

## Quarterly Meetings

By R. H. Nicholson

"Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much more as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:25).

The exhortation in the text, no doubt, had a local application as well as a prophetic warning by the words, "and so much more as ye see the day approaching." The admonition urges believers of all ages to be benefited by the social board and Christian necessity, fellowship, as well as pointing to the day when this Christian benefit would be needed more than any time in the past, but conditions would prevail until it might be sadly neglected.

Blessings received from such spiritual gatherings as prayer meetings, regular church services, as well the larger conventions and camp meetings would be difficult to estimate. However, God knew their value to man, and from the time He called out His people, Israel, He taught them to observe days and feasts which were certainly a means to enrich the life of the individual as well as solidify the nation in the worship of God.

The interest, stimulated by such gatherings, has sent many believers back to their home churches with a fire and an enthusiasm that has fanned the local work to a flame. Perhaps we could mention four of the contributions a union meeting makes to the local work.

First, it guards against selfishness. We are living in a day of self seeking and greed, even a Christian needs to watch lest he unconsciously absorbs this selfish spirit. We may have a strong missionary program, but if we overlook the needs near at hand while we gaze at distant fields, sooner or later these two will grow dim by the obstacle of an enlarged self.

Second, it is a source of encouragement. Often it has been the testimony, "I came to these meetings, discouraged, down in spirit, but what an uplift I have felt in my soul. If others can conquer in like circumstances as mine, then by God's grace I can be an overcomer too." Or, "I feel ashamed of my petty problems since seeing how God has undertaken for others in greater difficulties." Still further, "The meetings have been such a source of inspiration to me," says a glowing person, "I'm going back home to work for the Lord in a new way." We could multiply these common breathings of uplifted spirits and grant that their number will be enlarged in this day when men's hearts are failing them for fear.

Third, an enlarged vision. Any local church is liable to find itself in a rut as it follows its own way of doing things. And this rut can grow extremely narrow in an isolated location. However, the sharing of projects, and the Christian challenge, even on a district, can miraculously change the outlook and transform the shrinking process to an expansion program.

Fourth, a higher tone of worship. What is it? Mob psychology? Emotionalism? Release? Or whatever—it produces results. Let a group of God's people get together in holy expectation and God will not disappoint His children. Two thousand years ago it brought a Pentecost, and repeatedly since that time the refreshing breezes of the Spirit have blown away the dust of strain, monotony and selfishness until the smothered coals flare into a

flame because God has honoured His united people:

Our Quarterly Meetings used to be the type of meeting we have been writing about. The holiness people flocked together if they had to come on foot, buckboard, horse and sleigh, train, boat or whatever. They thought not so much of what they should eat, or wear, or sleep but to meet together in God's presence. But often of late instead of Quarterly Meetings, it has been in some places "cancelled meetings" or semi-annual meetings. We are not criticizing. Circumstances and locations may demand some changes. But are we letting a time of spiritual blessing slip by or are we just letting a faithful old horse die slowly rather than disposing of it quickly due to the fact it is linked somehow to religious romance of the past?

Our arguments against this past source of blessing are: too busy a schedule with our increased number of meetings; the responsibility of the local work due to competition; or the inconvenience of travel for something that produces so small results.

We are in sympathy with the above complaints, but could we give "Old Faithful" a real honest chance this March. Let's go to Quarterly Meeting, all of us, expecting God's blessing on our gathering, be willing to sacrifice for Jesus' sake and be prepared to carry some real, spiritual results back to our home churches?

## Radiant Christians

A minister of one of the larger denominations was discussing some of the problems of the present-day church with a few of his fellow ministers in a midwest city. He said, "Present-day Christians have lost radiance." Yes, it was a striking statement, coming from one whom we would consider rather formal and unappreciative of our position and unsympathetic with the doctrine of holiness. And yet he knew of a day when there were "radiant Christians."

Radiant Christians have always been the best advertisements of the Christian religion the world has ever had. Radiant Christians are active; they are happy; they have vision and zeal and faith; they are both inspired and inspiring; they have a passion and are compassionate; they are tireless even in their weariness; they are unafraid in the very midst of danger; and they are cheerful and optimistic and kind. It is to the radiant Christian that the sick will come for comfort; and to him comes the sinner who would find a sympathetic listener and one to pray with him that he might be forgiven. It is the radiant Christian upon whom the pastor will place responsibility, for he will be dependable and trustworthy.

Lord, give us radiant Christians. We have every other kind: those who keep the Discipline; those who know our doctrines and would fight for them; those who are glad to sit on important committees; and those who are ready with suggestions and advice; but we are impotent because we have too little radiance. Our knowledge of law and discipline and doctrine is not catching. Our testimonies are positive but without conviction-producing qualities, because we have lost the glow, the enthusiasm, the radiance. God give us more radiant Christians.—Ralph J. Milton, in *The Free Methodist*.

## Songs In The Cabin

In the "Pilgrim Holiness Advocate"

The captain and his swearing mate had but one solitary passenger. How to pass the evening pleasantly was the question.

The passenger "did not smoke," so the captain's choice cigar was of no avail; and he "never played cards," so the greasy pack was thrust aside reluctantly by Joe, who depended upon these for amusement when off duty. There was a prospect of a dull evening.

"I heard you humming a song on deck," Joe said. "We haven't heard a song for months. Give us a stave or two, stranger."

The captain said it would be "good to hear music again."

"You wouldn't like what I sing, friends," said the stranger doubtfully. "I do not know any gay songs to make you laugh."

As they urged him, the stranger, in a rich tenor, began to sing. His "songs" were new and full of meaning to Joe: "My Days are Swiftly Gliding By;" and "Joy to the World, the Lord is Come." Joe called that "a rouser, if 'twas pious."

Then—

"Eternal Father, strong to save,  
Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,  
Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep  
Its own appointed limits keep,  
Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee  
For those in peril on the sea!"

"I've known what that was," said Joe. The way was opened then for "Jesus, Lover of My Soul."

There was a wonderful distinctiveness and pathos in the stranger's voice, and the two men sat spell-bound. No such sentiments had ever been heard there. At its close there was a meaningful silence.

"I like to sing that on the water," said their guest; "for many a sailor has gone down with those words on his lips. Pale lips can speak brave words if Jesus has forgiven one's sins. When we meet death, friends, we need something besides earthly comfort."

The mate drew his sleeve across his eyes, as he muttered, "You're right, stranger. I've knowed one or two myself. I was glad they had something to ease 'em. I don't mind hearing another of your songs."

So "Rock of Ages" filled the cabin next. The mate dropped his head. The captain abruptly left.

"I knowed he couldn't stand them verses long," said the mate, drawing close to the stranger. "His woman used to sing them songs, and go to meetin'. He couldn't stop her nohow. They say she had tough times with him. But he can't fret her any more. Cap'n's wife's dead—gone to heaven, if there is one. He's never happy since; and no wonder."

"We must not judge others," said the stranger. "Whenever you take God's name in vain, you grieve your dearest friend—"

"He's no friend o' mine," interrupted Joe, "or He wouldn't let me have such hard rubs. Been knocked about the world and here I am, with no home, and nothing ahead for old age. Can't say I've much reason to think Him my friend."

"Not so fast," said the stranger earnestly. "Have you been in no perils by land or sea?"

"Ay!" cried Joe. "I've seen fearful storms. Been shipwrecked several times. There were only two of us left when the White Gull went down. Once we were took with the plague in

(Cont'd next Page, Col. 3)