

TRANCES EXPERIENCED IN REVIVAL-by MARIA WOODWORTH-ETTER

After many invitations from Hartford City, and believing that the Spirit of God was leading that way, I consented to go, and I went believing God would do a great work. I commenced meeting there about the first of January, 1885, in the Methodist Church. The first night it was not known we would be there to commence that evening. They rang the bell and the people came from every direction and filled the church to overflowing. The church was cold and formal, and many of the best citizens had drifted into skepticism. I knew that it would take a wonderful display of God's power to convince the people, so I prayed for God to display his power, that the sinner might know that God still lives, and that there is a reality in religion, and might convict him of a terrible judgment.

Five of the leading members of the church said they would unite with me in prayer for the Lord to pour out the power from on high, till the city would be shaken, and the country, for miles around. We prayed that Christians and sinner might fall as dead men; that the slain of the Lord might be many. The Lord answered our prayers in a remarkable manner. The class-leader's little boy fell under the power of God first. He rose up, stepped on the pulpit, and began to talk with the wisdom and power of God. His father began to shout and praise the Lord.

As the little fellow exhorted and asked the people to come to Christ they began to weep all over the [church] house. Some shouted; others fell prostrated. Divers operations of the Spirit were seen. The displays of the power of God continued to increase till we closed the meetings, which lasted about five weeks. The power of the Lord, like the wind, swept all over the city, up one street and down another, sweeping through the places of business, the workshops, saloons and dives, arresting sinners of all classes. The Scriptures were fulfilled. The wicked flee when no man pursueth.

Men, women and children were struck down in their homes, in their places of business, on the highways, and lay as dead. They had wonderful visions, and rose converted, giving glory to God. When they told what they had seen their faces shone like angels. The fear of God fell upon the city. The police said they never saw such a change; that they had nothing to do. They said they made no arrest; and that the power of God seemed to preserve the city. It held the people still. A spirit of love rested all over the city. There was no fighting, no swearing, on the streets; that the people moved softly, and that there seemed to be a spirit of love and kindness among all classes, as if they felt they were in the presence of God.

A merchant fell in a trance in his home and lay several hours. Hundreds went in to look at him. He had a vision, and a message for the church. The Lord showed him the condition of many of the members. He told part of his vision, but refused to deliver the message to the church. He was struck dumb. He could not speak a word because he refused to tell what the Lord wanted him to. The Lord showed him he would never speak till he delivered the message. He rose to his feet, weeping, to tell the vision. God loosed his tongue. Those present knew he had been dumb, and when he began to talk and tell his experience it had a wonderful effect on the church and sinners.

One night there was a party seventeen miles from the city. Some of the young ladies thought they would have some fun; they began to mimic and act out the trance. The Lord struck some of them down. They lay there as if they had been shot. Their fun-making was soon turned to a prayer-meeting, and cries of mercy were heard.

The people came to the meetings in sleigh loads many miles. One night while a sleigh load of men and women was going to the meeting they were jesting about the trances. They made the remark to each other that they were going in a trance that night. Before the meeting closed all who had been making fun were struck down by the power of God and lay like dead people, and had to be taken home in the sled in that condition. Those who came with them were very much frightened when they saw them lying there, and they told how they had been making fun of the power of God on the way to the meeting. Scoffers and mockers were stricken down in all parts of the house. One man was mocking a woman that God had taken control of her body. She was preaching with gestures. When in that mocking attitude God struck him dumb. He became rigid and remained with his hands up, his mouth drawn in that mocking way for five hours, a gazing-stock for all in the house. The fear of God fell on all. They saw it was a fearful thing to mock God or make fun of his work.

Surely, the Lord worked in a wonderful way in this meeting. The postmaster was converted. All classes from the roughs and toughs to the tallest cedars and brightest talents of the city were brought into the fold of Christ. We took the meeting to the opera house and it would not hold the crowds. Traveling salesmen arranged to return to the city each night. The Cincinnati Enquirer sent a reporter to write up the meetings and report daily. Every day the newsboys could be heard crying out, "All about the Woodworth revival." Lawyer C., one of the leading lawyers of the city, was convinced of the reality of the religion of Jesus by seeing me under the control of the Holy Ghost power while in a trance. Sometimes standing with my face and hands raised to heaven, my face shining with the brightness of heaven; other times the tears streaming down my face, with mute preaching, pleading with sinners to come to Christ; other times lying for hours, sometimes as one dead, divers operations of the Spirit, conscious all the time, but entirely controlled by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Always while in these conditions in this meeting, and all others, the fear of God would fall upon the people. Sinners would be stricken down [all] over the house. Many would be saved; they would rush to the altar crying for mercy. Sometimes scores would be converted while God would use me in this way. Mr. C. was the leading lawyer of the State. He was a skeptic; had no use for churches. The ministers had given up all hopes of him ever being saved. When he came and invited us to his house to make our home with them while in the city, people were astonished. He asked me if I would tell him my experience while in a trance. He said he did not ask this to satisfy curiosity, but for light. He said he had confidence in me, and would believe what I told him. I knew the Lord was leading in this. I told him more of my experiences than I had ever told anyone. While talking the power of God fell upon us all. I was almost blind with the glory of God. My hands looked transparent. He broke down and began to weep. We all got on our knees. This was the first time this strong man, this tall cedar, had ever bowed before the living God.