

Revival: Do We Need It?

Rev. C. E. Stairs

This question is addressed to each Christian individually and to all of us collectively and denominationally. In the light of last issue's definition the gist of the question would be: Do we need a renewal of spiritual life (a return to the state of vigor and activity which once we knew)?

Possibly that question may be answered best by some other questions.

First, let us ask ourselves: Do we need a renewal of love? Do we love God as we used to love Him?

God charged the church at Ephesus: "Thou hast left thy first love." The Ephesian Christians were good people. More than that, they were godly people (Re. 2:2), who would be acceptable in any Reformed Baptist Church—maybe even prominent. They were faithful in service, sound in doctrine, steadfast in suffering. There was only one thing wrong—a lost love. Simply one thing—but with God an all-important thing. There is only one name for a lost love—backsliding; one recovery—repentance; one result—revival (Re. 2:5). Significantly, a renewal of love and a renewal of works are related.

If our love for God has waned, we need a revival. Oh, that we might sing again, "If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now." Can you remember when you loved Him more?

Nor is it enough to love God. We must love our fellows. "... love the Lord thy God ... and ..."

Evidently sometimes we find it easier to love God than our neighbor or Christian brother. The Scriptures, however, reveal that these two loves are inter-related and inseparable. They are Siamese twins; one cannot exist without the other. Those who have tried to sever them have killed both. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." (I John 3:15).

If we stand aloof from our brother, God will stand aloof from us. If we are unwilling to forgive others, God is unwilling to forgive us. (Matt. 5:26).

Do we manoeuvre to avoid certain people at the church or social function? Beware. Do we find it easy to hurt, insult, or criticize certain people? Beware.

Broken fellowship calls for a broken spirit, a reconciliation, and a revival of love.

There is another question akin to the first: Do we need a renewal of worship? (We are not thinking of the act of worship, but the attitude or spirit of worship).

We can be as guilty of formalism as groups which have a more elaborate ritual. Formalism is not merely form. It is form without feeling, worship without heart. Jesus spoke of formalism when He said: "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me." (Matt. 15:7-8).

True, our forms of worship may be simple, but the question is: Are they empty routine? Are our hymns, prayers, and testimonies vehicles of expressing our heartfelt devotion—or are they just parts of the regular type of service? Does our being ever thrill as we think upon His greatness? Do our eyes sometimes flood as we sing of His love and mercy? Are we occasionally overcome with awe in His wonderful Presence?

There could be such a thing as a "dead" Reformed Baptist, and there could be such a thing as a dead Reformed Baptist service.

If our worship is a "mouth" worship, we need a revival that will make church attendance a delight, Bible reading a pleasure, and prayer a privilege.

The King's Highway

Prayer: "May the Conviction of Lack take us to our knees, O God. Help us to see ourselves as Thou dost see us. Anoint our eyes with the eye salve that we may regard coldness as sin, resentment and bitterness as murder, and formalism as hypocrisy. Have mercy upon us, O God, and forgive us. Breathe on us again, Holy Spirit.

'Breathe on me, Breath of God;
Fill me with life anew,
Until I love what Thou dost love
And do what Thou dost do.'
For Jesus sake. Amen"

Personal Purity

(Cont'd from Page One)

"With twain he covered his feet." This speaks of humility—a word foreign to many—not necessarily foreign to their vocabulary, but to their make-up, their personality. The attitude today often suggests false humility: "I am a very humble soul—and proud of it!" Today our churches are overrun with those who seek to vaunt themselves: Flowery orators, sensational musicians, vying with one another to see who can have the longest advance engagement list—merely entertaining the public, and not exhibiting the pure, unadulterated truth of God's Word.

"With twain he did fly." First came reverence, then humility, and now service. Undoubtedly the order is purposeful. Without true reverence, without God-given humility, there can be no real service. Our works are vain, futile, offending the nostrils of the Lord, unless He knows it is Himself we revere—not our own selves; unless we offer ourselves humbly and in veritable recognition that in ourselves lieth no good thing.

The seraphim echoed for the praises of God. This always was and will be to eternity the work of heavenly spirits. This, too, is the only purpose for which we are saved: to bring eternal glory to the name of the Father.

Observe the effects of this vision upon the Temple (v. 4). Matthew Henry poses a very telling question in this regard: "Shall walls and posts tremble before God, and shall not we tremble?" Isaiah trembled. He was filled with woe at the realization of his own personal impurities and imperfections. His eyes had seen the King, the Lord of Hosts!

As we take mental stock do we see our own repulsive natures in contrast to the superlative holiness of God? It is not enough to recognize that we are carnal, calloused Christians. We must be concerned enough to cry unto the Lord, and to beg Him to purge us. Isaiah underwent the purging of fire with live coals from off the altar. "Oh," you shudder, "how horrible! If I ask God to purge me—to purify and cleanse me—it will hurt: It will mean the searing and scorching of my precious personality!"

No, fellow Christian. God does not purge to hurt but to heal our sin-shattered souls. He does not apply live coals to cauterize but to cleanse. Note that the live coals, or whatever method He uses, must be from off the altar—they must be direct from Himself and according to His plan. No amount of self-affliction or self-denial will bring God's gift of purity.

Have you ever secretly wondered why you have never had the thrill of having God talk directly to you? Perhaps the secret is unveiled here. Up to this point in our passage we have no record of God conversing with Isaiah. But now—now Isaiah is honestly humble, and has emerged from the flames with all the dross burned away—now we read, "Also I heard the voice of the Lord ..." (v. 8.) God cannot get through to us when the path is piled high with our exalted opinions of ourselves. If we want to hear His

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