

Pastor and People.

I ONLY KNOW THAT HE IS MINE.

You ask me *how* I gave my heart to Christ.
I do not know.
There came a yearning for Him in my soul,
So long ago;
I found earth's flowerets would fade and die,
I wept for something that could satisfy,
And then—and then—*somehow* I seemed to dare
To lift my broken heart to Him in prayer.
I do not know—
I cannot tell you—how,
I only know
He is my Saviour now!

You ask me *when* I gave my heart to Christ.
I cannot tell.
The day, or just the hour, I do not now
Remember well.
It must have been when I was all alone,
The light of His forgiving Spirit shone
Into my heart, so clouded o'er with sin;
I think—I think 'twas then I let Him in.
I do not know—
I cannot tell you—when,
I only know
He is so dear since then!

You ask me *where* I gave my heart to Christ.
I cannot say.
That sacred place has faded from my sight
As yesterday:
Perhaps He thought it better I should not
Remember where. How I should love that
spot!
I think I could not tear myself away,
For I should wait for ever there to stay.
I do not know—
I cannot tell you—where;
I only know
He came and blessed me there!

You ask me *why* I gave my heart to Christ.
I can reply:
It is a wondrous story; listen, while
I tell you why
My heart was drawn, at length, to seek His
face,
I was alone, I had no resting place,
I heard of how He loved me, with a love
Of depth so great—of height so far above
All human ken.
I longed such love to share,
And sought it then,
Upon my knees in prayer.

You ask me *why* I thought this loving Christ
Would heed my prayer.
I knew He died upon the cross for me.
I nailed Him there!
I heard His dying cry, "Father, forgive!"
I saw Him drink death's cup that I might live,
My head was bowed upon my breast in shame,
He called me—and in penitence I came.
He heard my prayer!
I cannot tell you how,
Nor when, nor where;
Why I have told you now.

DEFICITS IN THE FUNDS. THE CURE.—I.

BY R. A. DIX

In discussing the cause of the deficits in the Funds, I said there was but one way in which money could be obtained for the work of the Master, without injury to that work, and that was, by direct appeal to the conscience of the giver. I need not say to those for whom I write, that this was the plan which Moses adopted, and that he adopted it at the command of God, "Who-soever is of a willing heart, let him bring it." Nor need I remind them that the result was a speedy overflowing of the treasury.

We follow too closely the example of our Lord's immediate disciples in one thing, to wit, the literal, or material, or carnal, interpretation of Scripture. The passage about the dead letter and the living spirit is not as continually present with us as it should be. We talk about the commandments "with promise" and forget that there is but one commandment in these days, and upon it all the promises hang. The Jewish Church showed its loyalty to God by strict observance to the law. That strict observance brought the blessing with it. Our loyalty must be manifested in a different way, since we are not under the law. "Ye are the salt of the earth"; "ye are the light of the world." He who uttered the words came to reveal the mind of the Father; came to set

before us the example of a perfect life. When you have found in that life one slightest instance of compromise with evil; one slightest instance of flinching from any consequences which absolute adherence to principle might entail, I shall grant your warrant for adopting man's devising to forward God's work—but not till then.

I am digressing, however. I began the last paragraph with the intention of calling attention to a certain promise in Malachi about opening the windows of heaven and pouring out a blessing. It was conditioned upon the observance of the law. God's power to make that promise good to the Church in these days has not been limited by changed conditions. The promised blessing was conditioned, as I have said, upon the observance of the law; but that, interpreted for our times according to the spirit and not the letter, means that it is conditioned upon loyalty to God.

To put the matter in other words, if we wish to get into the line of this blessing, we must be careful to avoid everything that might bring hurt or discredit to God's cause; we must be careful about our means and methods of doing His work. When, therefore, we find ourselves calling in the aid of means which appeal to the senses rather than to the conscience—to the eye and the ear, rather than to the heart—it is surely time to ask ourselves whither we are drifting. Men do not generally fall back upon the lower until they have lost confidence in the higher.

I am tempted to illustrate by my own experience in this matter; but suffice it for the present to say that, whether in congregation or Sabbath school—and only in the latter, of course, could a layman speak with the authority of a leader—I have found a quick and satisfactory response to a quiet, persistent bringing of people face to face with their duty and their privilege. What is their duty? To give as the Lord has prospered them. What is their privilege? To come to the help of the Lord. In how many congregations is that insisted upon? I am afraid the much more general story is, that there is a certain amount to be "raised." There must be talk sometimes about amounts. But the weight of emphasis should be put on the duty and the privilege. Every minister should be interested in the prosperity of the Funds, and should endeavor to rouse the interest of his congregation; but it is not his first business in the premises to get big contributions for the Funds. His first business is to cultivate the grace of giving in the hearts of his people; to teach them, out of willing hearts, to offer unto God acceptable sacrifices.

Take that Presbytery of our Church (I know not which it may be) which is most distinguished for the religious activities of its congregations, and let two or three competent judges go east and west and south and north, within the bounds and mark—not the facts set forth in the Session records—but the influence of the Church upon the world around it in the restraining of evil and the encouragement of good. Then let it come to pass that, throughout the Presbytery, all the churches shall be temples of the Living God, ceasing to be either lecture halls or concert rooms; all the services in these churches the worship of God—the preaching in line with I. Cor. ii. 1-5; the prayers after the model of Our Lord's Prayer (which is a model, and not liturgical), and the singing, whether led by an organ or not, praise, and not an interlude; also, let all congregational activities which have not within them a spontaneous principle of life, die and go to their own place; and when the new state of matters has continued for a year or two, let the spies go out into the land once more, and if they come not back having in their hearts and on their lips some such language as that in the opening verses of Psalm cxxxvii. then—but there is no "if" in the matter.

SABBATH OBSERVANCE.

During the past year the interest taken in the Sabbath question has been intense. Many public meetings of various kinds have been held in different parts of the Synod to discuss the important question of how to keep the Lord's Day holy. The Legislature has been asked to pass more stringent Sabbath laws in order to prevent the secularization of the day, so sacred in the eyes of the Presbyterian Church; and it has been decided to call in the aid of the Bench to interpret the existing laws, and if possible so to enforce them as to stop the street cars and boats, and thus secure more rest for the working man.

From the returns of the Presbyteries, it is clear that the subject has received a fair share of attention in the preaching, and in the deliberations of the subordinate courts of the Church, and it is needless to say that the press has kept this matter constantly before the minds of the people of Ontario. But in spite of all that has been said, written, and done, the progress made has not been much, if any. Most of the Presbyteries complain of more or less open and glaring violations of the laws of God and of man in relation to the Sabbath—violations that would be impossible were it not that religion is a much less powerful factor in moulding our civic life than we could wish. Materialism in philosophy and in life; worldliness in society and in the Church; love of pleasure so unfriendly to the love and law of God, have done much to lower the standard of Sabbath Observance, and to popularize practices clearly condemned by the fourth commandment. Card playing and gambling in its many forms, boating, boxing, horse-racing, drinking, wheeling, and bribing at elections are the chief causes of Sabbath desecration. Over work during the six days of the week, and too late hours for closing stores on Saturday; games such as football, baseball, tennis, hockey, and curling—games played so late on Saturday as to end in travelling on Sunday; the common custom of leaving home on Saturday evening so as to arrive in New York, Chicago, and Montreal on Sabbath, the semi-sacred Sunday travelling in car, boat, and buggy in quest of pleasure, of health, and of religion in its grotesque and more exciting forms, so dear to the hearts of the weak brethren; the half political half ecclesiastical Sunday meetings veneered with as much Christianity as makes them respectable in the eyes of the honest, old fashioned orthodoxy—meetings opened and closed with prayer and praise though the middle is essentially of the earth earthy; the advertising of all sorts of subjects for sermons, which, if preached as advertised, would be as remote from the gospel as the glib talk of the quack doctor commending his pills; the everlasting Monday puff, professing to give a true and faithful account of the wonderful eloquence of the past Sunday, but really, a cheap advertisement for the coming Sunday; the glaring inducements held out to the music-loving public of rare opportunities granted to Church members to hear the leading operatic singers at cheap rates and that without the sin of going to the theatre are the secondary causes of Sabbath desecration—causes deeply rooted in our social, our civil, and our ecclesiastical life, and leading to the wide spread demoralization of our families, our state, and our Church.

In order to reform the present abuses, and lift the Church to a higher plane of moral and spiritual life, the interests of the individual, of the family, of the Church, must be called forth, and the Lord's Day be made, not a mere negation, but a positive delight. No state enactments, however just and stringent, can secure this desired end, apart from the spiritualising of the masses of our people. While the natural heart is enmity against God, the

law of the Lord will be trampled on, in spite of legislation, of organization, of pains and penalties.

Your committee would respectfully ask the earnest attention of the ministers and members of the Synod to the great importance of taking just, true, and scriptural grounds, when discussing the Sabbath question. To condemn street cars and steam boats, while permitting livery stables to do business, not to speak of the private driving to and from Church, and from house to house; to denounce railway companies and boat owners as sinners above all sinners, and have no word of bitterness, no look of disapproval for the company that sells the gospel on the Lord's Day, pockets the proceeds when the star preachers are paid, and grows fat on the prayers and the piety of God's people, is more likely to convince a thoughtful public of the ignorance, if not the dishonesty of the advocacy, than it is to aid those who truly wish to see the Lord's Day kept as our Lord and Master did. Laying the emphasis on man's need of rest after six days of honest toil; of the inspiration to man's intellectual, social, moral, and spiritual nature to be found in the services of the sanctuary as conducted by Christ and His apostles; looking less to the laws of the land and more to the law of God; depending less on the arm of flesh and more on the aids of the spirit; let us tell our people that the Sabbath was made for man, made to meet his physical, his mental, and his spiritual wants.

1. Your committee would further request that the Synod would enjoin on its ministers under its care the duty of preaching at least once on the subject of the Sabbath during the coming year.

2. That the special attention of the heads of families should be drawn to the importance of seeing that the young are taught to keep the Sabbath as God has commanded it to be kept.

WHO WAS DIVES?

It is a puzzling matter, remarks the *Sunday School Times*, to find no mention in the Bible of a well-known Bible character. It make one wonder how such a name came to be so generally familiar, with no basis of fact beneath it. A reader asks for information on such a point. He says:

"Will you please oblige me, and perhaps many more who have been misinformed in younger days, why the name 'Dives' is given to the 'certain rich man' in Luke xvi. 19-31? His name is not given in the Bible. I have been somewhat stirred up about this name, for so many ministers call him 'Dives.' Where do they get their knowledge?"

"Dives" is not a proper noun. It is simply the Latin word for "rich," and in the text of the Vulgate, or Latin Bible, it appears where the man's name might have been. It is hardly to be wondered at that those who were telling the story wanted to designate the two persons by personal names. Indeed, it has been suggested that the term "Lazarus" also was intended rather as a description than as a personal name. "Lazarus" was a common abbreviation of "El-ezer," meaning "God helps." The parable represents two men,—one who felt that he could help himself, and the other who had to depend on God to help him. It would be quite natural therefore, to personify these two characters, after the manner of Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," as, say, Mr. Help-Himself, and Mr. Left-to-God-to-Help. As early as Chaucer, the two names appear over against each other in English as "Lazarus and Dives"; and "Dives" was a familiar character, in the old "mystery" plays.

An old Scotch lady who had no relish for modern church music was expressing her dislike to the singing of an anthem in her own church one day, when a neighbor said:

"Why, that is a very old anthem! David sang that anthem to Saul."

To this the old lady replied:

"Weel, weel! I noo for the first time understand why Saul threw his javelin at David when the lad sang for him."

*Report of the Committee of the Synod of Hamilton and London on Sabbath Observance, presented at its late meeting in Woodstock by the Rev. Samuel Lyle, D.D., and published by request.