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Current Events

The Late War [So we have hitherto designated the Civil War of 1861-65, but it must now yield that title to the war for the liberation of Cuba, just as the youngest child in a family ceases to be called "the baby" when there cometh a younger than he. "Short, sharp, and decisive," it was foretold that the war for our Union *should be*; short, sharp, and decisive the war for free Cuba has, indeed, been—four months instead of four years.

Free Cuba This was the aspiration of Cuban patriots through long years of patient and strenuous struggle. At length a strong and generous neighbor nation declared that the people of Cuba of right ought to be free and independent. All the world is amazed at the rapidity with which it was made so. It is the Lord's marvelous doing. To give that freed people a free and stable government, which shall conserve President McKinley says in his message: "It is our duty to assist them to form a government which shall be free and independent, thus realizing the best aspirations of the Cuban people." God grant to our statesmen wisdom as effective and sufficient as was the valor of our army and navy. Will not all Christendom make that a fervent petition in the coming week of prayer?

Other Islands The belligerent activity necessary to liberate Cuba from the tyranny of Spain most unexpectedly brought others of her islands under our nation's control. The people of Porto Rico not only made no resistance to our army and navy, but joyfully welcomed them as deliverers. Farther away, in the Pacific Ocean, a thousand or more islands containing seven or eight millions of people, have come under our nation's control, and our Government has

the responsibility of deciding what shall be done with them. We are not to discuss that question here, but we exhort our readers to consider prayerfully what the question involves. "What do we want of those islands?" is not the whole question. "What is the best we can do for the people of those islands?" appeals as properly to our conscience as does the other to our interest. What does God mean by laying these naked foundlings at our door? We attempt not to answer this question here. But we plead for prayerful as well as candid consideration of it. Neither the lust of conquest on the one hand, nor selfish neglect of feebler peoples needing our help, and asking for our protection on the other, can be pleasing to Him whom Dr. Cox once eloquently called "JEHOVAH STATOR" of our Republic. Let it not be assumed that we can not avoid one of those courses without taking the other. Whatever shall be made clear as the path of national duty must be the path of national safety and welfare.

Our Wider Responsibility When our country was passing through the awful struggles of our civil war, John Bright was our steadfast British friend and champion. During one of his remarkable speeches in the House of Commons he uttered this significant sentence: "Mr. Speaker, if our kinsfolk on the other side of the Atlantic settle their civil war satisfactorily and get back together in peace, in forty years there will not be a gun fired in the world without their consent." That prophecy then seemed presumptuous. But the last six months have made such changes among the nations that the realization of Mr. Bright's prediction seems almost accomplished. Our people have come together in peace. The men of the North and the men of the South have volunteered under the same flag and worn the same uniform, and fought shoulder to shoulder in Cuba and

Kindle Your Own Fire

By Theodore L. Cuyler, D.D.

The last annual reports of both the Presbyterian and Methodist denominations reveal the painful fact that the actual increase of the number of their church members has been very small. As those two are among the leading evangelical churches of our country, the fact of so small an increase has awakened much solicitude, and called forth several attempted explanations. It may not be presumptuous for me to offer one or two suggestions in regard to the comparative paucity of conversions. The sad prevalence of worldliness in too many churches, the growth of "materialism," the lowering of Sabbath observance, and the falling off of attendance on Sabbath worship all have their influence.

But it is a fair question to ask—is there not too much *periodical* religion in the churches? The idea has become too prevalent that conversions are mainly—if not entirely—to be expected during what is commonly known as a "revival." Instead of preaching and praying and working for the conversion of souls *all the time*, the ministers and church officers come to think that a long drought may be endured with the hope that it will be followed by a bountiful shower of spiritual blessings. This spasmodic style of religious work is most unhealthy. If a church has got terribly run down, its only hope may be in a genuine "revival." But why should any church voluntarily consent to go through an alternation of cold and heat, of indolence and zeal, of barrenness and brief harvests? Richard Baxter never had any revivals in his famous church at Kidderminster; and for the very good reason that he and his people never had any season of spiritual stupidity to be revived from. Preaching for souls was continual—praying for souls was continual—and conversion of souls was continuous. The gift of the Holy Spirit is not a fitful matter; the promises do not go by any almanac; "Lo, I am with you *always*" means that Jesus Christ agrees to sustain and bless those who are *always* at work for Him. Those are the wise pastors and churches who are perpetually laboring for and expecting the conversion of sinners. Every year is a "bearing year," and every communion season a time of ingathering. What would we think of a husband

who only loved his wife, or a mother who only trained her children, once or twice a year? Brethren, let us be done with *periodicity* in saving souls!

A second mistake that prevails in too many churches is that if sinners are to be converted, somebody else than the pastor and the "live" Christians in his flock is to do it. "Union meetings" with neighboring churches are often resorted to, as if the getting together of several cold bodies would generate spiritual heat! Personal responsibility is diluted and drowned out in the mixed assembly. I am heartily in favor of neighboring churches co-operating in many philanthropic labors in a community; but when it comes to awakening and leading sinners to Jesus, every church would better *kindle its own fire*, face its own responsibility, and do its own work. During my forty-four years of pastoral life I once consented to unite with two neighboring churches, and we invited a *then* eminent evangelist to conduct a series of union services; but the results were not remarkable.

There are a few wise, discreet, humble-minded and spirit-aided evangelists in this world—of whom my beloved Brother Moody is the chief. But nobody is more strenuous than Mr. Moody that every minister should sow his own seed and reap his own harvest. The surest way to hamstring any pastor is to make him believe that his only business is to make sermons, make visits, and officiate at funerals and weddings; but if sinners are to be led to Christ some one else must be sent for to do it! Paul never taught Timothy such pestilent nonsense. Since I have alluded to my own experience let me say that in all the seasons of the most abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the largest ingathering of converts, my church have done their own work, and the only help I ever sought was an occasional sermon from some neighboring zealous pastor. Brethren, if you want power, seek the power from on high! Don't send for a man; *go straight to God!* The only true fire is what the Holy Spirit kindles; and just as sure as you co-operate with Him the fire will be kindled.