

Revived To Evangelize

by H. J. Logsdon in "Wesleyan Methodist"

The Church must prepare herself to evangelize, or fail in fulfilling God's commission, thus standing guilty before Him. Often, there is a misplaced emphasis on evangelism without revival. Evangelism is the proclamation of the Gospel with the purpose of winning the lost to Christ. Revival is a fresh work of the Holy Ghost among Christian believers, bringing humility, confession, renewed dedication and zeal for the task of evangelism.

God's order is winning the lost through believers who themselves have first been revived. David prayed, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit; then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." It is true that "revival" is an Old Testament term and the New Testament program is that of "evangelism," or taking the Good News to all the world. We have God's standard for the New Testament church in the Book of Acts, for there we see a Spirit-filled church having great success in reaching men for Christ. The twentieth century church has drifted from the spirit and power of the first century church, making it necessary for her to experience a revival before she can evangelize.

The progress of religion in all ages has been due in large measure to those great awakenings called "revivals". Such awakenings are necessary to religious growth and progress. Some would have us believe that we should discontinue all special revival efforts feeling that, for the time and money expended, we are not getting sufficient results. True, there is a disappointment many times because of our lack of growth, yet where would we be as a church if there had not been times of special revival effort?

One points out that "without revival, religion soon petrifies into mere forms; the church becomes an ice-palace; evangelism and missionary zeal ceases; and Protestantism, instead of embodying and conserving godliness and spiritual liberty, becomes as dead as Romanism itself." History reveals that the Russian church trifled around with rituals, forms and spiritual emptiness until revolt swept one-hundred, sixty-five millions into the bleak despair of the bloody terror of atheism. We face the same peril unless the church is revived to evangelize!

The church must experience a REVIVAL OF SCRIPTURAL PREACHING! "Every revival worthy of the name begins in the restoration of the Word of God to the pulpit, and its fearless proclamation by those anointed of God to preach the gospel." A look into Old Testament history reveals this to be true. In II Chronicles 34 we learn that the revival under Josiah took place when "Hilkiah . . . found a book of the law of the Lord." In the record of the revival under Jehoshaphat, there is a statement regarding its relationship to the Word of God. II Chronicles 17:9 reads, "And they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the Lord with them, and went about through all the cities of Judah, and taught the people." During the revival under Nehemiah, "all the people gathered together as one man . . . and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded of Israel."

A return to God was always accompanied by a return to The Word! It is still imperative that we declare the "thou shalt's" and the "thou shalt not's" of God's law. While there is need today for a positive message, let us not forget that our positive message will lose its force when we discard the negatives. The Word must be preached in its entirety.

There must be scriptural preaching to awaken the

church to her spiritual need. The Word of God preached under the anointing and direction of the Holy Spirit is still the "power of God unto salvation." It is the only two-edged sword that can ever pierce through the armor of self-righteousness. It is the only light strong enough to expose the iniquities of the human heart. God's Word not only reveals to man his need but shows him a way out!

There is need for scriptural preaching to encourage the faith of the saints. Paul says in Romans 10:17, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The church today has been shot through with unbelief and much of this is the results of too little of The Word. In this age when every effort is being made to disprove the very existence of God, we must see Him afresh or our faith will fail. To see the God of The Word, who still has all power in heaven and in earth, will strengthen the arm of faith, but to miss this revelation will lead to discouragement and result in utter defeat. To succumb to the spirit of defeatism will mean death to all progress.

The preaching of The Word will make for a more solid, lasting work. "That which does not rest solidly upon the Word of God will ultimately either fade out because there is no fountain of divine truth continually refreshing it, or it will run into dangerous and sensational emotionalism, which, after it has passed will make those who have been the subject of such an experience dry and indifferent to the things of God, and at times more easily accessible than ever to the inroads of Satan himself."

If we would know the value of preaching The Word, we have but to examine the sermons of the great revivalists and soul-winners such as Wesley, Finney, Moody, Edwards and others to discover that they were saturated with the Word of God.

It is true that things have changed and modern inventions have brought about new methods of living, but in spite of this, man's heart is the same—"desperately wicked." Sin has not changed and why should we change our message? Nothing has contributed more to the present day vice and immorality than the drift away from God's truth, and nothing will help to remedy the situation but a return to that truth!

The church must have a REVIVAL OF SOUL PASSION! If the church of Christ is to carry out the commission of Christ, she must possess the passion of Christ. Our Lord carried in His bosom a burning and yearning after the souls of men. He was consumed with a passion for souls that ate into His very heart.

A look at the record of Christ's earthly ministry reveals His concern for humanity. In the fourteenth chapter of Matthew we have record of a great multitude following Christ into the desert. The Word says, "And Jesus went forth and saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them." One of the greatest needs of the church today is a like compassion. It isn't enough for us to preach the person of Christ doctrinally, but we must preach Him with all the tender compassion of Christ. The passionless church, like the disciples, would send them away, but the compassionate Christ says: "They need not depart, give ye them to eat."

When Christ was met by a leper, He, "moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean." Although the leper was a social outcast, was accursed in Israel and his place was outside the camp, yet the compassion of Christ reached out and met his need.

We have in the parable of the Good Samaritan recorded in Luke 10:30-35 another wonderful picture of the com-

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