

church. What are some of its characteristics?

1. *A sleeping church is UNAPPRECIATIVE.*

It is a great privilege, as well as a great honor, for a body of believers to have Christian sacraments and ordinances lodged in their keeping.

As no *soul*, however, has ever yet fully compassed the glory of adoption, so no *church* ever yet has fully measured its privileges in *possessing* the sacraments and ordinances for personal use and for redeeming agency. The Sabbath, the meeting-house, the preached word, the pastoral work, the kindly sympathies and sacred ministries of a Christian organization—*these are above all price*. Yet they may be and often are lightly esteemed, their *cost* considered far greater than their *real worth*!

Whenever a church comes to regard Sabbath worship as a matter of convenience or of preference, the preacher as a kind of respectable appendage to society, the prayer-meeting as a gathering good enough for old men and women but of little consequence for such as are in active business or have social connections of a satisfying kind, souls around as not of sufficient concern to command personal appeal or attention, the whole matter of Christian worship and work as of minor importance—when this condition of things exists, *then the church may be said to be ASLEEP*, if not in the actual *embrace of death*.

There may be a few earnest, anxious ones among the membership, but they are weary and hopeless. The stupefying process has gone on until religion seems of comparatively small account, until public worship is irregularly and unfeelingly attended, until the Christian hope has little power to inspire or cheer, until sermon and song are gauged by their pleasurable excitings, and few, if any, ever speak of their inheritance as heirs of glory.

There may be frequent and heated

discussion in the church regarding politics, temperance, town affairs and forms of worship, but no prayerful planning for spiritual prosperity, no large estimate of heirship in the kingdom. Divided in affection and dead to all these things of Christ, the privileges of the gospel are unprized and unappreciated.

2. *A sleeping church is UNCONCERNED.*

By this I mean has little sense of responsibility for the fulfilling of its mission as an illustration of godliness or as an evangelizing agency in the earth. It may be considered respectable and indeed essential for the church to exist, and for the public worship of God to be maintained. There may be a commendable and even conspicuous pride in such preaching and singing and surroundings as shall attract. There may be worldly wisdom in the management of all business affairs. The church may become a "mutual admiration society," may give liberally for Sabbath entertainment, may make much of suppers and social gatherings, yet may have small concern for the growth in grace and the sanctification of its members, and put forth little effort for the salvation of unsaved souls around.

These are symptoms of a *sleeping church*; and they are the result either of a low conception of the danger of souls out of Christ, or of a low estimate of the advantages of being born again, or may have developed because of a type of religion so intellectual as to make little impression on the heart. We may attach small importance to experiences which are merely emotional, but any true conception of the condition from which Christ delivers, and to which he exalts, will *move* men to testimonies and endeavors which cannot escape observation.

One great need of this land and age with Christians is a vital conception of man's *lost condition* out of Christ, and a larger conception of the glory