

SILVER LAKE CAMP MEETING;
WILMINGTON, MASS.

Silver Lake Camp Meeting of the Evangelical Church, New England District, concluded its thirteenth session on Sunday evening, Aug. 5th. Our aggressive, resourceful and diplomatic presiding elder, Rev. Thomas Laite, who was the dominating human agency in this meeting, declares it to have been the best that has ever been held at Silver Lake both as to attendance and spiritual results.

This Campmeeting will be of special interest to readers of the Highway, because its Editor Rev. P. J. Trafton and Rev. H. S. Dow pastor at Hartland, were two of the special workers. Their co-laborer was Evangelist Rev. E. W. Petticord of Columbus Ohio, who had been at Silver Lake before, and whose recent ministry was greatly owned of God. We are glad to learn that there are prospects of Bro. Petticord being the Evangelist at Beulah next summer. We will congratulate the Reformed Baptists if they are able to secure such a man.

But the two New Brunswick men were also wonderfully blessed in their ministry at Silver Lake. They came in the fullness of the blessing and had a most appreciative and sympathetic hearing all the way through. We heard every sermon they preached but one, and truly God helped them to rightly divide the word of truth in the power and unction of the Holy Ghost. Many responded to their invitations to seek either pardon or purity. The Lowell daily Courier gave great publicity to the meetings and published daily numerous excerpts from the sermons of all the preachers.

The weather for the most part was ideal, but the last two days and up till noon of the last Sunday was intensely hot. But in spite of the high temperature the attendance on these closing days was splendid and the spiritual tide ran high. The last day A. M., Bro. Dow preached a most helpful sermon on "Building up Character" Evangelist Petticord was on in the afternoon, at which time the awful humidity was broken by a heavy thunder storm. The mercury fell 25 degrees in a few hours, but when the meeting closed the spiritual thermometer stood high. The sermon was on "Reproducing the Image of Christ". Many at the altar made high resolve to follow Christ more heroically and meekly than ever before.

Bro. Trafton came on for the closing sermon and indeed had unction and power in describing "The Great Salvation". All through the meetings there had been scarcely a barren service and it was blessed indeed to see the altar filled at the closing service. Needless to say these two brothers greatly endeared themselves to many hearts by their ministry of the word. Many former Provincials attended the Camp. The large evening and Sunday audiences were made up largely of those who were British born and have become a saving element in the domestic, social, religious and political life of New England. A prominent Baptist minister has said that if all the Provincial people were to leave the Protestant churches of Greater Boston, the churches would be greatly depleted and many of them would be compelled to close their doors."

As the one who took the initial step in suggesting an exchange of Campmeeting workers between the Reformed Baptist and Evangelicals, and after having enjoyed the spiritual uplift of Beulah Camp along with my presiding Elder, Rev. Thomas Laite and his Brother, Rev. Gilbert Laite and after enjoying the inspirational and effective ministry of Bros. Trafton and Dow, we

are convinced that God had set his seal of approval upon the arrangements, and although not severally may retain our denominational identity, yet we believe, as those professing the same faith and experience, we shall be bound together in the days to come, more strongly by the bonds of mutual faith and sympathy. Holiness is too big for a single denomination to corner. There is room enough for us all. May God help us as professors of the grace of perfect love, to exemplify and propagate the doctrine and experience with renewed zeal and effectiveness.

W. EDMUND SMITH

WHY SO FEW REVIVALS

Selected Notes from C. J. Finney.

Various reasons are assigned for the declension of revivals and the present, all-too-powerless preaching of the Gospel. Now it appears to me that we ministers, instead of searching for the 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 fundamental reason of this decline. Want of personal holiness, unction, power in prayer and in preaching the Word, 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 such superficial character at the present day.

My brethren, is 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? There are certain evidences which bear no dubious testimony to the fact that the great mass of ministers are turned aside from promoting revivals and the holiness and entire consecration of the Church. Oh, does it not become us to take this home, confess it, bewail it, and, first of all, understand that whatever else needs to be corrected and set right, we must ourselves repent and receive a new unction for the work? It is of no use for us to go abroad and search for reasons, while the principal one lies at our own door. Until the leaders enter into the work, until we, the ministers, are awake and in the field with our armor on, and our souls anointed with the Holy Spirit, it ill becomes us to be looking around at a distance for the cause of the decline of revivals.

I have no doubt that there are many contributing 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.

What shall we say, brethren? Are we not greatly at fault? Have not the ministry, to a great extent, lost the spirit of revivals? Is there not a great lack of unction and power among us? And have we not suffered ourselves to be greatly and criminally diverted from this great work?

If so, my dear brethren, shall we not return? Shall we not see our fault, confess it to the churches, to the world, and return, and in the name of our Lord, lift up our banner? Unless there is a spirit of revival in the ministry, it is vain to expect it in the Church. The proper place for the shepherd is in advance of the sheep. The sheep will follow him; but if he attempt to drive them, he will scatter them in every direction. If

the shepherd fall away from a revival spirit, the sheep will naturally decline also. If he advance in the work of the Lord, they will, almost as a thing of course, follow him.

My brethren, believe me, I speak not this censoriously, or in the spirit of fault-finding; it is the full and deliberate conviction of my mind—an opinion formed, not hastily, but from protracted observation and from an intimate acquaintance with great numbers of the ministers of Christ of different denominations. While the ministers of Christ are filled with the Spirit of God, the Church, as a general thing will not backslide. There may, in some instances, be influences brought to bear upon the churches that will divert them from the promotion of holiness in their own hearts and the conversion of the impenitent in spite of all that the most wakeful and vigilant ministry can do. And yet it is my deliberate opinion that a thoroughly wakeful, prayerful, energetic ministry, by their influence, would generally, if not universally, prevent this. I cannot believe it to be otherwise that a general truth, that if the ministry are baptized with the Holy Ghost, and deeply anointed with the revival influence, so the Church will be: "like priest, like people."

And now, brethren, it does seem to me that when we ourselves are thoroughly in a revival spirit, our call to the churches to arise and engage in the general promotion of revivals will be immediately responded to. Let the ministry only come out in the true spirit of revivals, and I doubt WHETHER ANY MINISTER IN THE LAND CAN PREACH FOR THREE SABBATHS TO HIS CHURCH, IN THE SPIRIT, WITHOUT FINDING THE SPIRIT OF REVIVALS WAKING UP IN THE CHURCH. Let this experiment once be tried; let us wake up to the importance of this subject, confess and forsake our own sins, and cry aloud to the Church and spare not; let us lift up our voice like a trumpet, and rally the hosts of God's elect; and if they are deaf to the call, then let us inquire most earnestly what is next to be done. But, until we are anointed to the work, do not let us tempt the Lord or abuse the Church by looking out of ourselves and away from ourselves for the cause of the decline in revivals.

Do not misunderstand me. I know that the Church is in a state of decline, and needs greatly to be quickened and aroused; but I am confident that the prime cause of the decline in the Church is to be found in the fact that ministers have been diverted from their appropriate work. And I am also confident that the only remedy for this state of things is for ministers to come into a deeply spiritual and revised state of mind. And as soon as this comes to pass, there will be a general revival. And I am not looking for it to come UNLESS THE MINISTERS DO THOROUGHLY WAKE UP TO THEIR OWN STATE AND THE STATE OF THE CHURCH.—From "Lectures," 1846-1848.

Lord, it belongs not to my care

Whether I die or live;

To love and serve Thee is my share,

And this Thy grace must give.

—Richard Baxter.

The Bible is to be lived, not merely believed. It is not sufficient to know its ideals; they have to be made part of one's life; they have to be prayed in and lived out. Prayer will impress them, and conduct must express them. Christianity is not, and never has been a philosophy of life; it is itself a life, a present fact, a vital force.—Sel.