

have never known the unsaved to be more willing to hear the gospel. They do not appreciate philosophy, and they spurn with contempt our fine-spun theories, but they hear gladly the word of the Lord. They may not always receive it, but our responsibility ends with a faithful presentation of it.

III. A LOOK IN UPON THE FORCES. If God is ready and the lost are ready, may we be found faithful.

THE FIRST STEP.—In every practical work there is a first step, and now, starting with a look within, there is one of supreme importance. How often, as ministers, we have complained of the coldness of the church! We have felt that we had preached earnestly, and that our prayers had been faithfully offered; but the heavens were brass, and the hearts before us like stones for hardness. The trouble was, we had not seen the darkness of our own hearts. Our own spirits were unbroken and so we failed. Before the farmer can sow the seed, he must "break up the fallow ground." Every minister must begin with himself, if he would move others. It was said of the Macedonians "They first gave their own selves to the Lord." Have you tried and failed? You may have cherished some enmity against another. "Take ye away the stone." Your desire for a revival may have been selfish, to build up your own church that you might add to your own reputation; when the glory of God should have been your aim. It is always to be remembered that the divine power is never bestowed that we may consume it upon our own lusts.

One of the most successful of evangelistic pastors relates his experience:

"I devoted an entire week of prayer to a preparation of my own heart and life. I wanted to be thoroughly humbled and emptied of self. I wanted to press upon the church and the world the claims of God. In pleading with Him for others I would obey His command: 'Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord' (Isa. i. 13). On Monday I considered the infinitely holy character of God. By this I was greatly awed. On Tuesday I considered my

own sins in His presence, my pride, my ambition, my self-seeking. On Wednesday I considered His kindness to me, my family, and my church. I was amazed at His munificence. I was abased at my own unthankfulness. On Thursday I asked myself: 'Why do you want a revival? Is it for your own glory or for His?' On Friday I was prepared, as never before, to look to Jesus. I confessed and loathed my sin. 'I looked upon Him whom I had pierced and I mourned for Him' (Zach. i. 10). I then laid myself upon His altar to do or to suffer His will. With great confidence I sought His spirit. Each evening I poured out my thoughts of the day to my people, and the revival was upon us with increasing power daily."

What could be better than this for every pastor? What a wave of blessing would sweep over our land as a result!

There must also be concern for the lost, on the part of the ministers of Christ, amounting even to an agony. An honored minister confirms this when he says:

"On one occasion I felt that Jesus was passing by, and that we were to have no blessing. I went to the church crying, 'Only, only, only from God!' During the service I scarcely looked at the people. I felt that whether we were to have a revival or not was to be settled in heaven. I felt that I was taking leave of some of my people forever. I came near fainting as I preached. Of the one hundred converted in that revival, between forty and fifty were converted on that day."

Dr. Edward Payson used to say: "I never feel like saying a word to sinners until I have a broken heart myself." Dr. Lyman Beecher said: "I never had a revival without first having a tussle with myself, the church, and the Devil."

Oh! for an outpouring of God's Spirit upon those of us who preach the gospel! Oh! for sleepless nights such as Brainerd had! Oh! for times of agony such as Knox had! Oh! for a concern for the lost like that of our own Lord himself! Then not all the indifference of the church could stand before us, and not all the sin of the world could for a moment hinder us.