

LETTERS OF INTEREST.

Indiana.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: – I feel that I owe you an apology for my long silence, and wish to say that it has been more carelessness on my part than anything else. I have felt less the necessity of writing you often since others of our company have written, and in this way you heard from us, and we from you.

We have just had a week of meetings: meeting every evening for counsel, prayer and song, in which all were benefited who attended, and this included nearly all our number, though some were kept away through sickness and other causes over which they had no control. We all felt the need of a closer walk with our dear Lord, and to this end sought a deeper work of grace in our hearts, and the Lord responded to our petitions by meeting with us and granting to all that sweet subtle communion which every true child of God has experienced and yet cannot describe. I can see the benefits of the meetings already in the increased zeal of those who attended. Some are suggesting that we hold a series of public meetings, and it looks just now as though the way would open up for a series of meetings in Pool's Hall, about 1 1/2 miles east of here.

The churches in Indianapolis are making a special effort now to arouse a fresh interest in religious things. The ministers all seem to realize their spiritual deadness, which has come (as one of them expressed it to me) like a mighty wave over all the churches. I attended the meeting of the Indianapolis Ministerial association the 1st Monday of this month. I noticed by the papers that the subject for discussion was, "Is there a lack of spiritual life in the churches?" and what are the causes? and the remedy? The gentlemen who had the first part of the subject did not even debate the subject but spent the first four minutes of ten allotted to him in reading and commenting on statistics which

might well arouse them to greater energy. The next speaker was Pastor of the 1st Presbyterian Church, and said among other things that the increase for the year just closed in four of the leading Presbyterian churches of the city was less than 4 per cent. and that in 1600 (if I remember rightly) of the Presbyterian churches of the country there were no accessions whatever. A dark picture, surely, to all those who believe that all efforts for the salvation of the race will end with this age.

This same speaker mentioned the fact that he had attended Moody's meetings in New York about 20 years ago and that then the Word seemed to go out with power and take hold of the people, especially church people. But that in Moody's recent meetings, which he had attended also, there seemed to be a total lack of power, for which he was unable to account.

The gentleman who took the next phase of the subject, *i.e.*, "What are the causes of this deadness?" after naming various causes, mentioned as perhaps the principal cause a tendency among ministers to speculate on various subjects "thereby dividing the thought and confusing the minds of their audience." He mentioned as a particularly detrimental subject of speculation, "The Second Coming of Christ," and then added by way of apology "that he did not wish to criticise those who had views upon this subject, as doubtless some present did, but as for himself he had no views at all." Poor "blind leader of the blind!" Had he the least conception of the depth of shame involved in such a confession as this, falling from the lips of a so-called minister of the gospel, he would surely bow his head in shame. But no, as Paul puts it, he seemed to "glory in his shame;" and not a minister present raised his voice in rebuke of such shameful ignorance. The gentleman who took up the last division of the subject, whose business it was to suggest a remedy for existing evils in the church, was a "Holiness man" and, of course, suggested a baptism of the "Holy Ghost." Some seemed to coincide with this view and feel their own deep needs, while others sleepily listened and seemed to think that everything was in a fairly

prosperous way, though none of them were very hilariously jubilant. Surely, "the wisdom of her wise men shall perish."

The last speaker mentioned the fact that he too had been present at Moody's meetings in New York 20 years ago, and that he had recently heard from friends in the East who attributed Moody's lack of power to his speculations as to the Second Coming of Christ. Is it not significant that two out of three speakers gave as the most potent factor in producing this "spiritual deadness" and "lack of power" the agitation of the second coming of our Lord? I think it is. It seems to be an index showing how unpopular this subject is among the D.Ds. It seemed so queer to me: everybody addressed every other body as Doctor. I could not help thinking how ridiculous it would sound to say, "Doctor Peter," and what the impetuous old fisherman would have thought. I really felt sorry for these men. But as I witnessed their anxiety and seeming helplessness, I felt like suggesting that preaching the gospel would be an experiment worth trying at least as a remedy for the deadness of their churches.

With Christian love, in which Sister Owen joins, to yourself and Sister Russell, I am as ever,

Yours in our dear Redeemer,

C. A. OWEN.

Ohio.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: – We have had some very peculiar experiences of late. We have been holding public meetings (lectures from the chart), and announced them in the papers. At our first meeting a lady attended (a stranger) and at the next brought along four more. After attending four meetings they desired us to fill an appointment at one of their homes, which I did. The room was well filled; subject, "The Church, and Her Steps to Glory;" and they all expressed themselves as well pleased, and have asked for regular meetings.

This is all a great surprise to us. We learned that there are some fifteen or twenty, nearly all women, who have come out of the churches and are holding meetings among themselves. No objections have been offered to any of our views, but many intelligent questions were asked; reading matter was acceptable, and we distributed a lot of tracts.

Your brother in Christ,

S. J. ARNOLD.
