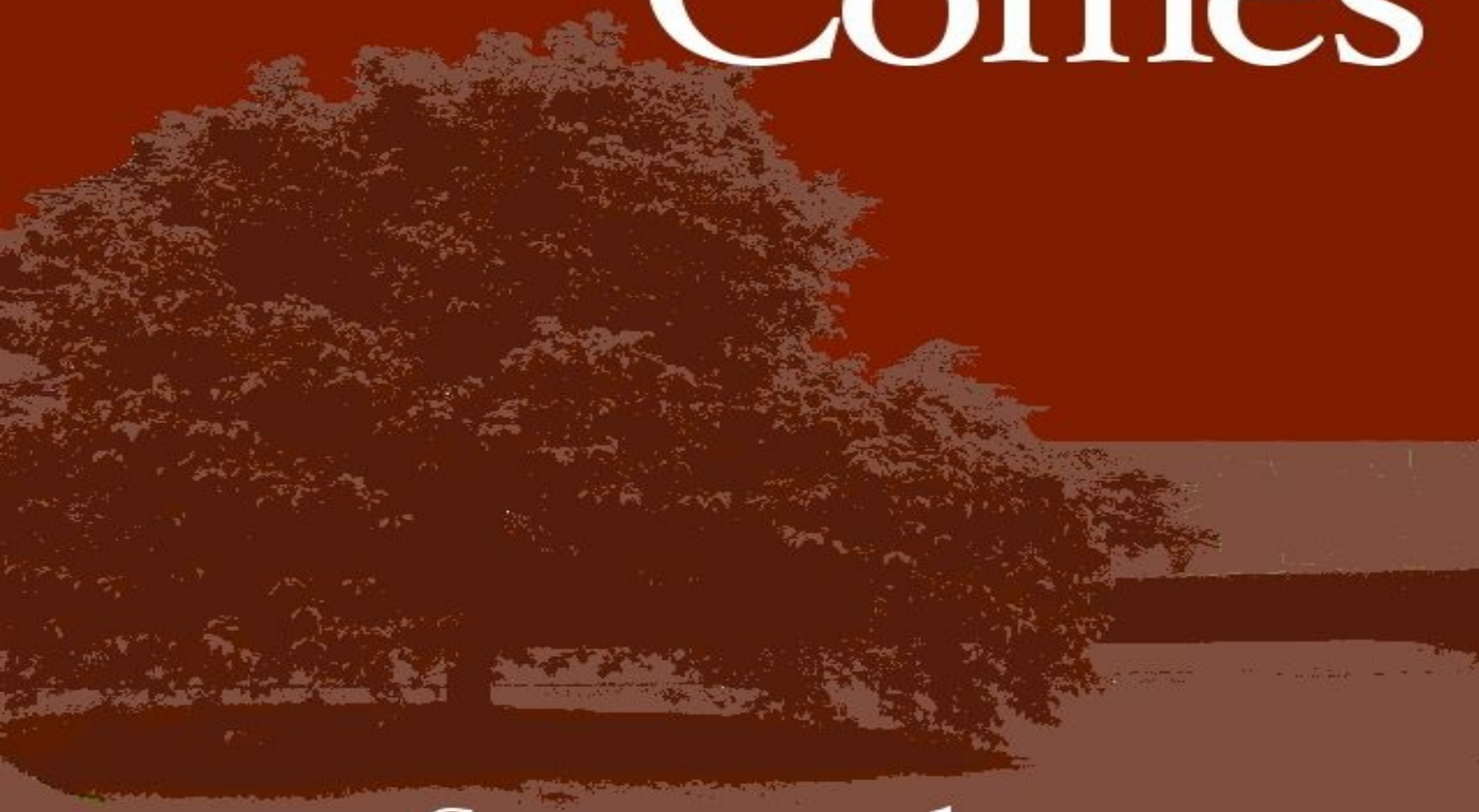
When Revival Comes



Sermons by

Herbert Lockyer

Previously published as
"The Mulberry Trees"

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When Revival Comes

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Previously published as
"The Mulberry Trees"

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The Fairest of All,
Sorrows and Stars, *When God Died*,
The Mystery of Godliness, *The Christ of Christmas*, etc.

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DEDICATED

to

Rev. W. Percy Hicks, B.D.,

Editor of *The Christian Herald* of London,

who

stirred within me the impulse to exercise

the ministry of the pen.

And it shall be, when thou shalt hear a sound of going in the tops of the mulberry trees that then thou shalt go out to battle.

1 *Chronicles* 14:15

PREFACE

In his striking pamphlet, *Earth's Last Pentecost*, D. M. Panton remarks that "Revival has always been a fresh inrush of divine life into a body threatening to become a corpse . . . Historically, conditions of appalling darkness have not been *against* revival, but *for* it; for revival is God by a mighty uprush saving the world from its downgrade to hell."

In these dynamic sentences the dual aspect of revival is described. There is the "inrush", quickening an impoverished Church — the "uprush" calling a weary world to the source of spiritual refreshment. And the following chapters have been prepared to emphasize anew the inflow and outflow of divine power.

We live in a world broken by its sin; and God is ever broken-hearted over the world's sin. Said a brilliant German skeptic, "If I could see the world as God does I would break my heart." The reply was, "God did break His heart at Calvary."

A broken-hearted God however cannot heal a broken world until He has a broken Church to work through. Pride, selfishness, prejudice, formality, unbelief, and worldliness make her too hard for Him to use . Brokenness, contrition, humility, Calvary: passion and compassion must characterize the Church if in the closing days of this dispensation she is to be the means of bringing multitudes into the valley of decision.

Herbert Lockyer

Moody Bible Institute, Chicago

May, 1936

I

The World's Greatest Need

If one could take a plebiscite of the nation as to its greatest need, what a variety of answers would be received! Different minds would respond in different ways. Outlooks upon life or ideals in life would be reflected in one's conception of the nation's greatest need. For example:

The *Moralist* would answer that the world's greatest need is the suppression or extinction of those blots marring humanity. The abolition of drink and gambling, vices of all kinds; slums would be singled out.

The *Educationist* would assert that the greatest need of our country is a higher standard of education and learning. Greater educational facilities and a higher intellectual attainment would deliver men and women from living small, puny, grovelling lives. But salvation is not in culture.

The last Great War was the product of the highest culture the world has known. And not only so, but our country with all her advances in knowledge is in danger of becoming a nation of educated pagans.

The *Scientist* would reply that our greatest need is a more thorough understanding of those forces playing havoc with the bodies and minds of the people. Thus he grapples in all seriousness with all the terrible *diseases* the flesh is heir to; and *magnificent* strides have been taken in many directions. May God hasten the day when remedies will be found for such devastating scourges as cancer and consumption!

The *Politician* would declare that the world's greatest need is

The Abolition of War,

class hatred, and industrial strife. It is of paramount importance, he would assert, to have a better industrial, national and international spirit: a friendlier atmosphere among men and nations. And so we have a growing number of peace-pacts and treaties. But while we earnestly pray "Give peace in our time, O Lord," let us not forget the solemn exhortation about destruction overtaking us when we think a peaceful security has been reached.

And then the *Religionist* would respond to the plebiscite in the following way: The greatest need of the nation is a deeper spirit of unity among the Churches; a closer bond of fellowship between all religious sects. There must come the harmonising of all denominations into one great, powerful, universal Church. And truly Christendom is marching on to such a goal. Many religious leaders, however, are spiritually blind regarding the Divine revelation of the exact nature of this united Church. All unconsciously they are as pawns, being used to fulfil prophecy. Union is bound to come but it will be a union resulting in corruption. John, in his Apocalypse, reveals that such a united Church will be known as the Harlot—the Whore—the False Bride. And the Devil's final masterpiece in the religious sphere will be the production of a United Church, but one utterly apostate in character.

Well, what is the *world's greatest need? God's estimation* of it differs from man's; yet, seeing that His conception is the highest and best, it must be followed. It is the prophet Habakkuk who voices God's mind regarding the nation's clamant need in the world—"O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years" (Hab. iii. 2).

If *the World is to be Saved from Decay* and disaster, she must have a mighty revival in the midst of this year of grace. Keen industrialists, cultured educationists, famous scientists, earnest but misguided religionists, may scorn the affirmation, but the fact remains that the paramount need of our country is a speedy revival of pure and undefiled religion.

The nation's greatest need is not material or industrial, but spiritual; not prosperous mills and factories, but purer men; not more gold, but more godliness; not more work, but more worship; not a revival of trade, but a revival of trust, both in God and each other.

Why, a *World-wide Spiritual Revival of Religion* would quickly settle the tragic problem of unemployment, so universal in its scope. It would also slay all national and international suspicion, hatred, and war-talk. The breath of the Spirit would transform swords into ploughshares, and spears into pruning-hooks.

And then a *National Revival of a Deep Spiritual Religion* would revolutionise politics and industry; would kill the parasites of drink and gambling, sapping away the life and means of thousands; would speedily stem

to deeper things, so characteristic of multitudes who appear to be dance-mad, sport-intoxicated, and pleasure-loving.

Yes, and a *Communal Revival would Solve the Problems of Slums* and poverty; for owners extracting money from wretched hovels, unfit even for cattle to inhabit, would, under the power of the Spirit, be so conscience-stricken as to fling their blood-money at the feet of the Corporation, saying: "Here is our wealth! Come and assist us to make an honest attempt to help the downtrodden to live higher lives." And, further, a mighty sweep of the Holy Spirit through a city or town would give the public-houses, clubs, cinemas, and music-halls such a blow as it would take years to recover from. At least, such was the manifest result of the Welsh Revival in its onward course.

And then an *Ecclesiastical Revival,* if we may so call it, would *work wonders in the land.* A revived Church would command the attention of the world. And, alas! it is only too evident that every branch of the so-called Christian Church is in great need of the Spirit's quickening influence. But a bursting forth of marvellous Pentecostal power would solve the problem and

Tragedy of Empty Churches; for by the Spirit's touch a barren, dead orthodoxy would pulsate again with the energy of God. If believers everywhere pray, and that earnestly, Habakkuk's revival prayer, our churches will not live on the edge of a financial chasm as the majority do, with officers and workers absorbing the time and talent which should be devoted to the Church's supreme task of saving men, in order to keep the show going. When the Church is as terrible as an army with banners, marching forward in the might of her God, she will have plenty of money for her work, both at home and abroad. And, further, purified from encumbrances, she would become a channel of marvellous blessing to towns, cities, and nations.

Now, as the nation or Church is made up of units, let us consider the personal aspect of Revival; for, as it has been suggested, we must draw a circle, and then, standing in its centre, pray, "O Lord, send a Revival, and let it begin in me."

would lift your life and mine on to a higher level, and make us better men and women. When we, individually, open the avenues of our being to the mighty

Holy Ghost, it is not long before all harsh criticism, backbiting, evil gossip, inconsiderateness, and jealousy vanish. When the disciples were filled with the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, they spoke with new tongues. And when those whose biting tongues cause more grief than pointed swords are brought under the sway of the Spirit, they quickly enter into possession of this Pentecostal gift of sanctified speech. All personal sin, bondage, cowardice, pride, and worldliness also receive their death sentence when the soul experiences the quickening touch of God. Seeing, then, that Revival, in its ultimate issue, is bound up with the individual, let us further examine this greatest need from the Divine standpoint.

The nation's greatest need is for every believer to pray in the Holy Ghost, and to live the sanctified life, being filled with the Spirit. Given such, problems both national and religious would quickly solve themselves. Yet we are so slow to learn that our deepest need is not material, physical, moral, social, or mental, but spiritual.

II

The Challenge of Revival

The striking introductory phrase in our Lord's High-Priestly Prayer in John xvii. is one that forces itself upon one's mind in these apostate days. With upturned face toward the Father, the Master prayed, "The hour is come." Extracting this declaration from its context, let us use it as a peg for a few thoughts about the challenge of Revival.

Never before were we confronted with such tremendous avenues for carrying our redemptive message into all the world. Truly,

"We are living, we are dwelling, In a grand and awful time; In an age on ages telling, To be living is sublime." And so the hour has dawned. The! hour for what? Why, the hour for a vigorous intervention and advance in the name of our victorious Captain: the hour, long-delayed yet now present, for effective action in capturing fresh territory for Him who bled and died for it: the hour in which every Christian is really wanted to achieve the plan he was brought into the world for: the hour when it is essential to put forth consecrated effort, summoning all Divine strength for the overthrow of sin. But while we are confronted with a vision of our enormous opportunities, there is, at the same time, that paralysing sense of our own utter helplessness. Let us look, first of all, at

The World's Appalling Need. Look where you will, the outlook is not encouraging, in spite of all our modern advance and enlightenment. We are not in any way pessimistic, but calm and sage in our estimation of things as they are. For example, take the activity of Bolshevism in Russia, and in other parts of the world, with its trail of blood and tears, and utter scorn of everything sacred. Think of the increasing strength of Roman Catholicism, and of the gradual return to those conditions which the Reformation overthrew. There is the terrible harvest of civil war in China, where the state of unsettled receptivity presents a striking contrast to the hard, impenetrable surface of days of old. Take the spread of Hinduism in India, forming, we are told, a serious hindrance to the spread of Christianity and the efficiency of British rule. And then there is the power of Mahomedanism in Africa, where it seems to be well-nigh impossible to penetrate some parts with the Gospel. Think of the growth of Modernism in Christendom, where, strange to say, spiritual work has declined as Higher

Criticism has grown. Think of the development of worldliness in Britain, a country in which it is becoming increasingly difficult to live and labour for God. What a sport-mad, pleasure-loving, self-pleasing people we are! Let us now consider

The Church's Helplessness. Now, there are several unassailable facts to bear in mind as we face the need and challenge of these days, so pregnant with opportunity. The first is that the world is a fallen world, and that, without Christ, a fallen world is a lost world. Secondly, the preaching of the Gospel is the only way by which we can take Christ to those who need Him in the lost world. And, in the next place, it is to the Church that this ministry of reconciliation has been committed. If she fails, God has no other plan. And not only so, but, being a spiritual body, the Church can only function as she develops her spirituality. Her spiritual power and influence, however, are lacking, seeing that her locks have been sacrificed on the lap of the Delilah of the world.

The Church exists to evangelise, and to extend her borders by the proclamation of the saving Gospel; but, ceasing to evangelise, she is faced with extinction. Her sole function is to witness for God, and by reaching others increase the government of her Lord on earth. But the Church is not gaining ground as she should. Converts are few and far between. And perhaps

The Reason is Not Far to Seek.

The Church, after the New Testament order, is a regenerated fellowship, being composed of those brought together into one holy communion through the New Birth. The entrance-door, however, has been widened, and now the Church is made up of a motley crowd, as with Israel of old, when the mixed multitude made for disaster and defeat. The method of membership needs a thorough overhaul and purging. There needs to be greater strictness in dealing with those who desire to carry the Ark of God. And such depleted membership would make for spiritual progress.

But the thought we set out to emphasize is this—namely, that the Church has an overwhelming sense of her helplessness. The wheels of her chariot are embedded in the mud. And such conscious helplessness in the presence of a great and recognized opportunity is not only humiliating, but dishonouring to the Lord who bought her with His blood. Paul commended the Philippians for their thoughtfulness, but they lacked opportunity to express it. Our case is so opposite

and tragic, for we have tremendous opportunities of winning men for Christ; but, somehow, we are helpless to appropriate such. Speech is wanted, but our tongues cleave to our jaws, and thus

There is a Sinful Silence

regarding the glaring evils of our day. The chance of our life is within our reach, but our arms are too stiff to embrace it.

Yet, amid our impotence, we feel that we have the very thing this God-forgetting world needs. Although few centres of religious activity are operating as they ought to, yet the Church, in general, possesses truth enough to turn the world upside down, if only there were power behind it.

The hour is here for a thorough examination of our relationship as professed Christians; for a closer conformity in our life to Christ; and for a marked increase in the use of those spiritual weapons making for the fulfilment of Calvary's plan. The hour is come to resuscitate prayer to the position of paramount importance, and for the manifestation of a deeper passion for souls. The hour has come for a stricter vigilance in guarding the sanctity of the Lord's Day.

Church-going people should reveal to the world that Sunday is a day to be guarded and preserved. Such a day is God-given, whereon we can develop our spiritual lives through the worship of God and the prosecution of definite spiritual work. But, sad to relate, the Lord's Day is carelessly and selfishly used, and its influence for good and truth destroyed, by religious people.

Take Sunday newspapers. Surely such are unnecessary, specially when we remember that we have six other days in which to

Gaze Into the Mirror of the World

If church-people would stop buying Sunday newspapers, and refuse to patronize those shops selling such, they would not be long in banishing this evil from our land. For it is a disgrace to have the land flooded on a Lord's Day with the material served up by the Sunday Press.

Take Sunday buying. Where is the conscience of any person attached to a centre of religious worship who patronises shops on God's day? Of course, what

we have in mind are not necessities, like milk or medicines, but commodities like sweets, tobacco, and eatables.

Take Sunday travelling, and engaging in business pursuits. The laxity of religious people regarding visiting, hiking, cycling, and travelling is to be deplored, as is the stealing of the Lord's Day for business purposes. Business will be more prosperous if books and accounts do not encroach upon this holy day. There is abundant proof in the Bible for declaring that it is only when God's people are jealous about His Day that they can enjoy His full blessing and favour.

In conclusion, let it be said that the time has come for that utter self-sacrifice, when, with self thrust in the background, Christ stands revealed. Let us watch unto prayer, drawing strength from Him who declared that without Him we can do nothing. Let us wait for the Bridegroom, seeing that the signs of the age herald His speedy return.

III

Seven Steps to Revival

The features and particulars of the Temple as seen and given by the Prophet Ezekiel are highly symbolic and spiritually instructive. The seven outside steps (40:22) were associated with the outer gate on the north side of this magnificent structure. The eight steps of chapter 40:37 were related to the inner court on the south side of the Temple. And the difference between the numbers bears a symbolic significance. Seven denotes spiritual perfection: while eight represents resurrection.

The seven steps, then, imply that spiritual perfection must characterise all our outer life: and the eight steps, that the whole of our inner life must be permeated with the Risen Lord Himself. Further, eight is one more than seven, pointing to a double truth,—namely, that a higher sanctity is attached to the inner life: and next, that as one approaches the dwelling-place of God, an increasing measure or degree of holiness is demanded. There were seven steps, then, to the outer door, and these added to the eight associated with the inner court makes fifteen, a number corresponding to the Pilgrim Psalms, 120-135, which are supposed to have been sung, one upon each step, by the choir of Levites as they ascended, first into the outer, and then into the inner court.

It is not our purpose, however, to linger upon such an entrancing theme, but to use this one phrase—"They went up into it by seven steps"—to indicate the necessary ascent as we rise from our spiritual poverty into the fulness of revival blessing the Lord has for all those who claim to be His Temple.

I. *A Right Estimation of God.*

We can never rise out of our failure into God's fulness unless we understand His true character. The first step leading into a life of closer intimacy is that of a right conception of God. Not until we know His name can we put our trust in Him. Well, then, what is the correct view to commence with? Is it not this, that, although our love for Him has grown cold, He has not given us up, or changed in His attitude towards us? The portrait Jesus painted of God is to be found in the father who never ceased to love his prodigal son, but watched at the window for his return.

Read the tender story of Peter's fall and recovery, and of how Pentecost finds

him at the top of the steps leading into the fulness of God. Had this erring apostle not caught the Saviour's look, and gathered therefrom a true conception of his Master's forgiving heart, the chances are that Peter could never have had his Pentecost.

When a believer is in a backsliding condition, Satan labours in every possible way to create a wrong impression of God. Have we failed? Do we long for revival? Are our hearts hungry for a life of fruitfulness? Well, we must return to the Lord, realizing that there is forgiveness with Him. And if our feet are upon this first step, then, we shall experience His abundant pardon. "Though we have sinned There is mercy and pardon."

II. *A Frank Confession of Hindrances*

If we find ourselves turning from our spiritual failure, then here is the next step bringing us nearer to a life of full, unclouded fellowship with the Lord. We must acknowledge and confess whatever may be between God and the heart. And, not only so, but we must deal with our hindrances, weight, or sins, one by one, and as a whole. Often the old-time music is not restored, simply because we are too general in our confession. Joshua marshalled all Israel together, and then sifted the people through, tribe by tribe, family by family, household, by household, until he came upon the one man whose one sin was responsible for defeat at Ai.

It is not enough to say, "Lord, I have sinned!" We must be explicit, and specify our sin. We must call the rebel by its right name. Dragging the accursed thing out, we must tell God the sad story of how our wandering began: how we grew to love the forbidden course: and of how we followed the siren voice to our bitter cost.

What is your hindrance. Is it unguarded conversation, a looseness of expression which is not a mark of sanctity? Is it an uncontrollable temper? Is it some unlawful habit or fleshly indulgence? Is it a jealous spirit colouring all you may think and say about the person you are jealous over? Well, tell it all to Jesus. Hide nothing, for He knows your innermost thoughts.

III. *A Definite Faith in Immediate Forgiveness*

This further step follows quite naturally upon the last. How long does it take a father to forgive his child once he is truly repentant? Would it not be a cruel act

to keep the child waiting for forgiveness, if sorrow had been expressed? Thus it is with ourselves. The estrangements of a life-time and the wrong-doing of years can be forgiven and blotted out in a moment of time. There is no interval between the telling out of the sad story of failure, and the reception of God's pardoning grace and restoring mercy. The moment we enter God's throne-room the gold sceptre of His royal forgiveness is stretched out for us to touch. We may not feel forgiven. No wonderful ecstacy or joy may fill our hearts, yet in God's thoughts we are fully and freely forgiven. Faith must rest upon this fact. As the late Dr. F. B. Meyer, to whom I am greatly indebted for many thoughts herewith expressed, was wont to state the order, it is—Fact! Faith! Feeling!

And faith is not waiting until we feel, but acting as if we felt. On the basis, then, of our confession, let us act as if we really felt forgiven.

IV. An Absolute Renunciation of Past Failure.

Some returning souls would like to skip this middle step, but here it is in the ascent Godward, and must, therefore, be honestly faced. We must go back over the past, and discover how we came to lose the sense of God's presence, and avoid such a cause of failure in the future.

"Repentance is to leave

The sins we loved before,

And show that we in earnest grieve

By doing them no more."

_ Was it an unspiritual friendship? Then we must cut the tie, and desire the company our Lord Himself would keep. Was it some unwholesome amusement, not at all conducive to our highest spiritual welfare? Then it must cease. Was it the useless reading of trashy novels? Then let us lose our eyes rather than miss the favour and smile of God.

Whatever the entanglements have been, His loving hands can sever them. If He does not cut the knot with a single stroke of His knife, then He will untie it under the patient working of His providence. Let us make no provision for a relapse, by carrying over into a fuller life any of those habits or friendships responsible for our spiritual dearth.

V. A Resolute Endeavour to Amend Wrong Often this fourth step is a very thorny one to take: one we would like to avoid, yet there it is as we climb the heights of blessing. It is not enough to confess to God, we must make our confession to man, if so be, that we have sinned against him. Our gift must be left at the altar until we are reconciled to our brother. Repentance towards God and restitution towards man are bound up together. In fact, repentance is not of the right sort and noble enough unless it leads us to make amends for past wrongs.

Zacchaeus offers us an illustration of this truth. The Philippian jailor, also, sought to undo past wrongs. He washed the stripes he had caused. And if we have defrauded anyone, or hurt, criticized, injured them, then we must right the wrong. This is why, in a time of revival, debts are paid, rectifications are made, apologies are given, cruel stripes are washed.

VI. A Whole-hearted Surrender Once and for Ever.

Perhaps you have surrendered things and habits to God, and yet withheld yourself. What He wants is you! You can give up your drink, your smoking, and a thousand other things, and yet not give yourself up to Him who claims your all. Kneel down somewhere, and give yourself, your life, and all your interests to Him who gave Himself for you. And every day renew and ratify the surrender.

"But," you say, "there is something I cannot give up." Well, ask God to take it. Confess your utter inability to surrender either yourself or your habit, and you will discover that He is good at a dead lift. But give Him the chance, and He will make something of you—a vessel for His use: a weapon in His hand: a receptacle for His glory: a crown for His brow.

VII. A Daily Committal to be Kept.

This last step brings us right into the presence of the Lord, and keeps us there. Constant victory and peace are ours as we exercise a moment by moment faith in a moment by moment Saviour. As we look to Him, He keeps us from falling. He keeps us as the apple of His eye. In the moment of temptation the Holy Spirit reminds us of Jesus, and instantly we claim His victory. No accounts are carried over-night. There is a daily adjustment to things Divine. We sing in our hearts:

"Jesus saves me all the time,

And Jesus saves me now."

The act of truth becomes the attitude. If, then, we follow these seven steps set out for our pilgrim feet, everything within the temple of our life will speak and sing of His glory.

IV

Hindrances to Revival

The idea of a prepared highway from which all obstructing forces have been removed is one of the common figures of speech employed by Isaiah. "An highway shall be there. . .it shall be called The Way of Holiness" (Isa. xxxv. 8). In the desert a "straight" highway is to be made for God (Isa. xl. 3). And then a highway is to be cast up with all stones and stumbling-blocks removed (Isa. lvii. 14; lxii. 10). And in all these references the prophet is thinking of and picturing Israel's return to glory. "Take the stumbling-block out of the way of My people."

In speaking of such a removal, it will be noticed that the hindrances are associated with a particular company of people—namely, "My people"; that is, those who are God's own, having been redeemed by blood. So let us apply these all-commanding words to ourselves, as we seek to prepare for the coming movement of God: "Take the stumbling-block out of the way of My people."

The time is long overdue for a calm and deliberate consideration of the causes of our spiritual impoverishment, and how such impotency can be removed. That

There are Stumbling-blocks

impeding the progress of Christ's cause, and His coming in Revival blessing, is all too evident.

The word "stumbling-block" can be translated "trap-stick"—that is, a crooked stick upon which bait is fastened, and the trap of which springs when an animal strikes it, thereby catching the animal. And many of our "stumbling-blocks" are the baits of Satan, for, as the subtle fowler, he knows how to entrap even God's own. The cross is spoken of as a stumbling-block (1 Cor. i. 23), and Christ as a stone of stumbling (1 Peter ii. 8). And Christ in His Deity, Christ in His atoning work, form great stumbling-blocks to those who are worldly-wise.

Let us then consider one or two hindrances to blessing; for all the language cited in the passages referred to points to one process—namely, the removal of all impediments from the highway.

I. *The Stumbling-block of Prayerlessness.*

The Church was born in a prayer-meeting, and her life can only be sustained in the same atmosphere, as the story of the Acts so clearly proves. "They gave themselves to prayer," "They went where prayer was wont to be made," are keywords of the book. In fact, the Acts extols the power of the Holy Spirit operating

Through a Praying Church.

Think of the miracles performed as prayer was exercised: for example, Peter's deliverance from prison; as well as that of Paul at Philippi.

In the course of the ages the Church has made progress in so far as buildings and wisdom and wealth are concerned; but does she still advance upon her knees? Although in any given town or city you have scores of churches, how many are there within such who believe prayer to be their vital breath? Let us take twelve such churches, with an aggregate membership of 300 each. That means a total of 3,600 members. Visit the weekly prayer-meeting in each place of worship, and if fifty people are attending such, the same is reckoned to be extremely good in these hard days. 3,600 professing Christians—600 who turn out to pray! Is it not a disgraceful percentage? And then we wonder why our church life is stagnant! But once the Church restores prayer to its rightful position, and rolls away the reproach of prayerlessness, then Revival will be here. Therefore we urge all ministers and evangelists and Christians, both at home and abroad, to further the Prayer Campaign for Revival.

II. *The Stumbling-block of Worldliness.*

One of the greatest stumbling-blocks to spiritual advancement on the part of God's people is their alliance with worldly pleasures and pursuits.

Church members are so thoroughly identified with all forms of worldliness that they have lost, if ever they possessed, the distinctive mark of separation. Worldly compromise ever means the loss of that power to win the world Jesus died to save. Let us make no mistake about it—if churches are to become a mighty factor in and around the districts they represent, there will need to come a drastic cleansing on the part of the majority of their adherents. May God help us to gather out the stones!

III. *The Stumbling-block of Doubt.* The Church is living in an age of doubt for which Higher Criticism is largely responsible. In several theological colleges

doubt is entertained regarding the reliability of the Bible, the Deity of Christ, the need of regeneration, and of eternal issues. Pulpits are being manned with brilliant sceptics and unbelievers who glory in disseminating the poison of doubt. And because of such, what else can we expect but the drying up of the brook of evangelistic activity? If unbelief prevented Jesus from doing His miraculous work, how does the Church expect God to manifest His power through her, if she is saddled with doubts and speculations? She must get back to that unwavering faith in the Word of God, and in the God of the Word, so characteristic of those of old, who "trembled" at His Word. The sooner we lay hold of the Satanic stumbling-block of doubt and cast it back into the hell in which it was born, the better will it be for our spiritual prosperity.

IV. The Stumbling-block of Ecclesiasticism.

In some circles there is no greater stumbling-block than rigid church customs, seeing that such prevent the acceptance of the full revelation of God.

Our supreme business is to obey God and not men, however good they are. Difficulties are created by the conceptions some hold in respect to the work of the ministry. Ordination, more or less man-made, is deemed to be absolutely necessary before one can witness in certain sections of the Christian Church. In other circles pastors are not recognized unless they pass through accepted channels and bear a certain hall-mark.

But—who knows?—in the coming Revival

God May Sweep Aside all prejudices and man-made orders, and use some of the most unlikely, unlettered, and unworthy vessels, from a scholastic standpoint, for the ingathering of multitudes. Of course, we know that God places no premium upon ignorance and mental sluggishness. With the best material He can do still greater things. But because man applauds what God condemns—namely, fleshly wisdom—and creates avenues along which he demands power to run, God often turns aside from "the wise and prudent" and honours His "babes."

And so of this we are certain, that when Revival does come, a lot of our prejudices as to who are qualified to preach and teach poor sinners will be in the melting-pot. It makes little difference to God whether the vessels are golden or earthen, so long as they are clean and usable. The pressing question is, Are we ready and fit for God to use?

The Trouble with the Water-pipe. The following story of S. D. Gordon, along with his pointed application is known to all readers of his books. Out in Colorado they tell of a little town nestled at the foot of the hills—a "Sleepy Hollow" village. But some enterprising citizens ran a pipe up to the hills, to a lake of clear sweet water. As a result, the town enjoyed a bountiful supply of water the year round, without being dependent upon the rainfall, which, you know, is very slight out there. And the population increased, and the place had a regular Western boom. One morning the housewives turned the water-taps, but no water came! There was some spluttering. There is apt to be noise where there is nothing else. The men climbed the hill. There was the lake as full as ever. They examined around the pipe as well as possible; but could find no break. Try as they might, they could find

No Cause for the Stoppage. And as days grew into weeks, the people commenced moving away again, the grass grew in the streets, and the prosperous town was going back to its old sleepy condition, when one day one of the town officials received a note. It was poorly written, with bad spelling and grammar; but he never cared less about writing or grammar than just then. It said in effect: "Ef you'll jes' pull the plug out of the pipe about eight inches from the top, you'll get all the water you want."

Up they started for the top of the hill, and dug into the pipe, and found the plug, which some vicious tramp had inserted. Not a very big plug—just big enough to fill the pipe. It is surprising how large a reservoir of water can be held back by how small a plug. Out came the plug; down came the water freely; by-and-by back came prosperity again.

Why is There Such a Lack of Power

in our lives? The reservoir up yonder is full to overflowing with life-giving water. And here all around us the plain is so dry, so thirsty for those waters! S. D. Gordon says: "Pull out the plug!" God says: "Take the stumbling-block out of the way!" And they are but different figures expressing the same truth. So let us out with the plugs, and away with the stumbling-blocks, that God may travel in the greatness of His strength.

V

Wanted! Revival Intercessors

The world's greatest need is not the material benefits accruing from the establishment of a National Government, but an army of National intercessors, who bear a mark in their foreheads, seeing that they sigh and cry for all the abominations practised within the Nation.

Doubtless, there is much, somewhat mysterious and hard to be understood in the series of visions granted to Ezekiel as he sat by the river Chebar. The Rabbins forbade the reading of the Prophet's book to young men under thirty years of age, lest the difficulties met with should prejudice their minds against Scripture.

If we read even the obscure parts with humility, and in the spirit of reverence, and in absolute dependence upon the Holy Spirit, Who inspired all Scriptures, then although we shall not be able to explain all mystery and untie all the knots, much will be gathered for the instruction of the mind, the sanctification of the life, and the enrichment of service.

In this spirit then, let us approach that portion in the ninth chapter dealing with the ministry of the man with the ink-horn, setting a mark upon all those who sigh and cry over the abomination of the Nation. May we discover in such a definite message for our own hearts, a message calling us to the exercise of a deeper passion for souls.

The Marker

Who is the august person in Ezekiel ix., 4 setting an indelible mark upon those who bear the burden of sin? Six men are referred to, each of whom had a slaughter-weapon in his hand: but this marker was not taken from such. The performer of this sacred task was a seventh person who had no weapon save his pen. He was clothed with linen—the special garment of the High Priest. He also carried at his girdle an ink-horn, that is a small case containing pen, ink and knife, such as Oriental scribes commonly wore.

In the work of the man with his ink-horn we have a type of our Great High Priest, Who by His Holy Spirit, the Scribe of Heaven, is ever active placing the Crossmark upon the redeemed, as they yearn and plead over souls until they

yield themselves to the Redeemer.

Are we among the God-marked, who, having vision and passion, express ourselves in the vital ministry of intercession, so sadly needed by our Nation in these dark and critical days?

The Marked

The distinguishing feature of the remnant in Ezekiel's day was their sighing and crying over the sin of the land. Even although all their efforts for reform were fruitless, yet they persisted in their agonizing ministry. Every Christian ought to be a living protest against the glaring sins of this modern age! Let us note the peculiar characteristic of those whom the man with his ink-horn marked. They "sighed" and they "cried." Now, as there is not one useless or unnecessary word in the Bible, what is the difference between sighing and crying?

Sighing is hidden heart-agony. It is the inner feeling of a man in distress. It corresponds to the inward groaning of the Saviour when He declared that His soul was troubled. Crying is the expression of our burden in prayer. In this attitude we weep before God in secret because of the dishonour heaped upon His Name by the sin of the people. The one is Passion: the other, Intercession. The more we sigh and cry over the sins of the Nation, the less inclination we have to commit personal sin. Thus the Holy Spirit is active, setting a mark upon those who are driven to God over the abominations, apparent on every hand. Are we ranked among the marked ones? "Oh, I am sick with the sins of these men! How can God bear it?" Henry Drummond cried one night when he came from a students' meeting. God forbid that souls should perish because of the lack of our vision of their need!

What This Marked Ministry Involves

Such sighing and crying as indicated by Ezekiel involve identification with the abomination we moan over. Vision becomes a burden upon the spirit. Ezekiel had to lie on his left, and then his right side for 390 days figuring thereby the laying of iniquity upon the house of Israel. Although guiltless, yet the prophet was identified with the nation's guilt. He represented the people as enduring divine judgment upon their sins. Such identification is common to Ezra, Nehemiah and Daniel. Jesus also, although sinless, was yet made to feel the

loathesomeness of sin. Who can plumb the depth of that mysterious phrase —"He was made sin for us"?

It is not sufficient to enumerate the sins and abominations of our Nation, speaking against them in an unattached or judicial way. We must sigh and cry over them, as those who feel their crushing weight. Tears must flow because of transgression (Psalm cxix. v. 136).

Ezekiel tells us that he "sat where they sat." He was not only a scholar in sympathy, but a true patriot. He agonised over the Nation's sin, until it seemed as if the mountain of iniquity was his own. Thus is it with ourselves. We must think and pray ourselves into the tremendous need of the country. If worldly and compromising Lot could vex his righteous soul over the abominations of Sodom, how deep ought our agony and compassion to be!

The first thing one must hasten to say about such a ministry is, that it is immensely unpopular. Those who bewail and bemoan both sin and sinners are not among the popular, much sought after in religious circles. This type of ministry highly provokes and displeases those who do not care about being disturbed in their sin. If we are found groaning over the evil of our land, we are daubed as whiners, pessimists, sour-faced Christians, or Jeremiahs. Yes, and one may be diffident about the discharge of such a disagreeable mission as that of protesting against the sins of the Nation. Ezekiel realized the sorrow and the trial of the task laid upon him. His commission was sweet, but bitter to perform (iii. 3-14), but with the hand of the Lord upon him, he did not forbear. Irrespective of results, he did not refrain. Such is the experience every faithful messenger in God's Name must pass through.

Then this marked ministry is also costly. While it is true that special deliverance is enjoyed when one bears the marks of separation from sin, yet here is a Calvary ministry so many shirk from exercising. Tradition affirms that Ezekiel was dragged over the stones until his brains were dashed out. John the Baptist was cruelly martyred for a similar reason. The only reward Jesus got for testifying in stern and vehement language against the sins of the Nation of which He was part, was a Cross of Shame. Because the disciple is not above his Master, we must be prepared for scorn and ridicule, if we see sin as God sees it, and condemn it as He would have us.

The Necessary Equipment for This Ministry

What wicked abominations surround us! What evil practices abound at every turn! There are the abominations of High Criticism; the abominations countenanced in the House of God; the abominations of this modern age; the abominations of world-glaring sins and moral sores; the abominations condoned by the seemingly religious; the abominations of the regions beyond; the abominations of our own hearts; a world of undiscovered sin.

Now, if we are willing to suffer the reproach inevitably associated with a faithful witness against all phases of abominations, God is waiting to equip us with all necessary grace. Along with a divine commission there is always the power of execution. If our sighs and travail are an echo of God's, then His sustaining might is ours. Ezekiel's name is illustrative of this truth. It means: "God will Strengthen" or "The Strength of God" or "One girt or strengthened by God." Thus, like many Bible saints, Ezekiel's name indicated what he received for his life and work. "I have made thy face strong against their faces." The Prophet's mission was to rouse and stimulate spiritual thoughts and feelings within the depths of his nation's soul, and to bring the people back to a living confidence in the God whose delight was in mercy. Ours is a similar mission, for the Church is here to witness against sin; to sigh and cry over sinners until they turn in penitence from their sin to the Saviour. Such heart-brokenness over the need of souls is ever before us in the Word of God. Are we willing to enter this small circle (for alas! God's marked ones are few) if so, then we have a likeness to Him, Who in His heart-agony "beheld the city and wept."

The Mark

It will be noted that the man with the ink-horn set a peculiar mark upon the remnant. What it was we are not told. Evidently such was necessary for the guidance of the angelic executors of divine judgment. For ourselves the work can stand for the assurance of God's favour we instinctively experience as we perpetuate the witness of Ezekiel against all abomination. "The Lord knoweth them that are His"—and this is a powerful support amid all the reproach and scorn our testimony may bring. There are at least two thoughts associated with this particular mark we can meditate upon for our edification:—

Separation

Not only did they who sighed and cried receive a distinct brand upon the forehead. The very sign itself separated those who bore it from the people guilty

of those gross abominations occasioning the tears, groans, and prayers of the elect souls forming the remnant. Let us pick out one or two illuminating phrases from the narrative:—

"Go through Jerusalem."—There was a strong feeling among the people that they were safe, so long as they resided within the Holy City. God, Whom they still regarded, notwithstanding their idolatry, as a Powerful National God, would certainly protect His people in such a privileged place as Jerusalem. Ezekiel's mission was to show that the transgression of the people had led God to give the City over to destruction. So, our work is to proclaim with a loud yet loving voice that sin is sin whether found in a saint or sinner: in the Church or the world: in the individual or the Community. The world may be a privileged place to live in, but the distasteful truth is that God's evident judgment is upon it.

"Let not your eye spare. . .slay utterly."— When dealing with sin there must be no with-holding, such as Saul was guilty of when he spared Agag and the sheep. We all have sins of our own we wink at: bosom and favourite desires in which we secretly rejoice. We know them to be wrong, yet we are silent about them. It is no use, however, decrying the sins of others, unless there is unremitting slaughter of our own personal abominations. It is our own personal holiness that gives power to our witness against sin.

"Begin at My Sanctuary"—God's Temple or Sanctuary-is a refuge for penitent sinners, but not for sinning saintfe. The wickedness of the Sanctuary is above all other forms most offensive to God, and so slaughter commences there. Judgment, Peter reminds us, must begin at God's House. Is it not time to shut our Church doors, and honestly endeavour to discover the cause of such apparent spiritual failure?

"They began at the ancient men," that is, the elders, leaders, and most conspicuous men in the Nation's life. The debaucheries of the priests had poisoned the springs of the national and religious life of Ezekiel's day. As priest, so people! Those in eminent places had sinned against light and clearer convictions, but neither the sacredness of the Temple, the honour of the city, nor the eminence of those within such, formed any security against God's displeasure. God hates sin most in those who are nearest Him. Therefore let us sigh and cry over our own sin more than we do. Let us plead with God for our Rulers and Church Leaders, that they may be men with an intense hatred for sin and a united witness against its manifold forms.

Crucifixion

Marking is common in Scripture, e. g.—Cain was branded. There is the mark of the Beast. Paul enjoins us to bear the mark of the Lord Jesus. The word Ezekiel uses for "mark," however, is *tav,* the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, which is the mark retained on old Hebrew coins in the form of a X. Early Christian writers laid great stress upon the use of the X as a sign of Divine mercy, hence its constant employment in the Catacombs. The usage of the mark of the X among Roman Catholics is a perversion of this old-time custom. Is this Calvary mark ours? What do we know of co-crucifixion? Do we bear in every part of our life the mark of the Master? Being Crossmarked we may find exclusion from certain circles, because of carnal, fleshly ways we can have no association with. It may be difficult for us to worship and serve God in some particular sphere because of the countenance of ways and methods alien to the mind of God. Where, then, can we go for comfort and inspiration? Well, God promises to make Himself as a little sanctuary (xi. 16). He abandoned His Temple, and gave up His Holy City to destruction, but to His marked ones He offers Himself as a sanctuary. If Cross-marked, there is but one place we can retreat to, namely, Calvary! This is our Sanctuary, where we can hide ourselves from the withering blast of the abominations of our day, and from the shame and ignominy our witness against such may bring.

VI

Preparing For Revival

IN HIS war with the Philistines, David received the following indication, or herald, of coming victory: "When thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, then thou shalt bestir thyself" (2 Sam. v. 18-25). The second book of Samuel falls into two main sections—namely, chapter 1-10, David's triumphs; 11-24, David's troubles. The 10th verse of this 5th chapter sums up David's career not only in this particular chapter, but as outlined in the first section of 2 Samuel. One of the great characteristics of the Bible is its unique power to sum up in a few words the truth of a chapter or chapters. Thus we read, "And David went on and grew great," or, as the margin puts it, "And David went on going and growing." "Going and growing!" That's it! Read the first ten chapters, and you will realize how such a phrase sums up David's career of triumph. Here we have "King David's first year of sunshine. After years of darkness he is now given a new crown, capital, palace, victory over an old enemy, and proof of God's love and favour."

Some Christians Have Plenty of "Go"

but it is not in proportion with their desire and ability to "grow." In David's experience, however, these two qualities were evenly balanced. Combined with outward activity there was the constant growth of inward spirituality.

Then notice the repeated phrase, "David enquired of the Lord" (vers. 19, 23). What a necessary attitude this is! Before we take any step, or make any plan, no matter what aspect of life or service we may think of, it is imperative to tread in the Psalmist's footsteps.

"I dare not take one step without Thine aid."

One herald of revival is the enquiring spirit. When God's people enquire more diligently of Him regarding the cause of their own spiritual impoverishment, as well as the remedy for such, then they will see Him moving on their behalf. Prayer, intense, passionate, insistent and believing, precedes all true revival. David went straight to God, and asked what he should do. And in all our search after revival, we must be careful not to force the past upon the present. The coming revival may be altogether different from spiritual movements of the past.

There is a world of meaning in that word of command, "Fetch a compass behind them" (ver. 23). It means to make a circuit or detour, to go around. We can see in the phrase a picture of Nehemiah, that great revivalist, who at the midnight hour encircled the city, viewing its ruin and desolation. What is there that can deepen our prayer-life, and fill our craving hearts with

A Burning Love for Souls

like a circuit or compass of the city, town or village in which we live? Broken walls! Why, the land is full of them! Mighty Philistines! Why, they are greater than we imagine! And what do the Nehemiahs of God see in this midnight hour, or "Saturday night" of the world's history? It is a vision impelling one to cry, "How long, O Lord!"

There is increasing worldliness, both within and without the Church. The country is pleasure mad. And such a quest is having a paralyzing influence upon the life of the Church. In fact, one evident sign of Christ's near return is that men will be "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." Then we see abounding iniquity, which is both open and flagrant. The daily paper is a faithful mirror of the world's life. What gross, open sins some people are guilty of! The bad are growing worse! And what can one say about the open lawlessness, spreading the world over with alarming rapidity? Without being an alarmist, it is safe to predict that Bolshevist activities are

Preparing the Way for Antichrist

and his forces. Russia and China serve us with an example of what will happen the world over, once the Church is removed. Then there is general apostasy, both in pulpit and pew. Men are departing from the faith. Modernism is responsible for the terrible blight in Christian work. Nothing destroys soul-winning work like "higher criticism." It impairs vision, and "where there is no vision the people perish." There, is the impotence of man to grapple with the problems of the day. The greatest minds are baffled by the intricate problems, social, religious, national and international, apparent in every land. The world is looking for a superman, super in strength, wisdom and ability, to right the world's wrongs. And one is coming! His name is Jesus!

Oh, then, to be men and women of vision, to have that knowledge of the situation, nerving us to effort, leading us to give ourselves more fully to our

Omnipotent Lord. Those broken walls broke Nehemiah's heart. And thus was it with Jesus, when He beheld the city and wept! The tears of Nehemiah led to his unceasing toil. The tears of Jesus led to His sacrifice upon the Cross. Olivet and Calvary went together. The one ever leads to the other. If we give our tears over the lost, we shall not keep back our blood. This also is a herald of revival!

Is it right to ask God for signs? Does He give His people heralds, indications, or forerunners, of His approach? Well, Gideon asked for signs, and they were granted. Here, in David's case, he was to listen for the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees. It was God's herald of coming victory. If, as some scholars suggest, they were poplar trees, then they would be naturally responsive to the action of the wind, trembling, shivering, quaking at the slightest breath of air. But, in the original, the style is dramatic and majestic, suggesting the march of mighty armies in the air. Thus the R.V. gives us a clearer thought: "When thou hearest the sound of marching." To David's trained ear God was going to cause the rustling leaves to sound as the steps of an advancing army. Those moving tree-tops, whether bending to and fro as the result of a passing breeze, or the breath of God, formed

A Type of Myriads of Angels

and chariots of fire sweeping down through the fields of air. They were the symbol of Jehovah's approach in power, and all that David had to do was to wait for this signal to advance.

Are we listening for sounds? Have we learned the necessary lesson of listening, hearkening to, and then obeying, these heavenly sounds? David is here pictured as clinging to God for His direction, even in minutest details. Is this our attitude? Do we hear the gentle breezes of the wind of the Holy Spirit playing upon the tops of the spiritual mulberry-trees? The child of God waits for "the sound of a going," not on earth, with its siren, contradictory voices, but in the air, even for the moving of the breath of the Spirit who bloweth where He listeth. Oh, for ears open for the sound of the coming revival, eyes open to see how God can slay the Philistines of sin and unbelief! The obedient ear of faith can detect certain sounds that God is about to favour Zion.

Advance Guards

Here are some of the heralds of revival or advance guards:

There are deeper desires after holiness of heart and life. Our low spiritual level shames us. We cry for victory over sin and for clearer likeness to our Lord. There is a deep yearning for greater freedom and liberty in devotion, and a more realized closeness of communion with Him whom our souls love. Our lives are so earthy. The Holy Spirit is calling us to a higher life, even to the tops of the mulberry trees. Thus we find "Holiness" movements well attended by companies of hungry souls. There is a deeper love and loyalty for the truth. Although we are faced with general apostasy, yet among the untainted there is a keener desire for fuller knowledge of the things of God. An encouraging feature of our time is that Bible-schools and Bible literature are being used as never before. And this in itself is a happy portent. For a more complete return to the revealed Word of God must inevitably result in revival blessing as it did in Ezra's day. There is a deeper intercession for precious souls. Whenever we experience a peculiar power in prayer, we can detect in such a sound of a going in the tops of the trees. Although the recognised prayer-meeting of the church has ceased to function, there are small prayer-groups scattered here and there, where humble souls are pouring out their supplications to the Lord Most High.

The Revival that Swept East Anglia

was prayed for through four years. Pray on, believer! God is on His way. There is a deeper passion for the perishing. When the apostles were ready to go forth the Holy Spirit came as the sound of a rushing mighty wind, and souls by the thousands were swept into the kingdom of grace. On every hand there is a multiplicity of evangelistic effort, such as mission and missionary work. There is a deeper interest in the truth of our Lord's return. The various signs of our times, the work of God among the nations, the shaking of the kingdoms of the earth, are all harbingers of our Saviour's near return. The subject of His Coming has never been preached and discussed as at the present time. There is a getting-ready spirit on the part of the redeemed. May God give us a clearer understanding of the times. The mulberry tree is spoken of as "the tree which weeps tears"—that is, distils gum in a tear-like form. Often tears are an indication of deeper, fuller blessing. Our ears can detect the heavenly sounds in the hour of trial. Heralds are seen in the crises of life, when everything around is so dark and difficult. They come to us in those strange providences of God strewn over life's pathway. May He deaden the sounds drowning

The Musical Movements of the Spirit.

May He make us deaf to every voice alien to His own! May we be —

"Alive and quick to hear

Each whisper of His word!"

The sounds were not only the symbol of Jehovah's approach, but also a call to David to be ready to come to the help of the Lord against the mighty. "When thou nearest . . . then thou shalt bestir thyself" (or, be sharp, be ready, rush quickly). If we are dead to heavenly voices, or indications of blessing, then we shall remain indifferent regarding the lost, never bestirring ourselves for their salvation. It is only the man who listens for God who bestirs himself, and who is careful not to act until he hears the movement of heavenly forces. Abortive, worked-up revivals are always disastrous.

Beloved, it is high time to awake out of sleep, out of our indolence and dalliance, robbing us of the fruits of victory over sin. Let us not fail to strike the blow for and with our great Commander at the opportune moment. If we feel the moving of God, let us rid ourselves of all encumbering influences, and thus be ready to march with Him.

"I can only spread the sail,

Thou! Thou! must breathe the auspicious gale."

Let us repent of our past failures — surrender ourselves more fully to our victorious Captain — manifest a greater passion for those souls who, if they die in sin,

Must Fill Christless Graves.

Our opportunities are growing fewer and fewer. Jesus is coming! God forbid that revival should come, and then pass us by because of our unfitness to be taken up in its mighty sweep. May we all be borne along by its surging torrent!

Ere we leave this spot where the mulberry trees are found, let us consider one other lesson to be learned. It is found in 2 Sam. v. 24: "The Lord shall go out before thee to smite the host of the Philistines." Such a declaration teaches us that victory is certain and complete when we come to the place where God is able to manifest His power. The R. V. provides us with a helpful thought, "The

Lord *is out before thee."* Not only will He go with us as we march to war, He is out before us, working silently in the hearts of men and women, thereby preparing a way for Himself. God is not inactive! Unceasingly He works, producing conviction of sin, begetting disgust for the things of the world: creating hunger after Himself. It behooves us to believe in the reality of these unseen spiritual forces at work in the world, even in the hearts of those we least expect. Now, in connection with the smitten host, we find the truth of co-operation. There was something for David to do, as well as for God. God's work did not displace David's part in the conflict, — it led up to it. Then there is

No Contradiction Between the Phrases

"The Lord smote" — "David smote" (24, 25). The one is the complement of the other. It is the forerunner of that New Testament truth about being "workers together." It is "the sword of the Lord *and of Gideon."* May we be ready to fulfil our part. May His grace quicken our efforts and energies. Let us live in the will of God — have His vision and passion — listen for the sound of His marching — yield ourselves to Him as clean, usable channels! For what Philistine forces can withstand the onward march of the Spirit-filled men and women as they fight with and for God? As one has put it, "The Christian life is no dream, no listless, sentimental waiting for something to happen, but it is the posture of hearkening until we hear His voice, and then it is the attitude of intense obedience, alacrity, and holy activity in fulfilling our great commission, and making the most of the Divine opportunity and the infinite resources which heaven has placed at our command." There is a sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees; let us bestir ourselves. It is a time of marvellous opportunity in Christian life and Christian work and

The World's Evangelization

Shall we not pray, "Blessed Lord, let us not fail Thee in this hour of need and opportunity. If Thou art counting upon us to fill the gap, then, when Thou dost give the command, may we be ready to go forward with Thee!" Let the cry of the our heart be:

"Revive Thy work, O Lord!

Exalt Thy precious name!

And may Thy love in every heart

Be kindled to a flame.

"Revive Thy work, O Lord!

Give Pentecostal showers!

Be Thine the glory, Thine alone!

The blessing, Lord, be ours!"

VII

Ministers and Revival

This message was penned during a recent visit to a famous Scottish fishing centre, where a few years ago a marvellous work of grace was experienced. While walking around the harbour I met with one from whose lips the unforgettable story of that revival fell.

He himself was caught in that flood-tide of blessing, and transformed from a careless sinner into a fiery Methodist. It may be that some of the old-time red-hot love for Jesus is missing, but one could detect something of the thrill of those past days as he recited the tidings of that past season of Divine quickening.

During our conversation we drifted on to the topic of the spiritual life of today, and quickly found ourselves discussing ministers. "Generally speaking," said the sea-tanned child of revival, "we are not getting the teaching about the Blood and of the Holy Spirit that we used to, and this is one reason why the flame of revival has gone out. Pulpit teaching is too modern, and kills the fire." Such was the burden of my friend's conversation, and it set me thinking about the head-line of this article.

Believing that God is sovereign, and can therefore move upon the godless masses when He desires, independent of all adverse circumstances — "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for Me?" — yet, at the same time, from the human standpoint, ministers of the Gospel could have

Revival at Any Time

if only as a body they were prepared to pay the price. If only every man who has the oversight of a congregation, whether small or great, had a living acquaintance of Christ's saving power, a heart burning with Calvary's passion and compassion for souls, an intimate association with the ministry of the Holy Spirit as the Interpreter of Scripture, a more definite abandonment to spiritual forces, and a greater determination to stand out from all worldly entanglements, what a mighty spiritual upheaval this land of ours would witness! For, dispute it as we may, the fact remains that the present failure of the Church to advance need not continue, — a revival of spiritual religion in our midst is a practical possibility.

While deprecating any thought of Popery or ministerial superiority, in the sense of lording it over God's heritage, it cannot be gainsaid that those who form a church depend, to a very large extent, upon their pastor for clear guidance in spiritual things. One has only to read Jeremiah's prophecy to see how true the axiom is —

"Like Priest — Like People."

Words like the following prove this, "If they had stood in My counsel, and had caused My people to hear My words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doing" (xxiii. 22). Again, "I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and My people shall be satisfied with My goodness, saith the Lord" (xxxi. 14). Surely such a verse as this reveals the vital connection between the pulpit and the pew.

How broken-hearted this weeping prophet was over the double grief of God, occasioned by the terrible idolatry of His backsliding children, and by the prostitution of the sacred office of pastor. Is there another book in all the world that can give a minister such a vision of the depths he can tumble into, once his altar fire is extinguished? Let us listen to a few of the sobs wrung from the heart of the ideal pastor, who could say, "As for me, I have not hastened from being a pastor to follow Thee . . . that which came out of my lips was right before Thee" (xvii. 16).

With the conversion of our friend, the harbour-master, fresh in my mind, I read the following scathing denunciations over for my own edification, with the prayer that I might be made more like Jeremiah, who ate the words of the Lord, whether they were sweet or bitter (xv. 16). Here are a few that caught my eye: "They that handle the law knew Me not" (ii. 8). Mr. Guthrie described unconverted ministers as "skeletons holding out in their bony hands a flaming torch." And what condemnation will be the portion of those who act like signposts, directing others the road, but who never foot it themselves; or who, like church-bells, ring others in, but themselves remain without? The spiritual history of Thomas Chalmers proves how sadly possible it is to be a means of life to others, yet spiritual corpses ourselves.

"The pastors . . . and the prophets walked after things that do not profit" (ii. 8). Because of his solemn position and privileges a minister ought to shun all unprofitable things in the shape of theatricals, dancing nights, whist-drives, and

other forms of worldly and

Questionable Amusements

When the fire of God's Spirit breaks out upon the church, what a heap of useless side-issues will be burned up by the revival flame!

"Why trimmest thou thy way to seek love" (ii. 33). The slave-girl, with her fortune-telling power, whom Paul was the means of delivering from her evil spirit, spake better than she knew when she cried, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation." And over that "way" are written the black words of sin, sinners, judgment, death and hell. The correlative terms of salvation, grace, blood-shedding, and heaven are also inscribed thereon. But, as such language is somewhat repugnant to the modern mind, there is a tendency to "trim" the "way" of its so-called antiquated phraseology, and adopt a vernacular wholly unbiblical in its accent. What "trimming" the pulpit is guilty of in order to gain the love of unconverted, self-principled church members! The truth of God needs no theological "trimming"; for, coming from the all-perfect One, it bears the stamp of His infallibility. A Bible "trimmed" of all its vernacular is "a way not cast up" by God (xviii. IS). From "perverting the words of the living God, of the Lord of Hosts our God" (xxxiii. 36), may we be mercifully delivered! With a revival will come a return to

"The Language of Canaan" "The prophets prophesy falsely . . . and My people love to have it so" (v. 30-31). Such a descriptive account of pastoral failures, which Jeremiah calls "a wonderful and horrible thing," might have been written in our day, for it is certainly characteristic of it. The tragedy of our general Church life is that, although it is marred by destructive criticism, blatant disbelief, and increasing worldliness, on the one hand, and a dead orthodoxy on the other, the majority of the people who form our congregations "love to have it so." Those who believe that a pastor should not "bear rule by his means," but under the direct guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, are few in number. Passages like v. 13; xiv. 14, should ever be before a minister's eyes, seeing they describe the peril of being false, unsent, uncommanded, and destructive. "Many pastors have destroyed My vineyard" (xii. 10). It cannot be denied that churches are not so full as they used to be. Centres of powerful ministry, once packed, are now sparsely attended.

Of course, there are circumstances, apart altogether from a powerless ministry, responsible for many dwindling congregations. But

The Fact Must Be Faced if we desire revival, that very many do not come to church solely because stones are given in place of bread. John the Baptist could gather an audience in the wilderness with his message of repentance. Modernism has changed many a fine audience into a wilderness, and "woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture, saith the Lord" (xxiii. 1).

"They speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord" (xxiii. 16). One has only to study the "Church Notices," as printed in Saturday's daily papers, to discover how many "visions" are spoken on the Sabbath by men who speak out of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord. Their subjects, lectures, themes, and sermons, as the titles suggest, are woven, like the spider's web, out of their own bodies. What a difference congregations all over the land would detect, if every minister

Before Next Sunday waited upon God for clear guidance as to the message He would have delivered!

Browning, in his "Paracelsus," asks: "Are there not, Festus, are there not, dear Michal, Two points in the adventure of the diver: One when, a beggar, he prepares to plunge; One when, a Prince, he rises with his pearl?"

And God is waiting to give those of us who, by our profession, ought to be divers into the sea of Scripture, pearls of great price. The difficulty is we are not prepared to treat ourselves as beggars. We are too rich in modern knowledge. If Spurgeon was the "Prince of Preachers," it was because as a beggar he plunged into the presence of God, and then into His Divine Word.

"Is not the Lord in Zion? is not her King in her?" (viii. 14). Yes, He is in the midst of her. Then, why have the showers been withholden, and the latter rain denied? (iii. 3) Well, they cannot come out of our vanities (xiv. 22). But "we will wait upon Thee." Let us wait upon God for a deep work of the Spirit in the hearts and lives of those within the so-called "ministry." And then our churches will be filled with those who "ask for the old paths — the good way" (vi. 16), even with those that shall "ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward" (1. 5).

VIII

The Ministry of a Revived Church

As there are contradictory voices in the world, proclaiming the foundation and functions of the Church of God, it is imperative to give ourselves to the study of the Biblical conception and commission of such an institution.

The general conception is that the Church is in the world to make it a better place to live in. It is here to lead humanity to a higher plane. It is in the world to be a mighty factor in its civilization, to right its social and industrial wrongs, and to be a guarantee of its integrity. And with such a Utopia in view, religious people engage in all kinds of moral, educational, and humanitarian reforms and movements and schemes. With undying enthusiasm, they identify themselves with all beneficial methods of purifying and stabilizing our communal, national, and international life.

But such a conception, however, of the Church's mission, although idealistic and seemingly attractive, is wholly foreign to the revelation of God, as we hope to prove clearly.

Of course, we readily admit that the Christian Gospel in its application, vitally affects every relationship and realm of life. Radical transformation speedily follows the reception of the spiritual message of the Church, no matter what sphere we can think of. Such, however, is another question altogether.

Let us approach our theme, first of all, from

I. *The Negative Side*. Here let us state what the Church *is not* in the present world for. Its mission *is not* one of betterment or improvement. The church is not here to make the world better, but to testify that it can never be made so; and, further, that it will go from bad to worse. Things are to wax more wicked, and iniquity is to abound. The world, as a system, is satanically controlled, for the devil is the god of this world. How, then, can it grow better?

Let us hasten to add that the world is better materially. When we use the term "better," we do not mean to say that our age is not an advance on all previous ages. The world is better materially, to-day, than yesterday. Surely it is better to ride in a motor-car than in the old stage coach! Electric light is better than oil-lamps. The thousand and one inventions of our time have greatly assisted

mankind. People are better housed, clothed, fed, taught, and paid than they were a generation or so ago. We have advantages and facilities in almost every realm that would astound our forefathers, if they could but rise again. And not only so, but the Word of God prophesies still greater things in the way of inventions and beneficial measures. And as the deceiver Satan will see to it that such are brought about.

The world, however, is worse spiritually. Instead of growing better in the things of God, it is becoming more godless and materialistic. "Better," in the Bible, is used of spiritual things; of people becoming more godly, more governed by the Spirit, more deeply taught in Divine matters. But such an application of the word is not true of the world. As prophesied, the world is loving pleasure more than God—is more dead to higher claims than ever before. And the Church's mission is not to attempt the impossible task of sweeping the world clean, but of saving men out of it, ere God's righteous judgment falls upon it.

And this attitude is forced upon the Church, as one great American writer has more fully shown, by two fundamental truths.

1. *The Fact of the Incarnation, or Miraculous Birth.*

In the unique birth of our Lord, God did not take an old humanity into union with Himself, but created a new and distinct humanity altogether. Betterment implies an evolution, but the Incarnation was not an evolution. It was a revolution, declaring that original humanity was weighed and found wanting. God, in the creation of the body of Christ, apart from natural generation, denied thereby, that human nature had any Godward hope within it. And Christ, breaking in as He did, by His birth, upon the natural order of things pronounced the death-knell of the self-exultant theory of evolution. The Incarnation proclaims, with unerring voice, that the hope of man is not in his own evolution and betterment, but in a new and distinct humanity.

2. *The Necessity of Regeneration, or the New Birth.*

Our Lord's authoritative and final utterances to Nicodemus reveal that man can never be a partner in the kingdom, unless he is born from above. No matter how pure his ancestry, or fine and fruitful his morality, or gradual and good his progress, unless he receives a new nature, he can never enter into fellowship with God. The Incarnation of Christ provided redemption for sin—furnished a new Head for the race—opened up a source of new and spiritual life for man.

His wondrous birth is a witness to the fact that He came into the world, not to live for its betterment, but to die for its salvation. His advent demonstrated the degeneracy and insufficiency of man.

Coming to regeneration, which, in many ways, is akin to the Incarnation, we realize that such a revolutionary work means the reception of the risen and glorified Man, Christ Jesus, into our life. In the new birth, the Holy Spirit reincarnates Christ within us. The Church, then, is in the world to warn men that there is no hope in the present constitution of things; that humanity, although cultured, is lost; that souls can never be improved by an internal motion of their own, or by any human agency without.

II. *The Positive Side.* Seeing that the world is growing bad instead of better, and that civilization is doomed to failure, let us now seek to examine the definite ways the Church of God does function in a condemned world. What is involved in the work of Him whose blood purchased the Church? Well, the keywords of Salvation—Declaration—Addition seem to cover the Church's mission in the world.

A. Its Mission is One of Salvation The Church's work is a continuation of the Master's mission,—namely, to seek and to save the lost. Like Christ, the Church came into the world to save sinners. And that this salvation is needed can be easily proved as we look upon the world's deep need. Take, first of all, the enormous expenditure of time and money on sport, pleasure, drink, gambling, cosmetics, etc. If it be true that the moral character of a nation, or of an individual, for that matter, is largely determined by the employment of time and expenditure of money, then the world is heading for disaster.

The condition of human society, with its breakdown of parental authority; its growing disrespect and lack of reverence for old age; its looseness of the marriage tie; its lowering of female dignity; its rapid increase of crime, suicides, sensualism, and atheism, calls for the preaching of a sin-destroying, soul-saving Gospel. Organized society is making for chaos! It needs the Christ, and it is the Church's business to take Him to the world. The Church engages in a mission of deceptive encouragement if its ministers cry "Peace! Peace! when there is no peace." It is cruel and monstrous to preach that all is well with the world: that it is growing better in every way, when revelation and experience declare otherwise. It would seem as if there are three ways by which the Church is to discharge its God-given mission.

1. *By the Declaration of the Full Gospel of God.*

Paul makes it very clear that the Church is the medium of revelation concerning the grace of God (Eph. 3:8-10). Her mission, according to her commission, is to preach the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). Of course, the Church must be sure of the Gospel it preaches. Gospels there are in abundance, but they are destitute of the good news of God's love, and Christ's sacrifice and saving merit. The Church is here to tell men that no matter how good and true they are, or black and lost in vice, that they can only have eternal life by believing. The Church is God's ambassador, delivering His message without favour or sentiment, knowing that His word will not return void.

2. *By Reliance Upon the Holy Spirit for Power.*

Pentecost was the birthday of the Church; and the power producing it, is necessary for its continuance. With the mission of His Church in view, its Risen Head promised the Spirit of Power to all its members (Acts 1:8). This is why "The Acts" can be named "The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Church." And, as with the Early Church, so with the Present-day Church; the world can only be influenced for God as the Lordship of the Holy Spirit is recognized, and all within the Church are surrendered to His control and power.

The Church, alas! may have intellectual, social, financial, and moral power, and yet be destitute of the mighty dynamic of Pentecost. O that the Church universal could realize that its message can only be delivered, and its work administered, by the Spirit of God (Zech. 4:6).

3. *By the Demonstration of Personal Soul-Saving Work.*

The way in which Christ sought individuals, and individuals were brought to Christ, should teach the Church how to break itself up into individual seekers and winners of men. Every member of the Church must be a missionary. And what a vast extension of the kingdom would be witnessed if only we could have a revival of personal evangelism. In fact, the Church's extension depends upon its evangelism. Failing to evangelize, it must fossilize! Souls must be singled out, named, dwelt upon, and carried in the arms of faith and prayer to the feet of Him who has provided a personal salvation.

B. The Mission is One of Declaration.

Passing reference to this function has been noticed. We herewith enlarge upon it. "Declare" is one of the keywords indicating the constraining motive in the Church's ministry. It is a word saturating "The Acts" and "The Epistles," and meaning the proclamation of something to somebody as a Divine message. Think of the word as it left the lips of our Lord and His apostles!

"I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it" (John 17:26). And Paul, catching the spirit of his Master, said: "We declare unto you glad tidings"; "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 13:32; 20:27; 1 Cor. 15:1, etc.).

The Church's mission, then, is to preach the preaching God bids it, and not to evolve its own message. The Church is here to declare certain revealed facts, and not to give its opinion, theories, or theologies to men. Whether men dislike, disbelieve, discard the declaration is not the Church's responsibility. The response to the Church's witness and message is not its concern, neither are the results of its mission. Its one obligation is to declare the revealed Gospel, and to leave the rest with God. For example, it must declare three facts.

I. *The Fact of the Soul.*

Because a gross materialism covers the world, and the vast majority think only of the body, how it can be clothed, fed, housed, beautified, and gratified, it is the Church's mission to call men to think of their neglected possession. It would seem as if there is nothing practical beyond the body, seeing that it, and not the soul, is the real thing to live and provide for. What a tragedy it is when all man's energies are exercised for the welfare of his body! He must be taught the value of the soul, and this is the Church's supreme work.

The Church is in the world to impress upon men the fact that the body will crumble to dust, and that the hope of a new one is in Christ. We question whether the Church should interest itself in the body, save as an expression of the soul. At least, Paul urges us to yield our bodies for such service. In saving the soul, we save the body. Thousands of good bodies, however, carry lost souls! Why, a soul is of more value than the whole world! And this is why the Church must cry out to man: "You have a soul, and it is the biggest, real, and most permanent part of you!" O, what an immense mission it is to arouse men from their beast-like stupor and animalism, and tell them that after they have secured everything in the world for the body, the soul shall be required of them.

II. *The Fact of Eternity.*

Further, man, concentrating upon his body, and the body being related to this world, he is taken up with time and not eternity. Even scientists are striving to extend life upon this planet, as if there were no others. But the Church is here to awaken men to the fact of eternity. "Where and how will you spend eternity?" must form a prominent part of its message. Men must be warned of the hell awaiting all who die out of Christ. The danger of endless woe, as well as the brighter side of the Gospel, must be proclaimed. Man is planning for time, scheming for this world, evolving systems to benefit him down here, so he must be pointed to the shoreless beyond. Jesus preached the love of God, yet He stands out as the world's supreme hell-fire preacher. And, like Him, we must cry in the ears of men, "Arouse! ye sons of men, and prepare for eternity, ere it be too late."

III. *The Fact of Judgment.*

Again, the Church is here to declare that the world, with its best systems of civilization, are to be swept away by the judgement of God. Has He not said that He will overturn, overturn, overturn; and does not Peter foretell the dissolution of all things?

We boast of our magnificent civilization, but its limit was reached centuries ago, as the history of the Egyptians so clearly prove. Still, no matter what expansion of human progress we may witness, or the height human genius may yet climb, God declares that He is to come with a down-sweeping and desolating flood of judgement upon all our fancied pride, greatness, pomp, glory, achievements,, and inventions. And He is not a man that He should lie!

How, then, can the Church have to do with the betterment or improvement of a system God is to reject and utterly destroy? No, the Church's responsibility is to maintain a faithful witness, and keep itself unspotted from the world.

C. Its Mission is One of Addition.

A previous remark about personal evangelism prepares the way for this last phase of the Church's work in the world. The very name "Church" means "called out," indicating thereby, the nature of its mission. The Church is here to call men out of their sin to God. Dr. Haldeman, to whom I am indebted for so many of the thoughts herewith expressed, reminds us that the Church below is a living

protest against the old nature, and a constant witness to the new and spiritual nature to be received from the risen and immortalized Christ. Part of the Church's message is that life must be from heaven, downwards, and not from earth, upwards, as evolution teaches. Jesus walked on earth as a heavenly Man. "Ye are from below, I am from above." And the Church, in like manner, is a regenerated, spiritual body, walking through the earth with a membership, a re-incarnation of the Lord. It is in the world, but not of it. Here are four words describing the pre-eminent function of the Church, which is His Body.

1. *Extension.*

The one dominant purpose of the Church should be to build itself up, and honour and glorify the Lord thereby (John 15:8-16). A tree is planted in the soil, not to benefit the soil, making it richer and better, but exclusively for its own benefit and life. And as a tree planted of the Lord, the Church draws out of the world those elements making for its growth and enlargement. By the power of the indwelling Spirit, it takes out of the common soil of humanity those individuals necessary for the completion of the structure. The Church is not here to better or Christianize the world, but to gather out souls in all parts, and extend thereby its own influence over the world.

2. *Exclusion.*

There is a rigid, man-made exclusion from some assemblies which is utterly foreign to the Church's life. Some forms of exclusivism practiced in Protestant circles are just as abhorrent as Roman Catholicism, with its consignment to perdition of all those outside her fold. By the Church we mean all those within and without all Churches, who have been made partakers of the Divine nature through faith in the risen, glorified Saviour. To be outside the Church, that is, the living organism, is to be separated from Christ, and lost in sin. But where Christ is, there is the Church. The Church, as a system, may include multitudes who are not Christ's, but the Church, which is His Body, excludes all who are not born from above. And in these days of loose ideas about the Church, we need to stress the difference between the organization and organism, or a building and the body.

3. *Separation.*

The High Priestly prayer of our Lord, in John 17, carries a burden for the

Church's separation and sancti-fication. It is in the world, but not of it. Because of this fact there is a great gulf fixed in respect to the countenance of worldly ways and methods of support. The Church must have heavenly food for the sustenance of its heavenly life. Taken out of the world, it must be distinct from all worldliness, and a constant witness to the better world to come.

4. *Glorification.*

In its development below, the Church is helping to people heaven above. Called out ones, are to be caught up! The Church is here, not only to preach God's love, as revealed *m* Christ, and, as souls turn to God from their idols, build up the_ spiritual house hereby. It is here to lift up a warning voice in a world blinded by its own culture and creeds, that the golden age can only dawn after judgment. "The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night."

Yes, the morning is coming, even the morning without clouds, eternal, bright and fair; but before such a bright and cloudless morning dawns upon this sin-smitten, devil-driven world, the night of judgment is to come. The flashing sword, in the hands of One whose vesture is dipped in blood, is to sweep the earth.

This, then, is the Church's urgent mission. With sted-fastness, it must lift up the voice of warning, declaring that the world is rushing headlong to destruction, and that the only hope for lost souls is to be reconciled to God. No matter how unwelcome the message may be, the Church is here to urge men to "flee from the wrath to come." And the unceasing passion of the Church must be the presentation of Christ in all His fulness as the only Ark of Salvation.

IX

The Thrill of Revival

We are living in days when the thrilling and spectacular doings of both men and women attract worldwide attention, claiming for those who engage in them wealth and honour and fame. Recently Professor Piccard, the Belgian scientist, ascended ten miles in a balloon, being the first to ascend so high. Aviators are willing to bridge the distances between nations, sometimes perishing in the attempt, their bleached bones being discovered in desolate parts of the earth. The whole nation was roused by the feat of Miss Amy Johnson, who flew alone from England to Australia, earning for herself an honour from the King, a fortune, a multitude of gifts, and world-wide fame. Not so long ago a man risked his life in a steel barrel in the rapids of Niagara, emerging safely from the river at Queenstown. About the same time two men stepped into a plane at Toronto, to give the crowds a thrill; one died, the other broke his neck. Who is not fascinated by

The Accounts of Scientists

who go blind, have their fingers burnt to stumps, die premature deaths—all because they feel the thrill at the discovery of those remedies benefiting a diseased and pain-stricken humanity?

Yes, we are living in days when there is no apparent lack of men and women willing to risk their lives in hazardous tasks, willing to attempt the seemingly impossible, willing to do and dare and die. For the sake of science, commerce, worldly fame and glory, riches, and sometimes for the cheap applause of crowds who are after a thrill, there are those to be found eager and ready to risk life and limb in the performance of something notable and spectacular. The world issues a call for volunteers who will devote themselves to tasks involving danger and hardship, and there is an immediate rush to obey the call.

Now, what about Christianity and the call of Christ? For well-nigh two thousand years

The Trumpet Has Been Sounding

forth, calling men and women to do and dare, to hazard their lives for the Gospel, to respond to the lure of the hard and difficult conflict, to abandon

themselves to high endeavour, glorious adventure, and soul-stirring service. And what response has our Captain received? Oh, the irony of it! For two millenniums He has been waiting to evangelize the world, to spread the glad news of His salvation among the sinbound of earth; but so few fling themselves on the altar for sacrificial service. Christ has been calling all down the centuries for heroic men and women, even for those willing to wage a warfare from which there is no discharge. And there is thrill in His service! Danger and difficulties to face and overcome, sacrifices, innumerable, romance, sensation, and fascination to stir and satisfy the most adventurous; and at the end there is a reward, not of worldly applause and passing fame, but unfading in its nature and eternal laurels. Think of Christ's challenging appeal!

There Are Kingdoms Waiting

to be conquered among those tribes in the vast interiors of heathen lands where the Gospel has not yet travelled. There are wandering Bedouin perishing by thousands in the desert, without the Bread of life. There are head-hunters in Borneo who have never heard of Him whose name is as ointment poured forth. There are thousands in our own land, around our own doors, who, though surrounded with religious privileges, are as spiritually blind as Hottentots. And then think of the Drink Traffic, with its trail of blasted lives and broken homes, of the gambling scourge, and of kindred evils sapping away our national life.

What scope for high endeavour, glorious achievement, eternal fame and honour! And yet, what a miserable response there is to the call and challenge of the Divine Leader, as He urges us into His crusade against sin. He cries, "Who will go?" and, apart from a few souls here and there, whose hearts respond to the thrill of the Christ, His

Stirring Call to Heroism

and abandonment of life in the greatest of all causes falls on deaf ears. And yet there is enough arduous endeavour calling for all the bravery, courage, and fearlessness the bravest and strongest care to give in our Lord's incomparable service. Yes, and when the mighty Revival comes, there will be witnessed an abandonment of life and possessions to the Lord Jesus Christ, unmatched in any other realm.

And, further, there is no need to turn to history or to the many realms of our

own day, for illustrations of what lengths determined souls are willing to go in order to achieve this object. And we do not belittle, for one moment, the glorious achievements of high-spirited men who have risked their life and all in the realization of some purpose. All honour to them! But let us put in a plea for the Bible and Church History, for these annals of the brave can supply all the necessary fuel to feed our enthusiasm for truth and righteousness.

Shall we, dare we, respond to the clarion call for self-sacrifice, flinging ourselves with alacrity and gladness on the altar for the accomplishment of the Divine plan? Let us continue to plead for a mighty Revival, for in the day of God's power we shall be willing to go all lengths for Him who set His face steadfastly toward Jerusalem, where He knew His cross awaited Him.

X

Keswick and Revival

The main purpose of this article is to trace the bearing of the Keswick message on the subject of "Revival"; for if Keswick is synonymous with the deepening of *the spiritual life of God's people,* which is *the first work of a revival,* then surely we have a right to look for those mighty outbursts of the Holy Spirit's power consequent on the Lord having prepared a people to work through.

Keswick was *born as the result of the revival* of the latter half of the last century; and what was born of a revival must carry a revival nature. The inception of Keswick, one writer tells us, was the result, in large measure, of the visit of Moody and Sankey to England, and of the widespread wave of revival in 1874-75.

Christians began to realize that there were *unrealised possibilities in the life of faith,* and over all the country there was a heart-hunger for a deepening of spiritual life; but it was in this veritable Eden that the movement known as "Keswick" took permanent root.

As to the roots or beginning of the actual Convention movement we are not now concerned seeing that the facts of such have been minutely described by various Keswick biographers. Our intention is to show the connection between Keswick and Revival.

It would be a fruitful study to set forth the marvellous manifestations of the Spirit of God both during certain Conventions, and as a result of the Keswick witness throughout the world. For example, there is that memorable Convention of 1905, when, as revival was sweeping through Wales, a great spirit of prayer and expectancy laid hold of the thousands gathered at Keswick that year. To read the thrilling account of that Wednesday evening when Dr. A. T. Pierson spoke on "The Inbreathed Spirit," and of the hush that fell on the crowds, and of the audience interrupting the address, singing "Songs of praises I will ever give to Thee"; and then of the all-night prayer-meeting that followed, lasting until three in the morning, stirs one's heart to pray, "Do it again, Lord!"

Then, who is there that attended the 1922 Convention who can ever forget the remarkable scenes after Dr. Douglas Brown preached on "The Bleating of the

Sheep"? Like the bursting of a flood two or three thousand making-over to their Lord the entire surrender of themselves for whatever purposes of witness and service He might ordain, followed spiritual guides to the Pavilion and the Drill Hall. And when at night Dr. W. Graham Scroggie, who, not doubting the depth and reality of the morning's consecrations, sought to show that everything in the realm of Christian action must be done intelligently, as well as emotionally performed, a crowded tent rose in response to the intelligent and deliberate appeal to crown Christ as King as well as Saviour. Thus, the 1922 Keswick, like that of 1905, was a red-letter Convention; and the world must have felt the impact of both.

Coming to the spiritual influence of Keswick leaders and speakers on the outside world, and of the breath of revival sweeping hundreds into the Kingdom of Grace as the result of their inspired labours, and of the many Conventions throughout the world, traceable to the parent stem, we realize what a remarkable record such would make. For instance, one has only to peruse the late Dr. C. Inwood's "African Pentecost" in order to understand and appreciate the infinite possibilities wrapped up in the Keswick movement.

Our present desire, is to show that this year's Keswick can produce the conditions essential to a world-wide revival. Therefore, Christians everywhere should pray that the present Convention may mark the beginning of that mighty spiritual upheaval the world so sorely needs; and as such a revival can come only as God's people are thoroughly adjusted to the Divine will and purpose, and to the God-inspired Word, with all its fundamental truths firmly adhered to, Keswick, we affirm, supplies the necessary fuel for a mighty spiritual conflagration. What are the prismatic rays of the so-called Keswick teaching?

I. *An Unfaltering Faith in An Infallible Bible.*

Of this fact we are certain—that God the Holy Ghost will not and cannot bless and use any professing Christian, or body of Christians, who fail to accept the Scriptures in the entirety as the Word of God. We challenge Higher Criticism to produce any startling work of grace, any season of revival, that has come to a needy world as the fruit of its labours. Are we not right in declaring that the terrible spiritual blight resting on our Church life to-day can be attributed to the baneful influences of Modernism? Where is the higher critic who is an ardent and successful soul-winner, and pleader for revival?

Coming to Keswick, however, is it not a cause for profound gratitude to God that it has always stood for all that is fundamental in "the faith once for all delivered to the saints"? The acceptance of the integrity and absolute authority of the Word of God has been jealously guarded by its leaders and exponents. And long may they continue so to do! Here, then, is the first link in the chain of Revival.

II. *The Unity of Believers.*

The constant stream of Revival in "The Acts," from Pentecost onwards, came as the result of God's people being of one mind and of one accord.

Keswick, by its very motto, which is descriptive of its inherent nature, provides this precursor of blessing, for emblazoned over its platform is the Pauline message, "All one in Christ Jesus." And such a New Testament truth indicates that at Keswick, as at Pentecost, brother looks on brother from the Divine standpoint, and that a common rallying-ground is found where non-essential differences are forgotten in true heart-affection to our common Lord, thereby fulfilling for the Holy Spirit another necessary condition for the display of His quickening and reviving grace.

Would that the extraordinary union of ministers and members of various churches, now being witnessed, might, as the result of a definite surrender to the Lord, on the part of all, for a higher Christian life, break forth into a world-wide revival! Gathered as they are from all parts of the land, and out of varying sections of the Church, may the saints of God receive such a baptism of fire, as they unitedly wait on the Lord, as will constrain them to return to their respective spheres as channels of revival! May the spiritually-minded expositors of the Word be so set on fire of the Spirit as to expound those truths making for the liberation of those spiritual forces our pagan-hearted land so deeply needs!

III. *A Passion for Souls.*

All who have been greatly used of God in the conversion of souls have been those captivated by Calvary's compassion for the multitudes living without Christ. Was it not this deep burning passion that gave David Brainerd the Indians for his hire; R. M. McCheyne, the crowds of weeping sinners of Dundee; and Evan Roberts, the conscience-stricken communities of Wales?

Of course, we are orthodox in that we believe with our minds that if men and

women linger and die in their sins, they die lost for ever. But does such a dreadful truth leap out of the pages of Holy Writ, urging us to rescue the perishing, as it ought to? Generally speaking, are we not strangers to the inner agony of William Burns, when he had to escape from the godless crowds in Glasgow, and, going into a closet in Argyle Street, wept and pleaded for their Christless souls? Now, it is here that we realize that Keswick is not an end, but a means to an end. Its primary object is the rectification of God's people, in order that they might function as soul-saving mediums. Even at the Convention itself, although its chief purpose is the deepening of the spiritual life of the hundreds who gather within the "Canvas Cathedral," the evangelistic passion expresses itself in the nightly open-air meetings in the Market Square, as well as on the Sunday evenings, when the saving Gospel is echoed forth in all its fulness.

But one of the chief channels Keswick supplies for a world-wide revival is its missionary auxiliary.

The missionary meeting, which is perhaps one of the most remarkable gatherings during the Keswick Week, was initiated as the result of the urgent appeals of Dr. Eugene Stock and Mr. Reginald Radcliffe in 1887. In 1888 a donation of £10 was received from an unknown source, on condition that other nine donations of a similar sum should be given for a Keswick Mission. Within an hour a sum of nearly £900 was promised[1]. And a similar outburst of liberality has taken place every year, for missionary and other objects. Last year about £500 was disbursed for missionary work.

[1] About £100,000, or $160,000, when adjusted for inflation.

Thus, by its own missionaries, and the sending of deputations to distant parts of the world, Keswick causes its life-giving stream to irrigate the dry, arid wilderness of the regions beyond, as the late Dr. Stock's chapter on "Foreign Missions at Keswick," in "The Keswick Jubilee Souvenir," so clearly shows. Concluding his contribution, Dr. Stock says, "It may truly be said that Keswick has rendered essential aid to Foreign Missions in three ways. First, by sending forth the missionaries, and enabling the societies to send forth more missionaries. Secondly, by calling forth at home, through its own message, offers of services from men and women freshly awakened to a deeper sense of their Lord's claim upon them. Thirdly, by its quickening and revivifying influences upon many missionaries on furlough, who gladly resort to the Convention for spiritual uplift. Bowker's later principle, that consecration and the evangelization

of the world should go together, has proved right in itself, and fruitful in its application. Yet Reginald Radcliffe's dying words still need to ring in the ears of all true servants of the Lord: "I want—I want—I want—all Christians to go all over the world spreading the glad news!"

As Keswick has come round again, thousands are gathered together in holy convocation from all parts of the globe, intent on meeting with God, discovering thereby how their lives can function more fruitfully for His Kingdom. May one and all realize that there is no limit to what the Holy Ghost can accomplish through lives utterly abandoned to His control, and seek after the Convention to return to their respective spheres with a heaven-born desire to spread abroad the glad news.

IV. Victory Over Sin

As it is useless to pray and plead for revival, if sin is consciously entertained in the lives of those who intercede for others, it is imperative for the people of God to bear in mind the vital connection between holiness of life and the manifestation of the Spirit's mighty power. And the teaching of the Word clearly points out the necessity of abandoning all known sin, in order that God's reviving grace may be experienced. Such is the underlying principle of all Bible revivals.

S. D. Gordon's telling illustration of a fast-dying village, languishing for want of water while a full reservoir could be found at the top of the hill, and of the plug inserted in the connecting-pipe by some mischievous person, is one worthy of our earnest consideration. Above, the swelling rivers of grace are waiting to refresh the sin-parched millions of the earth below; and because God's condescending method of saving sinners is through the lives and service of those who are already saved, Keswick says, and so does the Bible—Pull out the Plug!

XI

When Revival Comes!

What a remarkable phenomenon is witnessed when something extraordinary happens in the natural world! Take, for example, the devastating results of the earthquake in New Zealand, when a whole community was plunged into chaos, loss, and death, through the immediate destruction of buildings and homes. Or think of the ravages of cyclones, storms, floods and epidemics.

When we turn to the spiritual world we discover something of the same destruction in respect to all that is alien to the Holy Spirit, when He manifests His power in a time of revival blessing. One has only to read the Acts of the Apostles in order to realize something of the mighty dynamic of the Spirit when He is given unhindered sway. Think of what happened during that tremendous spiritual cyclone of Pentecost! Think of the drastic outcome of the earthquake at Philippi; and of the upheaval at Thessalonica, when the world appeared to be turned upside-down; and of the uproar at Ephesus, when curious arts, books, and idols were destroyed!

As in nature, so in grace, something must give way when the extraordinary power of God is at work. Let us think, then, of one or two things Revival will deal with, and that drastically, when it sweeps over our beloved land.

It will burst the bonds of formalism. While we deplore the terrible ravages of Modernism, both within and without the Church, it cannot be denied that in all sects there is another danger to be feared—namely, a barren orthodoxy where Higher Criticism is not accepted, creeds and liturgies are coldly recited, and services, fundamental in nature, are gone through with the monotony of a treadmill. In general, the Church has a name that she lives, but is dead. But when the mighty power of God begins to work, and Revival descends upon the Church with all its cyclonic swiftness and force, then, depend upon it, something will happen. A rush of fresh life and energy will lift the Church out of all denominational ruts, and, bursting the fetters of formalism, and penetrating all hide-bound systems, make her as "terrible as an army with banners."

It will purge our churches of worldliness. One wonders what the feelings of our blessed Lord must be as He looks down upon the Church, purchased with His own blood, and beholds her so baptized into the spirit of the world. It makes

us cry out in anguish as we witness, day after day, in the newspaper, pictures of

Dramas, Plays and Theatricals

performed within churches. Great publicity has recently been given to a vicar and his cabaret show. The fact of the matter is that many places of so-called worship are little different from the worldly centres of amusement a few doors away.

But when Revival comes, what a clearance and riddance and purging there will be! Just as you have wholesale destruction when a surging flood overleaps all banks, so, when God pours out a floodtide of blessing upon the land, dances, concerts, operettas, bazaars, whist-parties, and everything of a secular nature will never resist the oncoming tide, but be swept out of the courts of God's house with surprising haste.

It will revolutionize the ministry. During the Welsh Revival hundreds of ministers and Christian workers gained a new vision of their Divine vocation. They either visited the scene of Revival or read accounts of it, and, fired with a fresh passion, allowed themselves to be caught in that

Wonderful Spiritual Upheaval

that shook the land. And when God in His sovereign power breaks upon His Church, as we believe He is about to do, things will happen in the lives of His ministering servants that will surprise themselves. Bondage, fruitless-ness, professionalism, and clerical pride will go to the winds, and tongues of fire will be ours to preach the reconciling Word.

Nothing can raise the spiritual tone of the ministry save the long-looked-for Revival. When Revival comes, multitudes of ministers the land over will step out of all worldly ways and associations, and, abandoning themselves to the glorious tide of blessing, be carried along by its urge and surge, to do and dare great things for God.

It will sweep souls into the kingdom. If the cataclysm of Revival does anything, it will certainly smash to smithereens the modern ways of trying to do God's work. On every hand we are being told to change our vocabulary, and adapt the truth to modern requirements. All the language of Holy Writ in respect to sin, salvation, and punishment, is deemed to be obsolete.

"Modern Thought in Modern Phrases"

is the slogan of the hour. A confusion of tongues is fallen upon the Church; her members speak, as Paul refused to speak, "in words that man's wisdom teacheth," in loose phrases which may fit a dozen meanings, in terms that are indeterminate, and in definitions that do not define. Many no longer preach Christ crucified, but "the principle of the Cross"; regeneration and redemption are swallowed up in "a process of spiritual redemption;" the Gospel itself is converted into "the New Testament ethic." Using the same artificial speech as the politicians, the scientists, and the moralists, such preachers are involved with them in the strife of tongues that bewilders the world.

But when Revival comes the Church will return with startling suddenness to the old-time fashion of declaring God's truth in God's language. Sermons and hymns drenched with the Gospel will be the order of the day, and, with such, souls, myriads of them, will be swept into the kingdom of God's grace. So let us stick to the sweet language of Canaan!

XII

The Perils of Revival

Christians generally are not alive to the reality of Satan's personality, activity, and subtlety. They forget that he is the great antagonist of Christ, and His work and wonders. Why, his very name, "Satan," meaning ""adversary," reveals the hatred burning in his devilish heart toward things Divine. Thus, with any great forward spiritual movement there is always increased Satanic activity, seeking to block the way of blessing. Alongside of the Holy Spirit you can find the evil spirit striving to weaken and nullify the work of God. Paul felt this; hence exhortations like the following—"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us" (2 Cor. ii. 11) ; "I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain" (1 Thess. iii. 5). It is our purpose, then, to indicate a few devices Satan employs in the ruin of revival. Among the perils of revival, then, we would name: 1. *The Substitution of the Visible for the Invisible.* One device of the devil is to get God's people to substitute revival for the Reviver, blessing for the Blessed; to be taken up with a movement, rather than with the Mover, with crowds and not the Christ, with converts and not the Converter. We are tempted to lay more stress upon continual efforts rather than upon the deep inner work of the Holy Spirit. If the work we represent has experienced an inrush of new life, raising the church or mission hall to a higher level, thus bringing it into prominence, pride is apt to creep in and the work made to usurp the place of the Divine Worker.

And not only so, but we must learn how to distinguish between a mission and a revival. *Missions* can be "got up" and carried through successfully by the employment of certain means, such as wide advertising, a large choir, solo singing, fervent hymns, strong emotional appeals by some winsome, attractive speaker. But *revivals* are not "got up," but "sent down." We can *organize* missions—for revivals we must *agonise.* Yes, and very often revivals come unaccompanied by the ordinary evangelistic paraphernalia.

2. Overmuch Publicity.

Many a mighty work of grace has been damned by the Press anxious for sensational copy! The less we court publicity, when the Holy Spirit is doing His strange work, the purer and more lasting the results. Yet there are some who seem to have a mania for making the world's Bible— that is, the newspaper—

their medium of influence. The excuse is that such a method enables them to reach greater multitudes, gives them wider scope for their message. But lurking at the back of publicity is self-exaltation, self-glory, self-aggrandisement. In fact, it helps to secure further engagements. The use of a religious paper for telling in a plain, unvarnished way the story of what God may be doing in some particular part of the country, is legitimate and commendable, as it enables believers the land over to rejoice in the Lord, and to seek in other centres a similar Divine visitation. What we must guard against is the courting of publicity, seeking thereby to focus attention upon ourselves. And, after all, why trouble about getting reports into this and that paper, when the only reports that matter are those to be read at the Judgment-seat of Christ, where every man's work will be tried, of what sort it is?

3. *Negligence of Inner Spirituality.*

Another most subtle device and terrible peril is to get workers so busy as to neglect the inner fires that go to maintain the blaze of revival. Any great movement of the Spirit makes extra demands upon the workers associated with it. For example, there are more meetings, a greater tax upon our time, more exhausting efforts, all of which breed the tendency to neglect the hidden fires of prayer, Bible-reading, and secret devotion. Evangelists know only too well how mechanical their labours become when they strive to keep the outer machinery going, without the driving force of an inner life constantly invigorated by the life-giving Spirit. "As thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone" (1 Kings xx. 40). May God save us from an activity divorced from spirituality!

4. *Man-worship.*

The leaders of all great movements find themselves beset with many perils, seeing that the eyes of multitudes are often fixed upon them. If they happen to be attractive, gifted, endowed with a fascinating personality, and with power to move and influence an audience, it is somewhat difficult for them to escape man-worship. One has known of women infatuated with a preacher to such an extent as to sleep with his photograph beneath their pillow. Alas, the man element looms so largely in religious work, for often the preacher is the "draw," and not the desire to worship the Lord independently of who the speaker is. And when a preacher fosters the love for praise, he receives homage belonging to Another, even his Lord. If we are to be vessels unto honour, then the people must "see no man save Jesus only."

5. *Superficial Personal Dealing.*

Often there is a tremendous back-wash in so-called revival meetings, simply because the people are fed on touching stories, highly exaggerated and of doubtful veracity. It is comparatively easy in an emotional atmosphere to make a moving appeal, getting men and women to stand, sign cards, and promise to serve Christ. But, because the mind has not been fully enlightened and the will exercised, we have what we call backsliding. Because there is "no deepness of earth" the seed withers.

Again, loose ineffectual handling of souls in inquiry-rooms is responsible for a good deal of backsliding. Seeking souls are not thoroughly dealt with by workers with Bible in hand. The Scriptures form the sword of the Spirit, and unless we know how to handle them to meet the varying difficulties of the sinner, it is nothing short of sacrilege, trying to ease the pilgrim of his burden.

6. *Jealousy.* Tell it not in Gath! Jealousy has ruined many a much-used channel. "They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands. . . . And Saul eyed David from that day and forward" (1 Sam. xviii. 8, 9). If an outstanding leader is popular, much sought after, highly successful in his work, he is often the object of criticism levelled at him by some less conspicuous leader, who is filled with the devilish spirit of jealousy. What if another can preach the Gospel better than you? Well, he cannot preach a better Gospel. So serve God up to the measure of your capacity, and continually pray for your fellow-preacher with greater gifts, that he may be kept humble, for he has a greater responsibility. From all jealous, ulterior motives, so disastrous in the service of the Master, may the good Lord deliver us! Brethren, if we would safeguard our lives against all the perils lurking in the dark, let us strive to remember:

Always labour for the glory of God and the food of souls.

Maintain, at all costs, fellowship with Christ.

Seek the constant reception of the Holy Spirit.

Cultivate that spiritual intuition whereby it is possible to detect the false from the real.

Shun and suppress all thoughts of self-advertisement and self-advantage.

Keep the Judgment-seat of Christ in view, where service will be rightly valued and rewarded.