

## WHY SO FEW REVIVALS

C. G. Finney

(The following statements, giving a few of the reasons why there are so few real Holy Ghost revivals, although made a number of years ago by Mr. Finney, are just as applicable today, as when they were uttered.)

I am rejoiced to perceive that the inquiry is beginning to agitate the Church, "Why are there not more revivals?" as well as, "Why is their character so changed?" The inquiry is also made, "What can be done to promote them, and to promote them under a desirable and permanent type?" The circumstances of the Church, the decline of revivals, and the whole aspect of the Christian world, demand a consideration of these questions.

I have seen in the public papers various reasons assigned for this declension of revivals, this absence of revival influence, this powerless preaching of the Gospel.

Now it does appear to me that we who are ministers, instead of looking abroad and searching for the fundamental difficulty beyond and out of ourselves, should see that whatever else may be an occasion of the great falling off and decline in revivals, our own spiritual state is certainly one, if not the primary and fundamental reason for the decline. Want of personal holiness, unction, power of prayer and preaching the Word, the want of holy living and consecration to the work of self-denial, and energetic effort in the ministry—these no doubt, are the principal reasons why revivals are so few and far between, and of so superficial character as at the present day.

The fact is, ministers have turned aside, in a great degree, to vain jangling, have given up their attention to church politics, church government, and ecclesiastical proceedings of various kinds. The ministers have been diverted to an alarming and most injurious extent, from promoting revivals of religion.

I appeal to you, my brethren, of all denominations, if it not a fact in your own experience and observation, that ministers have to a great and alarming extent suffered themselves to be diverted from the direct work of promoting the **conversion of sinners and sanctification of the Church.** This is too notorious a fact to need any proof. The journals of the day, the movements of ecclesiastical bodies, the doctrinal collisions, and—shall I say?—ambitious projects, that have come up and figured before the public within the last few years, bare no dubious testimony to the fact that the great mass of ministers are turned aside from promoting revivals.

Until the leaders enter into the work, until the ministry are baptized with the Holy Spirit, until we are awake and in the field with our armor on, and our souls anointed with the Holy Spirit, it certainly ill becomes us to be looking around at a distance for the cause of the decline of revivals.

I have no doubt that here are many causes, but this is the first, the greatest, the most God-dishonoring of all—that the ministry are not in the work, that the shepherds have in a measure forsaken

their flocks; that is, they are not leading them into the green pastures and beside the still waters, are not themselves so anointed and full of faith and power as to be instrumental in leading the Church into the field for the promotion of revivals.

There has been so manifest and so lamentable a falling off from a revival spirit among the ministers of Christ as to become a matter of general, if not universal observation.

Now dearly beloved brethren, unless there is a spirit of revival in the ministry, it is in vain to expect it in the Church. The proper place for the shepherd is before or in advance of the sheep. The sheep will follow him whithersoever he goes; but if he attempt to drive them before him, he will scatter them in every direction. If the shepherd fall away from a revival spirit, the sheep will naturally decline also. If he advances in the work of the Lord, they will almost as a thing of course follow him.

The greatest of all difficulties in the way of the promotion of revivals has been a superficial work of grace in the hearts of many of the ministers themselves. I cannot believe it to be otherwise than a general truth, that if the ministry are baptized with the Holy Spirit, and deeply anointed with the Holy Spirit, and deeply anointed with the revival influence, so the Church will be—"Like priest like people."—Holiness Banner.

## THE BIBLE THE BEST BOOK FOR GIRLS AND BOYS TO READ

The first book ever printed was the Bible, and since the invention of printing book-makers have spent a large fraction of their time in producing Bibles, and books about the Bible. This book is the religious guide of nearly one-third of the human race.

We may call it The Book of Books. In fact, we may call this unique book a library in itself, for it is really composed of sixty-six different books, bound together not merely by binders' thread, but by a spiritual and intellectual unity.

Our greatest writers have been they who best knew their Bibles. John Bunyan read almost no other book, and he wrote the book, "Pilgrim's Progress," of which more copies have been printed than of any other book except the Bible itself. Macaulay says in one of his essays: "If everything else in our language should perish, the English Bible would suffice to show the whole extent of its beauty and power."

The reading of this book, which is without an equal, is sadly neglected by the girls and boys of today, the women and men of tomorrow. Books of far less importance are to a great degree taking its place.

How many of the girls and boys who attend our Sunday Schools read daily a chapter in the Bible, and learn, at least, one verse every day? Are we, as Sunday School teachers, doing our whole duty towards encouraging and kindly urging them to read and study the Bible more than the majority of them are doing?

The Bible declares about itself that it is a hidden treasure. So it is therefore worth while as well as profitable for

them to read the Scriptures carefully and repeatedly. The sacred Word tells us to **"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of Christ."** Thirsty souls with joy have drawn the water of life by its aid from the wells of salvation, and then with the Psalmist they can say, **"O how I love Thy law! It is my meditation all the day."**

It would be difficult to find any other book for children and young people more interesting than the Bible. A little girl about seven years of age, after listening with interest to the reading of some Bible stories paraphrased for children, said, with a sigh, "Yes, that is good; but I like the real Bible better." To those young people who are unfamiliar with the teachings and the diction of this Book of Books much that is best in English literature is as a sealed book. The language of the Bible is simple and direct, yet clothed with grace and loveliness; and its pages are strewn with the fair flowers of speech.

The Bible speaks to all nations in language so plain,  
That he who will read it, true wisdom may gain.

It tells us of One who is mighty to save,  
Who died on the cross, and arose from the grave,  
Who dwelleth on high in that holy abode,  
Where saints are uniting in praises to God.

Oh, who would neglect to read such a volume as this,  
That warns us from danger, and invites us to heavenly bliss?

—Hazel I. Botting in Free Methodist.

## SABBATH REGARD.

We are very much pleased to note the following clipping. It is a quotation from a speech from England's new prime minister, Mr. Ramsey MacDonald, and as such it should carry much weight. The Sabbath belongs to God and the individual or nation transgressing its provisions will suffer for it sooner or later.

"I am amazed at a great many of my friends saying that the old Scottish Sabbath was a burden. I would like to see a state of society, where every man and woman preferred the old Scottish Sabbath to the modern French one, because in that state of society you would have fine, solid, eternal foundations of character and self-command.

"Whether you have a Tory, Liberal or Labor government, you cannot do much with people who can do nothing but be amused by some one else or something else—people who have not in themselves the capacity to spend time with themselves, spend it profitably. We are losing the sense of human values; we are going far too much after superficialities."

Swearing has a bad kin. It goes with ignorance, cruelty, brutality and drunkenness and you can always tell a habit by the kind of company it keeps.

The three Hebrew children probably would never have seen the form of the Fourth if they had not gone through the fire.