

that Jesus loves them wherever they stray'—that they keep on wandering and straying and singing about it year in and year out, without seeming to get anywhere in particular. I have also noticed, that holiness of heart is attained, not by getting a little more religion; not by drawing a little nearer to God; nor by having their spiritual strength renewed; but by seeking it by faith, as a definite experience." Those persons are never long without the full grace of Christ, whose personal consecration is complete and entire under his intercessory prayer, "Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth," John xvii. 17. Here now we have the means of special favour, divinely set forth to the desired end. The Word of God is the sword of the spirit—the only soul seed that is incorruptible—and the best means of ministering the grace of Christ to the cure of fallen men.—1 Peter i. 23, 25. And he that winneth souls is wise. And where is the place of special services in gospel work?

*First and Locally.*—The special of Pentecost was holden in an upper room, an apostolic *sanctum sanctorum*—Acts i. 13. St Peter held his special to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius.—Acts x. 22. Our blessed Saviour sent forth His disciples two and two, with assurance that where two or three gathered in His name, there in the midst He would be, Matt. xviii. 20. We thus learn that special services are to hold their place and sphere of usefulness and of dignity, in our Lord's communicable presence amid His worshipping assembly, and among all nations to the end of the gospel dispensation.—Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. And inasmuch as the visible church of Christ is the pillar and ground of the truth, then every good and perfect gift as it comes down from above, will surely find its base in Zion, and will receive its practical encouragement and development, from within the divinely regulated courts of the Lord—

To God's temple we repair,  
We love to meet and worship there.

*Second and Officially.*—Special services rank in importance, second only to the stated ministry of the gospel, for most obviously, the true special is a spiritual adjunct to the associate life, and regular ministrations of the working church.

The object of special services I take to be fourfold.

1. To glorify God by the more full and free iteration of His redeeming love through the atonement of the cross of Christ towards all men.

2. To quicken and confirm believers in the Christian life, and in the witness of the Holy Spirit, and in the practical needs of home and foreign missions.—Mal. iii. 16, 18, Rev. xiv. 6, 7.

3. To counsel the unsaved to flee to Christ for refuge, and so to escape the wrath to come.—John iii. 14, 17.

4. To advance the sons of faith, in scriptural knowledge concerning the coming millennial age, when our

Lord shall reign with His church triumphant in the new heaven and new earth of the world to come.—2 Peter iii. 11, 15, Rev. xxi. 1, 5.—xxii. 20, 21.

The clear apprehension of the true object of a revival is an important element in success, and special services when devoid of the crown that is prospectively promised to the finally glorified, seem to resemble some extensive building foundation, that is destitute of floors, rooms, roof, fields and gardens.—John xvi. 12, 13, Rev. iii. 11, 13. The best time for holding special services is when the Holy Spirit indicates His will by having quickened the spiritual consciousness of the Lord's people, and inspired some marked awakening in affairs of the soul.

When earnest desire for the reign of righteousness prevails, then action should implead the Holy Spirit to convince men of sin, righteousness and of judgment to come.—John xvi. 8, 14. Dear brethren—"The Lord is at hand, and the people perish for lack of gospel knowledge." Let us then pray for qualifying favour and divine power to co-work with God, for lo, "the day goeth away, and the shadows of the (gospel) evening are even now lengthened out," Jer. vi. 4, Mark xiii. 34, 37. Is it not high time to awake from comatose dreams? Oh, what is the new covenant measure of our personal and denominational zeal, in the all-important work of human redemption? Are we zealously affected towards God and mankind? Are we observant of the great need of special services in every branch of our Congregational order. Are we all aglow with the redeeming spirit of Christ? Is it not our special work to invite and win souls to the divine Son of God? Think and sound the solemn warning!—"Except ye believe I am He," said Jesus, "ye shall all likewise perish in your sins!"—Luke xiii. 3. Ezekiel xxxiii. 1, 7.

#### HOW MAY WE BEST CONDUCT SPECIAL RELIGIOUS SERVICES?

With permission, I will speak from observation of over forty years, during which period I have been privileged of God to participate in some 125 seasons of special services—many of them notable visitations of divine grace—and none were devoid of memorable tokens of the redeeming power of Christ. To my view, brethren, the best conducted specials have been scriptural, simple and direct efforts, to bring enquirers under the power of the Holy Spirit, who is the one author and director of all acceptable worship. Am I asked—how may we assure the presidency of the Holy Spirit? The officiating minister and his co-workers will need with single eye and prayerful heart, to watch the spirit of each special session, with ready intent to counsel and consecrate its nearer approach towards the Divine Mediator upon His upper sanctuary throne.—Luke xi. 13, Heb. ix. 14, 15. "Quench not the spirit." Promote with gentleness the unity of