

of adoption. We are living in an age of *intellectuality*. Investigations and speculations are rife all around us. We would not deery these. The truth never suffers by being scanned. *Souls*, however, may suffer by microscopic searchings, and the peril of souls may be forgotten in effort to be wise above what is written. The great business of the preacher is to *preach the gospel*. The great business of the church is to *win souls to Christ*. *Unconcern* along these lines is an evidence of *sleep*.

3. A *sleeping church* is UNRESPONSIVE.

God has many ways of making his will known to his children, such as in the preaching of the Word, in the movings of his providence, and in the impressions of his Spirit. In these ways, and in many others, the divine summons comes to be and endure and do—sometimes in effort for self, and sometimes in effort for others. The summons is heard; but, half asleep and half awake, it comes as only some strange sound in a troubled dream; does not *move men* or arouse them to a full consciousness of personal or church responsibility. There is more or less of conviction as to privilege and duty. It is not possible to be utterly indifferent; but few, if any, in this *sleeping church really wake up* so as to recognize the voice of God or see things as they are in their significance and value. Hence there is no quick and resolute response.

The word may be preached in all earnestness and fidelity. The great issues of life and death may be plainly set forth by him who ministers in holy things. Providences may be impressive and even alarming. The divine Spirit may at times so deal with duty and destiny as to awaken in the soul a sense of uneasiness, but the pleading, the providence, and the Spirit's power may pass unheeded.

There is never sufficient waking to arouse and enthruse. Things are allowed to "take their course." If godliness results, all well; if not, then

equally well! If souls are converted, all well; if not, no special responsibility is felt. The church falls back upon the doctrine of divine sovereignty or on the decrees, or on the often misinterpreted passage about God having "set times to favor Sion." Thus the months and often the years go by with no advance for the cause of truth and righteousness, as committal to the care of this *unresponsive church*.

I merely suggest,

4. That a *sleeping church* is INACTIVE. This condition is the natural and inevitable result of characteristics already considered. When a church is *unappreciative, unconcerned, and unresponsive*, it cannot be other than *inactive* along distinctively Christian lines. It may make a great noise, may thrust itself on the attention of the community, may pay its preacher a large salary, may be extravagant in its provision for music, and may keep things in a general stirred-up condition, but it will not engage in thoroughly Christian activities; will undertake no really self-sacrificing work for the poor and the neglected, will exercise little watch-care over its members, and will scarcely interest itself at all in the evangelization of this lost world.

Sleep sometimes can be overcome only by exertion. The whip and spur are often in demand. Work will wake up and keep awake. Sleep leaves men motionless only as there is involuntary movement. We keep our eyes open by keeping on the wing. We warm our hearts by seeking to warm other hearts. No better counsel could be given a *sleeping church* than to be *up and doing*. Brave exertion will aid in overcoming lethargy.

Am I as a pastor *asleep*?

Am I as a church member *asleep*?

Is the church to which I belong *asleep*?

The world around is *awake*. The years fly. The end is fast approaching. Souls are going down to death because neglected by the church. Per-