

Guest Editorial

REVIVALS ARE COSTLY

Editor, "Pilgrim Holiness Advocate"

Revivals are costly. The cost in time and strength and money. They call for humility and heart burden. They mean prayer and sacrifice and suffering with Jesus.

Scriptural revivals are relatively scarce. Perhaps we have so few because we are unwilling to pay the price for them. Too often the church has been willing to settle for something less; so much so, that in some instances the very term "revival" is in danger of wearing threadbare.

Many gatherings are called revival meetings which are little more than preaching missions and times of good fellowship. Few outsiders, if any, attend the meetings; and only now and then are any saved or sanctified.

One of the disheartening things to the God-called evangelist who comes for the revival is to find out that there has been little or no preparatory work; almost no praying, visitation has been neglected, and outside of casual announcements of the coming meeting there has been little preparation from the pulpit. There is no burden upon the believers, no vision of a whitened harvest field, and the members themselves with only a halfhearted concern in the effort. There has been so much of this casual approach that the whole revival program in some places is in serious danger.

If we have a revival we need to make preparation for it. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord," is a timely text for those who are interested in an awakening in their church and community.

There must be definite prayer preparation. We may have good preaching and excellent singing, and even fair attendance without much prayer; but we never are going to have a heaven-born revival without it.

Prayer-preparation for revival should begin well in advance of the scheduled meeting, perhaps even months. Some of the greatest revivals have come only after prolonged seasons of prayer. But whether it is one week, or many, we need to wait upon God until our own souls are burdened and concerned, until hindrances are recognized and set aside, and the hearts of God's people are genuinely burdened for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

There also needs to be a visitation preparation. A list of prospects for the people of the church to call upon may be made up from many sources. There are the unsaved parents of Sunday school children, friends and relatives of the members, the occasional worshippers, known backsliders, and the newcomers in the community. Calls should be made with the thought in mind of helping the people spiritually. And the whole visitation effort should be organized so that when the meeting comes on, follow-up calls will bring some of the people to the church during the campaign. These are the highways and byways days. Unless there is an organized effort to go out and bring the needy to the house of God, many will never come.

Appropriate gospel preaching needs to accompany all the preparation. People need God's Word concerning revivals preached to them. The Word is needed to awaken the church, to call men and women back to paths of spiritual life and holiness. There are so many wonderful themes in the Bible along this line that have to do with prayer, faith, heartsearching, and soul winning.

The people should be brought up to revival meeting time in expectancy and faith, and ready to continue both their prayer and their visitation ministry right through the campaign.

Yes, we still believe in revivals. They are a part of the divine program for the life of the church. Revival campaigns that are true to the Word of life have resulted in the salvation of many precious souls. May God give us

wisdom and grace to face heartbreaking needs of the hour and to experience anew those refreshings that come from his presence.

LET'S FACE IT

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and looked out at the window"? The obvious answer: Her face was an indissoluble segment of her utter wickedness. God was repelled by her complete abandon to heathenism and harlotry.

That leads logically enough to Ezekiel 23:40, 44 where the practice of painting is inextricably joined with lewdness and marital infidelity. "... for whom thou didst wash thyself, paintedst thy eyes, and deckedst thyself with ornaments ... yet they went in unto her, as they go in unto a woman that playeth the harlot ... the lewd women." Little wonder that Jeremiah transmits God's message in language like this: "... though thou rentest thy face with painting in vain shalt thou make thyself fair ...". (4:30)

A mysterious mentality has arisen among us which discounts the Old Testament, relegating its principles and precepts to a level almost as low as that of profane literature. To any such, then, please take close cognizance of relevant New Testament passages. I Timothy 2:9, 10 articulates the identical principle of simplicity in opposition to sophistication, plainness as opposed to pompousness. Incidentally, it is more than interesting to see that the mother of harlots (Revelation 17:4) is "decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication."

I Peter 3:1-6 may have been unduly belabored in some circles but it is still in the Word of God and it has not lost its teeth. It means something, surely, in this fat and flourishing twentieth century. One feels that it stands out in crying defiance of the celebrated evangelist whose wife with her swank furs and facial fashions was a distinct detriment to the young people of the local evangelical churches. One pastor, very broken and loving in his attitudes toward others, lamented, "That finished it! I had been making some progress with my young people, especially in the choir work, but those two people ripped up in two weeks what I had prayerfully put together over a period of six years." Sister, prayerfully peruse this sacred block of Divine teaching. Don't sidestep with the old "But criticism and such things are much worse—spend your time preaching on those things." True, criticism is wicked; it is murderous. But God is calling your attention to something else in I Peter 3 which is not unimportant. Let's face it! It means something specific! It is applicable today, to you! Let's not rationalize and let's not argue about moral and ethical relatives. All of God's Word is designed for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages are come.

In Calgary the writer was seated in a compartment in a restaurant with three unsaved soldiers. He was confronting them with the claims of the Gospel and the beauties of our Beloved. Presently four wholesome, unpainted girls seated themselves across the aisle and placed their order. Observed one soldier, "I'll bet those girls are Christians." The exclamation staggered me and when equilibrium was restored, inquiry was made. Yes, indeed, they were saved girls. The sequel to the story is that we all attended the local city wide youth meeting that Saturday night where one soldier professed conversion. That kind of incident could be repeated a number of times from the writer's ministry. The world itself expects us to be different, ladies. They demand of us the witness

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