

STIR UP!

When the Spirit of God takes hold of men He stirs them up to a wonderful pitch of interest and energy for their own salvation first, and then for others. We believe that no one ever was saved until his heart was stirred to its depths and he was thoroughly aroused to see, feel and act. A dull, indolent seeker never gets saved until he gets stirred out of his dullness and indolence. A dull, indolent professor of religion cannot be in a state of salvation, for such a state is the opposition of that of one in whom the Spirit of God operates.

The devil seeks to keep men asleep, that is, in a state of unconcern about salvation, and unconscious of danger. Nor does he strive alone to keep the sinner in this state, but he just as diligently, or more so, seeks to put the church to an easy-going gate which will finally end in spiritual sleep and death.

It has been surprising how souls have been stirred to seek God. There was nothing they would not do to find relief from the spiritual distress. They would go here and there to the means of grace; they would go miles for help. They were at every service and every prayer meeting. Had they been absent some one would say, "I wonder is he losing conviction." But he was there and got through to God. Such souls always do. But what about the Christians? Do we allow a lower standard for a Christian than for a seeker? Too often it is the case. There may be a considerable slackness and easing off and still he passes as a Christian. What do we require of ourselves? Is it less than when we knelt at the penitent form?

There is need of a stirring up, and there is one who will stir. The Spirit of God is the great worker in salvation, and he awakes, stirs up, and keeps awake. He will arouse all our heart's affections to lay them at Jesus' feet. He makes the heart that once was dead to spiritual love to worship and adore the Christ. He stirs up the faculties so that the thoughts and meditations are upon God and delight in Him day and night. He stirs up the physical so that there is not the shirking duty, but there is a love for the means of grace and duty.

But let us not think that we may wait for the Spirit of God to do all the stirring. We must stir up ourselves to take hold on God. We may wait like the lazy frog and die of starvation, but we must do more than open our hungry mouths, we must jump out and seek for that which our souls need. We must stir up our souls to prayer, to reading, to meditation, to love and to faith. We must stir up our bodies to pray also, and to have ready feet, willing hands and lips to act and work and speak for God and souls.

Physical stir is not alone enough. We may stir the physical and leave the soul dead, but God desires that our inmost parts be stirred for his glory. We might be a jumping-jack in services, and a physical wonder for gesture and manoeuvre and effect, but our soul's deep affections may be dead and our hearts may not be filled with love and humility. Physical effort may sometimes disguise the empty soul, but it cannot take the place of that inward stirring of all the heart's affections and abilities.

Thank God, we can be alive, altogether alive for God, our souls vibrating with life and energy, and we are ever ready to do for God. Thank God, if we undertake to stir up, the Blessed Spirit will co-operate with us. He can so animate those affections and powers of the soul that the life will be full of eagerness for the lost and perishing. There is no power to do for God like a burning heart. There is nothing that will stir others if it is not first stirred itself. A dull,

dry church will not save sinners, but a church stirred and alive for God will see sinners converted, believers sanctified, and there will be blessed outpourings of God's Holy Spirit upon her.

Stir up now. Stir up everything in yourself. Stir up every capability. Let none rust or rot. Stir up your soul to love and feel and pray and prevail, and you will be made to rejoice in the goodness of God and in His abundant grace. You will then see of the travail of your soul. Praise God. He will aid in every diligent effort we make for Him.

At our convention the other day we heard a sister say that she had not been getting on in experience up to a certain all day meeting, when the people were put to the test and those who would promise to be at every all-day meeting possible were to stand up. She thought, well, she needed to make some resolution like this for God, so she stood up. Before the next all-day meeting she was out in a blessed experience. We think there are others who should stand up in more than this point, and we verily believe that as the above sister so soon swept everything into a grand resolution for God, so they may, and thus help the good old chariot along.

When one is not stirred for God, trifles hinder, they stall on the smallest things, but let them be stirred to their hearts' depths and nothing in earth or hell will stop them. Thank God, we are encouraged as we see present evidence of a gracious stirring.—A. Mills, in *The Holiness Worker*.

A SPIRITUAL DECLINE

By Rev. E. C. Cornell

A man is not necessarily a pessimist who observes and states the facts may be alarming and discouraging. To say that there is a spiritual dearth throughout the church is simply stating the fact, however deplorable that may be. The moral standard throughout the world is very low and the spiritual standard throughout the church is depressingly below par. In many a quarter the statement of the apostle is verified: "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power." The church services are largely for entertainment purposes. The moving picture has taken the place of the gospel, the prayer-meeting is formal and stiff, without juice or unction. The Amens and Hallelujahs have long since quietly departed this life and are buried beneath an avalanche of forms and worldliness. The glory has departed from Israel, and this is noticeable on the face of the worshipers. There seems to be a woe-begone expression indicative of an empty, unemotional heart. Heartfelt, spontaneous, cheerful, direct testimony to the saving power of Jesus' blood, is the exception rather than the rule. The class meeting has died, the young people read a "squib" from some religious paper, and that takes the place of testimony. What is the matter? The freshness, glory and divine power so characteristic of Holy Ghost Christians is gone because He—the Holy Spirit—has departed. There can be no refreshings without Him. *When He is come*, then the fires of Pentecost begin to burn. Without Him there is barrenness and death.

Therefore, it must be apparent that there is a woeful lack of spirituality among church members. This must be clearly seen by those who know anything about the deep things of God.

A Methodist writer a little while back writing in *Zion's Herald* said some terse, awful things. Here are but a few of his sledge-hammer blows:

"I have ceased to offer prayer in some families because they sit upright while I am on my

knees."

"In some pastoral homes prayer is offered sitting around the family 'board.' Not only have we ceased to kneel in our homes, but we have actually ceased to have family prayer at all, in nine-tenths of our homes."

"Yes, you may pray if you want to! It won't do any harm! Well, I don't care, suit yourself." These and similar replies are not infrequent in the homes of professing Christians, where the pastor asks, "Shall we have prayer?" All sense of reverence, all idea of communion with God have been lost."

"Cut your first prayer down to three minutes," was the mandate of an official board to the pastor of quite a prominent church, and thereafter he prayed alternately, opening his eye upon his watch and racing like the wind through his supplication."

"No temperance meetings in this church; no temperance addresses from this pulpit. This house was erected for the worship of God"—so said a board of trustees where politics was largely controlled by that board."

"Said one pastor to another: 'My, my! this is dreadful, dreadful! But you found this wickedness; it did not emerge after you became pastor. Don't touch it! You are not responsible!' Said the District Superintendent also: 'It is not your fault; and as you cannot cure it, let it alone.'"

This is, no doubt, a faithful picture of conditions as they exist in many a church and community. Sin is covered up, winked at, and of course there can be no spiritual power.

THE LAST WORDS OF DARWIN

The following little account by Lady Hope of the death of Charles Darwin, the evolutionist, is startling. It is a most wonderful narrative and contains the account of a great and terrible tragedy. The tragedy of Christendom for the past sixty years, the lapse from the true faith, the blight which has spoiled the Christian harvest, have here a surpassingly strange light cast upon them.

Darwin is propped up in bed, and he looks out over the lovely landscape as the sun is setting. He is reading—the Bible! Says Lady Hope: "I made some allusion to the strong opinions expressed by many persons on the history of the creation, its grandeur, and then to their treatment of the earlier chapters of the Book of Genesis.

"He seemed greatly distressed, his fingers twitched nervously, and a look of agony came over his face as he said, 'I was a young man with unformed ideas. I threw out queries, suggestions, wondering all the time over everything; and to my astonishment the ideas took like wildfire. People made a religion of them.'

"Was there ever a more dramatic scene? The very soul of tragedy here exposed to us. Darwin, enthusiast for the Bible, speaking with glowing enthusiasm about the 'grandeur of this Book,' reminded of that modern evolutionary movement in theology which, linked with skeptical criticism, has become a blight in all the churches and has destroyed Biblical faith in multitudes—Darwin, with a look of agony, deploring it all and declaring 'I was a young man with unformed ideas,' and imploring his visitor to gather servants, tenants and neighbors together and preach to them Jesus Christ."

This remarkable picture of Darwin is a challenge to every Methodist. What an overwhelming criticism! The "unformed ideas" of the young man Darwin are the basis of modern evolutionary theology! — *Journal of the Wesley Bible Union*