

THE King's Highway

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness.

THE ORGAN OF THE

REFORMED BAPTISTS OF CANADA

Published Semi-Monthly at Moncton, N. B., by a
Committee of the Alliance.

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SUBSCRIPTION PRICE

Per Year, in Advance	\$1.50
Ministers, per year	1.00
Four Months' trial subscription40
Sample Copy	Free
United States Subscribers	1.75
Ministers, U. S. A.	1.25

SPECIAL NOTICE

All correspondence for the Highway should reach us before the 12th and 25th of each month. Address Rev. P. J. Trafton, 233 Aberdeen Street, Fredericton, N. B.

MONCTON, N. B., FEBRUARY 14, 1925

EDITORIAL

REVIVAL REQUISITES.

What a strange place to lose the book of the law of the Lord—in the house of the Lord! Yet God's Book has been lost in God's house in our own day. Many churches seem to have everything but the law of the Lord. But the revival began when the book was rediscovered and read. And may not the outstanding characteristic of the coming revival be the rediscovery of God's Word? The lifting of it up out of the wreck and rubbish of rationalistic Modernism, and restoring it to its place of supreme authority in the church of Christ? Hilkiah did not argue about the inspiration of the Book—he read it; and Shaphan the scribe read it before the king. And the Book itself did the rest! It caused the king to rend his clothes, and call the people to repentance. And if the ministers of this Continent would put all their books about the Bible aside for six months, and read the Bible alone, and let it speak for itself; such a revival would undoubtedly sweep the Continent as the world has never seen.

And again: The reading of the Book brought them to the heart of the Book—to the Passover, and salvation through the blood. It always does! From Genesis to Revelation, the Cross is the most conspicuous figure: "And there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept, and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem."

In Nineveh also, heathen city though it was, there was a great revival under the ministry of Evangelist Jonah. Poor Jonah had fallen into a sadly back-slidden state, or rather, into a very deep, down-fallen state; and God had to revive the preacher before he could revive a city. **And many of us who preach need to be restored to a recognition of the obligations of our commission.** The majority of preachers who preach the platitudes

of Modernism, do not so preach from conviction, nor as a result of intellectual difficulties with the Word of God. They may not be aware of it, but the fact is, they preach evolution because it is more palatable, both to themselves and their audience, than repentance.—If only their people would throw them overboard as did the mariners of the ship sailing from Joppa, it might be their salvation as it was Jonah's. In any event, we do well to pray for the fleeing Jonahs, that God, in His mercy, may give them "a whole of a time"—for then some Nineveh will soon be ablaze with revival fires.

America needs a ministerial revival. Jonah was providentially compelled to pray; and out of his praying came great preaching. There is perhaps nothing which the Church of Christ needs more today than a revival of ministerial courage. Some revivals have come from God's blessing upon great preaching; but we can never have great preaching on the way from Joppa to Tarshish. May God so revive all of us who preach, that we shall be like Jeremiah when he said, "His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay."

In New Testament times, the first revival was in Jerusalem at Pentecost. It was a real revival! The church, or the nucleus out of which the church was to be formed, had been very low. The only Christ they knew, for three dark days, was a dead Christ; and after His resurrection, following forty days of blessed fellowship, their only Christ was an absent Christ. It was hard to convince the world of the reality of a resurrection it had not witnessed, and of a living Christ whom they could not see. But that is still the task of the Christian Church: our message concerns the unseen. By what weight of scholarship, by what force of reasoning, by what use of human power of any kind, can we convince the world of the reality of an absent and unseen Christ?

The first disciples in those post-resurrection and pre-Pentecostal days—prayed. What a trite remark! What a commonplace! What waste of paper and ink to write that platitude again! Ah, but what is trite, or commonplace, or platitude? That they prayed? As a matter of fact, in our day, prayer is the rarest exercise of the Christian church. We hold prayer meetings—but they prayed; and, as in Old Testament times, God answered by fire. The glorified Lord demonstrated His sovereignty in the midst of His people, even over the hearts of the unregenerate: "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. . . Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." This was the first visitation sent by the Exalted One, Whom the angels described as "this same Jesus" in words which imply that He will be the same until and when He comes again.

The book of the Acts of the Apostles, being, in reality, the record of the acts of the Holy Ghost, records revivals as

commonplaces. In nineteen words the Holy Spirit records what we should write volumes to relate: "Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand." The truth is, revivals are commonplaces to the Holy Spirit; and if we but give Him right-of-way, revivals will become the blessed commonplaces of our experiences. Observe the striking way in which the New Testament relates the history of great revivals: "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." And again, "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." And yet again, "And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord." In this last instance, a whole town was saved; and the Holy Spirit tells the story in fifteen words. But read again: "Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord"—"But the word of God grew and multiplied." "And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed." And our gracious God still waits to visit us with like manifestations of His saving power.

Revivals of Post-Apostolic Days

I have thought it most profitable to cite instances of Biblical revivals; for here we have an absolutely reliable history of what God has done. But the history of the Church subsequent to the Apostolic era is replete with accounts of revivals of religion. Such revivals have not all borne the same characteristics. Just as the whole book of the law was lost until recovered by Hilkiah, so in the history of the church, certain aspects of truth have been forgotten, or certain doctrines have been denied, and God has visited His people by raising up men to reaffirm or re-emphasize the truth forgotten or neglected. Thus the Reformation was a rediscovery of the doctrine of justification by faith; the revival which gave birth to Methodism laid special emphasis upon personal religion as distinct from national religion; and professed to have but one aim, namely: "To spread scriptural holiness over the land." The revival of which Spurgeon's ministry was the centre, laid emphasis upon the truth that salvation is by grace alone, and upon the necessity of grace bearing fruit in a holy life; while the revival in which D. L. Moody was so largely the divine instrument, laid special stress upon personal evangelism. But all these and other movements had this characteristic in common, that revival meant a renewal of the soul's consciousness of God, of the soul's responsibility to God, of the sense of sin, and the certainty of judgment, of the efficacy of the clean-