

# Free Grace Broadcaster

SPRING 2013

## REVIVAL

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*“O LORD, revive thy work in  
the midst of the years...in  
wrath remember mercy.”*

Habakkuk 3:2

### **Our Purpose**

*“To humble the pride of man,  
to exalt the grace of God in salvation,  
and to promote real holiness in heart and life.”*

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## REVIVAL

#223

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# WHAT IS REVIVAL?

Horatius Bonar (1808-1889)

**W**HAT is a revival? Strictly speaking, it is the restoration of life that has been lost; and in this sense, it applies only to the Church of God.<sup>1</sup> But used in the more common acceptation, it is *the turning of multitudes to God*. As conversion is the turning of a soul to God, so a revival is a repetition of this same spiritual process in the case of thousands. It is conversion upon a large scale. It is what occurred under the apostles at Pentecost, when three thousand were converted under one sermon. It is what took place at Corinth, Thessalonica, and Ephesus, when, under the preaching of the apostles, multitudes believed and turned to the Lord. This is what we mean by a revival! As far as it corresponds with these scriptural scenes, as far as it is right—we defend it. As far as it departs from scriptural precedent or is inconsistent with scriptural rule, we do not defend it. Let the opponents of revivals meet us here. We are willing to apply this test; are they? It is an equitable<sup>2</sup> and satisfactory one. They need not fear it, if it is truth they seek.

We can suppose the existence of honest objections to revivals. If they produce immorality, sow sedition,<sup>3</sup> foster licentiousness,<sup>4</sup> or are the hotbeds of hypocrisy, then are they worthy of condemnation. But are they such? Have they brought forth these fruits of evil? Have they made men bad citizens, bad masters, bad parents, bad children? Have they turned sober men into drunkards, chaste men into lewd, peaceable men into riotous, reverential men into blasphemers, loyal men into seditious?<sup>5</sup> Are they crowding or are they thinning our jails? Are they filling or emptying our bars? Are they exciting or are they allaying party spirit?<sup>6</sup> Are they increasing or are they diminishing the calendar of crimes and criminals?

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<sup>1</sup> What is revival? We can define it as a period of unusual blessing and activity in the life of the Christian Church. Primarily, of course, and by definition, a revival is something that happens first in the Church and amongst Christian people, amongst believers. That, I repeat, is true by definition. It is revival; something is revived and when you say that, you mean that there is something present that has life. But the life was beginning to wane, to droop, and had become almost moribund; and some people said, "That is dead, that is finished," because they could not see much sign of life and activity. Revival means awakening, stimulating the life, bringing it to the surface again. It happens primarily in the Church of God, amongst believing people, and it is only secondly something that affects those that are outside also. Now this is a most important point because this definition helps us to differentiate, once and for all, between a revival and an evangelistic campaign. (David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Revival*, 99)

<sup>2</sup> **equitable** – characterized by justice or fairness toward those involved.

<sup>3</sup> **sow sedition** – spread conduct or speech that stirs up rebellion against the authority of a state.

<sup>4</sup> **foster lewdness** – encourage lustful behavior.

<sup>5</sup> **seditious** – encouraging or causing people to rebel against the authority of a state.

<sup>6</sup> **allaying party spirit** – calming divisive attitudes or movements.

Let us answer these questions by citing a few statements. Party spirit has ceased wherever the revival has come; and enemies have embraced each other, so that a Popish judge bears testimony to the wonderful improvement, in this respect, in his own vicinity. The drunken assemblages at weddings and funerals have not only ceased, but [have also] been transformed into meetings for praise and prayer; and the brutal scenes of brawling and bloodshed on such occasions are no longer heard of. Thousands of drunkards have become sober; thousands of blasphemers have turned from their profanity; the whole moral aspect of families, villages, and towns has been altered for the better. Hundreds of Romanists have turned from their superstition; hundreds of Unitarians<sup>7</sup> have owned the Lord Jesus as God; poor, profligate<sup>8</sup> females have turned from their evil courses; bars have been shut up and inroads made among those whom we are accustomed to call the “masses,” such as have not been made by any efforts heretofore.

It would thus appear that the results of the Irish revivals have been good and not evil—good religiously, morally, socially. Their tendencies are all in the right direction. So that even admitting all that has been said against them, and making full allowance for what are called extravagances,<sup>9</sup> nay, assuming that there has been a mixture of hypocrisy and deception in some cases, a very large balance remains in their favor. They have diminished crime; they have turned drunkenness into sobriety, dishonesty into honesty, brawling into good neighborhoods, hatred into love. Of bad citizens, they have made good ones; of bad husbands and wives, they have made good ones; of bad masters good ones, of bad parents good ones, of bad children good ones; and of mere formalists in religion they have made devout and fervent worshippers.

These are the results of what has taken place. “By their fruits ye shall know them” (Mat 7:20). Are these the works of Satan? Are these things from beneath or from above? Are they earthly or heavenly? If they be Satan’s doings, then is his kingdom divided; and he is fighting against himself (Mat 12:25).

It is to be noticed, too, that the really religious men who have visited the scenes are all convinced that the work is of God. Their enemies are among the irreligious and profane. The Popish priests are against them. The barkeepers are against them. The Unitarians are against them. The lovers of pleasure are against them. Yet these are the things that tell so strongly in their favor.

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<sup>7</sup> **Unitarians** – members of various antitrinitarian groups; these originated with Arius of Alexandria (AD 250/56-336), who denied the deity of Christ, and others in later centuries; Faustus Socinus (1539-1604) became the leader of the antitrinitarians in Hungary and Poland during the Reformation in Europe; Unitarians all deny the Trinity and have increasingly rejected the authority of the Bible and the supernatural.

<sup>8</sup> **profligate** – recklessly immoral.

<sup>9</sup> **extravagances** – exceeding the appropriate limits of conduct.

Manifestly,<sup>10</sup> the work is of God, not of man or of Satan. God has risen up to do a work in our day worthy of Himself—a glorious work in which human instruments are set aside, and the Holy Spirit is the great and indisputable worker. A work like this will not easily be overthrown. It will not be put down by scoffing, nor injured by misrepresentation, nor arrested by the hostility either of formal Protestants or of angry Romanists. Fling your handfuls of sand into the torrent, ye enemies of Christ—will these arrest its victorious rush? Cast up embankments on the Nile from Thebes to Alexandria—will these hinder its overflow? Bring your mighty engines<sup>11</sup> to bear upon this divine conflagration<sup>12</sup> that is now blazing through Ulster—will you quench one spark? Send for your Balaams, your lying prophets of the press, ye Balaks of Moab! Place them upon every green mountain from Donegal to Downpatrick and say to them, “Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel” (Num 23:7)—what can the answer be but, “How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed, how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied?” (Num 23:8).

From *Authentic Records of Revival, Now in Progress in the United Kingdom*,  
edited by William Reid, London: James Nisbet and Co., 1860.

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**Horatius Bonar (1808-1889):** Scottish Presbyterian minister and prolific author of tracts, books, and hymns; born in Edinburgh, Scotland.



Oh! Men and brethren, what would this heart feel if I could but believe that there were some among you who would go home and pray for a revival of religion—men whose faith is large enough and their love fiery enough to lead them from this moment to exercise *unceasing* intercessions that God would appear among us and do wondrous things here, as in the times of former generations.—*Charles Spurgeon*

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<sup>10</sup> **manifestly** – visibly; showing clearly and conclusively.

<sup>11</sup> **engines** – any mechanical devices for assisting labor; typically, large machines; in war of old times: large devices such as catapults or battering rams.

<sup>12</sup> **conflagration** – intense, uncontrolled fire.

# MOTIVES FOR REVIVAL

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981)

*“And Moses said unto the Lord, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now the way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people. And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth. And the Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.”—Exodus 33:12-17*

**I**F you read the history of the great revivals of the past, you will find that—as you read of the men whom God has used most signally, as you study them in the period before the revival came, when they were pleading and interceding—you will find invariably that they were animated by exactly the same motives as we find here in the case of Moses.

So we must be perfectly clear with regard to this matter of our motives. I am calling you to pray for revival. Yes, but why should you pray for revival? Why should anybody pray for revival?

**The answer that is first given here is this: a concern for the glory of God.** You will find it at the end of verse 13: “Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight; and consider that this nation is thy people.” That is the motive. That is the reason. Moses was concerned primarily about the glory of God. Now, you will find that he constantly used this particular argument with God...He is concerned about the name and, as it were, the reputation and the glory of God.

That is the point he is making here again. “This nation,” he says, “is thy people.” He is saying, in effect, that God’s honor and God’s glory is involved in this situation. They are, after all, His people: they have claimed that, He has given indications of that—He has brought them out of Egypt in a marvelous and a miraculous manner. He has brought them through the Red Sea; is He going to leave them here in the wilderness? What will the Egyptians say? What will the other nations say? Has He failed? He promised them great things; can He not execute them? Can He not bring them to fulfillment? Moses is suggesting to God that His own glory, His own honor, is involved in this whole situation...

This is what matters, is it not? The Church, after all, is the Church of God. “She is His new creation, by water and word.” We are a people for God’s own peculiar possession; and why has He called us out of darkness into His own marvelous light (1Pe 2:9)? Surely, it is that we may show forth His praises, His excellencies, His virtues. Therefore, we should be concerned about this matter primarily because of the name, the glory, and the honor of God Himself. Whether we like it or not, it is a fact that the world judges God Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the whole of the Christian faith by what it sees in us. We are His representatives; we are the people who take His name upon us; we are the people who talk about Him—and the man outside the Church regards the Church as the representative of God. Therefore, I argue that we must emulate<sup>1</sup> the example of Moses as we find it here. Our first concern should be about *the glory of God*...Here is the thing, surely, that we must needs recapture. We are so subjective in our approach, always thinking about ourselves. That is not the way to pray for revival. We must, in the first place, be concerned *about God: His glory, His honor, His name*.

This, to me, is the essence of the whole matter. Go through the great prayers of the Old Testament, and you will find it always there. These men had a passion for God; they were in trouble, they were unhappy because this great God was not being worshipped as He should be. And they prayed God for His own sake, for His glory’s sake, to vindicate His own name and to arise and scatter His enemies. That is the first thing.

Then the second thing—and it must always come in the second place, never in the first—is *a concern about the honor of the Church herself*...It seems to me that there is no hope for revival until you and I, and all of us, have reached the stage in which we begin to forget ourselves a little and to be concerned for the Church, for God’s body, His people here on earth. So many of our prayers are subjective and self-centered. We have our problems and difficulties; and by the time that we have finished with them, we are tired and exhausted, and we do not pray for the Church—[it is only] *my* blessing, *my* need, *my* this, *my* that. Now, I am not being hard and unkind; God has promised to deal with our problems. But where does the Church come into our prayers and intercessions? Do we go beyond our families and ourselves? We stand before the world and we say the only hope for the world is Christianity. We say the Church, and the Church alone, has the message that is needed...

**Then, of course, the third reason is that *Moses is concerned about the heathen that are outside*.** He wants them to know: “For wherein shall it be known here [in the wilderness, where we are], that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth” (Exo 33:16).

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<sup>1</sup> **emulate** – strive to equal by imitation.

These are the motives in praying for revival: for the name, honor, and glory of God, and for the sake of the Church that is His. Yes, and then for the sake of those people that are outside, that are scoffing, mocking, jeering, laughing, and ridiculing. “Oh, God,” say His people, one after another, “arise and silence them. Do something so that we may be able to say to them, ‘Be still, keep silent, give up.’”

“Be still, and know that I am God” (Psa 46:10). That is the prayer of the people of God. They have their eye on those that are outside. You find illustrations of this right through the Bible. And this has been true of all men who have felt the burden of the condition of the Church, and whose hearts are breaking because they have seen the name of God blasphemed. Oh, you will find it in very strong language here in the Bible, sometimes so strong that certain little people are troubled by the imprecatory<sup>2</sup> Psalms. But the imprecatory Psalms are just an expression of the zeal these men have for the glory of God. “Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth,” says the man in Psalm 104...It was not a desire for personal vengeance. *It was that these men were consumed by a passion for God and His glory and His great name.* There is something wrong with us if we do not feel this desire within us: that God should arise and do something that would shut the mouths and stop the tongues of these arrogant blasphemers of today, who speak with their mincing<sup>3</sup> words upon radio and television—these supposed philosophers, these godless, arrogant men. Do we not feel, sometimes, this desire within us: that they might know that God is God and that He is the eternal God?...

This should make us ask, therefore, whether we are concerned at all about these people who are outside. It is a terrible state for the Church to be in, when she merely consists of a collection of very nice and respectable people who have no concern for the world, people who pass it by, drawing in their skirts in their horror at the bestiality, the foulness, and the ugliness of it all. We not only want the scoffers to be silenced; we should desire that these men and women, who are like sheep without a shepherd, might have their eyes opened, might begin to see the cause of their troubles and be delivered from the chains of iniquity and the shackles of infamy, vice, and foulness. Are we truly concerned about such people, and are we praying to God that He would do something, that they may be influenced and affected?

There, as I understand it, are the three main motives that animated Moses as he offered up these petitions to God.

**There is something else for us to notice, and that is *the way in which he prayed.*** We have seen what he prayed for; we have seen why he prayed for it; now let us watch his method of prayer. If ever we needed instruction, it is just here.

There are certain elements that always come out in all the great biblical prayers, and the first characteristic of Moses’ prayer is its *boldness*, its confidence. There is no

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<sup>2</sup> **imprecatory** – expressing a spoken curse; invoking evil upon someone.

<sup>3</sup> **mincing** – give the appearance of sincerity; pretentious.



hesitation here. There is a quiet confidence. Oh, let me use the term: there is a “holy boldness.” This is the great characteristic of all prayers that have ever prevailed. It is, of course, inevitable. You cannot pray truly, still less can you intercede, if you have not an assurance of your acceptance, and if you do not know the way into the holiest of all. If, when you get down on your knees, you are reminded of your sins and are wondering what you can do about them; if you have to spend all your time praying for forgiveness and pardon, wondering whether God is listening or not—how can you pray? How can you intercede as Moses did here? No, Moses was face to face with God; he was assured; he was bold with a holy boldness. As we have seen, God had granted him intimations of His nearness, and so he was able to speak with this confidence and assurance...

But, there is a second point, which is most valuable and interesting, and that is *the element of reasoning* and of arguing that comes in. It is very daring, but it is very true. Let me remind you of it. “Moses said unto the Lord, See...”—which really means that he is arguing with God. “See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said...” You see, he is reminding God of what He had said. He is having an argument with God: “And yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. Now therefore,” says Moses, as if he were saying to God, “Be logical, be consistent, carry out your own argument. You cannot say this to me and then not do anything.” “Now therefore, I pray thee, if...”—still arguing—“if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people.” Then in verse 16, “For, wherein”—if you do not do this—“wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated...” He reasoned with God. He argued with God. He reminded God of His own promises, and he pleaded with God in the light of them. He said, “Oh, God, can you not see that having said this you must...?”

Is it right, someone may ask, to speak to God like that? Is this not presumption? No, these things go together. The author of the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, who talked so much about our going boldly to the throne of grace, at the same time reminds us that we do so always with reverence and with godly fear. This is all right. What is happening here is this: we are not seeing a man under the Law speaking to the Lawgiver. No, it is a child here speaking to his father. And the little child can take liberties with his father that a grown-up man, who is not his child, would not dare to take. Oh, yes, this is a child speaking, and he knows it. God has spoken to him, as it were, face to face; and Moses knows that. He comes with his love, his reverence, his godly fear, and he ventures to argue. He says, “You have said this, therefore...”

**Another thing we should notice about prayer is its orderliness, its *directness*: the specific petition.** Notice that Moses here does not offer up some vague, indefinite general prayer. No, he is concentrating on the one great need. Of course, he wor-

shipped God; of course, there was the reverence and the godly fear, yes; but at this point, he concentrates on this one thing: this presence of God. He will not get away from it. He says, "I will not move unless you come. You must come with us." He gives his reasons and plies Him with all these arguments about it.

And if I may speak for myself, I shall not feel happy and encouraged until I feel that the Church is concentrating on this one thing: *prayer for revival*. But we have not come to it. We are still in the state of deciding in committees to do this, that, and the other, and asking God to bless what we have done. No, there is no hope along that line. It *must* be that one thing. We must feel this burden, we must see this as the only hope, and we must concentrate on this, and we must keep on with it—the orderliness, the arrangement, the concentration, the argument, and always the urgency.

Moses here is as Jacob was in Genesis 32. This element always comes into true intercession. "I will not let thee go," said Jacob. I am going on. The morning was breaking; he had been struggling through the night. "Let me go."

"No, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." There is the *urgency*. Read the great biblical prayers; it is always in them. In Acts 4, we read of the Christians asking God to act "now!" "Oh God," they said, "in the light of this, in our situation now: do this. Give us some indication, give us some signs, enable us to witness with this holy boldness, and to bear witness to the resurrection that they are prohibiting us to speak about." See the urgency of the prayer. Moses keeps on coming back to it, repeating it, putting it in different forms and from different angles. But there was just this one thing: "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." Insisting urgently, "I will not let thee go."

There, it seems to me, are some of the lessons from this passage. We say our prayers, but have we ever prayed? Do we know anything about this encounter, this meeting? Have we the assurance of sins forgiven? Are we free from ourselves and self-concern that we may intercede? Have we a real burden for *the glory of God* and the name of the Church? Have we this concern for those who are outside? And are we pleading with God for His own name's sake because of His own promises to hear us and to answer us? Oh, my God, make of us intercessors such as Moses!

It is no use anybody saying, "Ah, but he was an exceptionally great man." God, as we have seen in the history of revivals, has made use of men who are mere nobodies in exactly the same way as He used Moses here...It can be any one of us. May God make of us intercessors such as Moses was.

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**David Martyn Lloyd-Jones** (1899-1981): Well-known expository preacher and minister of Westminster Chapel, London, England, 1938-68; born in Wales, UK.

I would not say a hard word if I did not feel compelled to do it, but I am constrained to remind our brethren that let God send what revival He may, it will not exonerate them from the awful guilt that rests upon them of having been idle and dilatory during the last twenty years. Let all be saved who live now, what about those that have been damned while we have been sleeping? Let God gather in multitudes of sinners, but who shall answer for the blood of those men who have been swept into eternity while we have been going on in our canonical fashion, content to go along the path of propriety and walk around the path of dull routine, but never weeping for sinners, never agonizing for souls.—*Charles Spurgeon*

We cannot be too much in earnest about the saving even of one lost one. I believe we know almost nothing of that deep compassion and yearning love for a dying world, which, as saints, we ought ever to feel.—*Horatius Bonar*

# PREPARATION FOR REVIVAL

Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)

*“Can two walk together, except they be agreed?”—Amos 3:3*

**I**F we would have the presence of God, it is necessary that we should be agreed with Him. We must be agreed with God as to the *end*<sup>1</sup> of our *Christian existence*. God hath formed us for Himself that we may show forth His praise. The main end of a Christian man is that, having been bought with precious blood, he may live unto Christ and not unto himself. O brethren! I am afraid we are not agreed with God in this. I must say it, painful though it be: there are many professors,<sup>2</sup> and there are some in this church, who at least appear to believe that the main end of their Christian existence is to get to heaven, to get as much money as they can on earth, and to leave as much as they can to their children when they die. I say, “To get to heaven,” for they selfishly include that as one of the designs of divine grace. But I question, if it were not for their happiness to go to heaven, whether they would care much about going, if it were only for God’s glory—for their way of living upon earth is always thus: “What shall I eat? what shall I drink? wherewithal shall I be clothed?” (*cf.* Mat 6:31). Religion never calls out their thoughtfulness. They can judge, weigh, plot, and plan to get money, but they have no plans as to how they can serve God. The cause of God is scarcely in their thoughts. They will pinch and screw<sup>3</sup> to see how little they can contribute in any way to the maintenance of the cause of truth or to the spread of the Redeemer’s kingdom. They will so far condescend to consider religion, as to think how they can profess it in the most economical manner, but nothing more. You will not hear me speak so foolishly and madly, as if I thought that it were not just and laudable<sup>4</sup> in a man to seek to make money to supply the wants<sup>5</sup> of his family or even to provide for them on his own decease; such a thing is just and right. But whenever this gets to be the main thought, and I am persuaded it is the leading thought of too many professors, such men forget Whose they are, and Whom they serve. They are living to themselves; they have forgotten Who it is that has said, “Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as with silver and gold” (1Pe 1:18).

Oh! I pray God that I may feel that I am God’s man, that I have not a hair on my head that is not consecrated<sup>6</sup> nor a drop of my blood that is not dedicated to His cause. And I pray, brethren and sisters, that you may feel the same—that selfishness

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<sup>1</sup> **end** – purpose; goal.

<sup>2</sup> **professors** – those who profess faith in Christ outwardly.

<sup>3</sup> **pinch and screw** – become tightfisted and stingy.

<sup>4</sup> **laudable** – worthy of high praise.

<sup>5</sup> **wants** – things lacking.

<sup>6</sup> **consecrated** – dedicated to a sacred purpose.

may clean die out of you, that you may be able to say without any straining of the truth, “I have nothing to care for, nor to live for in this world, but that I may glorify God and spread forth the savor of my Savior’s name.” We cannot expect the Master’s blessing until we are agreed about this. This is God’s will: is it our will today?

I know I have around me many faithful hearts who will say, “My desire is that whether I live or die, Christ may be glorified in me.” If we be all of that mind, God will walk with us. But everyone who is of another mind and of a divided heart is a hindrance and an injury to us in our progress. It would be no loss to lose such persons, but a spiritual benefit to the entire cause if this dead lumber were cast out...

**If we would have God with us, we must be agreed as to the *real desirableness and necessity of the conversion of souls*.** God thinks souls to be very precious, and His own words are, “For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye” (Eze 18:32). Are we agreed with God in that? Our God thinks souls to be so precious that, if a man could gain the whole world and lose his soul, he would be a loser. Are we agreed with Him there? In the person of Christ, our God wept over Jerusalem, watering with tears that city that must be given up to the flames. Have we tears, too? Have we compassion, too?...Do we stir our souls to an agony of grief because men will turn from God and will willfully perish in their sin? If, on the contrary, you and I selfishly say, “We are safe; it does not matter to us whether others are brought to know Christ,” [then] we are not agreed, [and] God will not work with us. Such of you as feel this indifferentism,<sup>7</sup> this cursed lethargy,<sup>8</sup> are our bane,<sup>9</sup> our burden, our hindrance. God forgive you, and stir you up to feel that your heart will not rest unless poor sinners are plucked as brands from the burning (Amo 4:11). Are we agreed here?

**If we would have the Lord with us, in the next place, we must be agreed as to the *means*<sup>10</sup> to be used in revival.** We are agreed that the first means is the preaching of Christ. We do not want any other doctrine than that we have received—Christ lifted up upon His cross, as the serpent was lifted up upon the pole (Num 21:9). This is the remedy that we, in this house of prayer, believe in. Let others choose sweet music, pictures, vestments, baptismal water, confirmation, or human rites; we abhor them and pour contempt upon them. As for us, our only hope lies in the doctrine of a substitute for sinners, the great fact of the atonement, the glorious truth that Christ Jesus came into the world to seek and to save sinners. I think we are agreed with God in this: the preaching of Christ is the way by which believers shall be saved.

**God’s great agency is the *Holy Spirit*.** We are agreed, brethren, that we do not want sinners to be converted by our persuasion; we do not want them brought into the

<sup>7</sup> **indifferentism** – the absence of zeal, interest, concern, or attention.

<sup>8</sup> **lethargy** – lack of energy and enthusiasm.

<sup>9</sup> **bane** – cause of misery.

<sup>10</sup> **means** – something or someone used as an instrument to achieve a purpose; in this case, as an instrument in the hands of God, used for His purpose.

church by excitement. We want the Spirit's work and the Spirit's work alone. I would not bend my knee once in prayer, much less day by day, to win a mere excitement; we have done without it, and we shall do without it by the grace of God. But I would give mine eyes if I might but know that the Holy Spirit Himself would come forth and show what divinity can do in turning hearts of stone to flesh. In this thing, I think that we are agreed with God.

**But God's way of blessing the church is by the instrumentality of *all her members*.** The multitude must be fed, but it must not be by Christ's hand alone: "He gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples, to the multitude" (Mat 14:19). Are you all agreed here? I am afraid not. Many of you are engaged in works of usefulness, and I will make this my boast this day, that I had never thought that I should meet with a people as apostolic in their zeal as most of you have been. I have marveled and my heart has rejoiced, when I have seen what self-sacrifice some of the poorest among you have made for Christ: what zeal, what enthusiasm you have manifested in the spreading abroad of the Savior's name. Still, some of you are doing *nothing* whatever: you have a name to live, but I fear that you are dead. You are very seldom at a prayer meeting—even some church members and persons whom I know are not kept at home by business, but by sheer indifference to the cause of God. Some of you are never provoked to zeal and to good works. That you come and listen to us is something; and for what you do, we are grateful. But for what you do not do, *over this we mourn*...fearing that we are restrained in our efforts for the spread of the Savior's kingdom because as a church we are not agreed in God's plan. We shall be restrained until every man in the church can say, "I will consecrate myself this day unto the Lord of hosts! If there is anything to be done, be it to be a door-keeper in the house of God, here am I"...

**Yet again, dear friends, are we agreed this day as to *our utter helplessness in this work*?** I caught a good sentence the other day. Speaking with a Wesleyan<sup>11</sup> minister, I said to him, "Your denomination during the past year did not increase: you have usually had a large increase to your numbers. You were never as rich as now. Your ministers were never so well educated; you never had such good chapels as now; and yet you never had so little success. What are you doing? Knowing this to be the fact, what are you doing? How are the minds of your brethren exercised with regard to this?" He comforted me much by the reply. He said, "It has driven us to our knees: we thank God that we know our state and are not content with it. We have had a day of humiliation, and I hope," he said, "some of us have gone low enough to be blessed." There is a great truth in that last [phrase], "low enough to be blessed." I do fear that some of us never do go low enough to be blessed. When a man says, "Oh! Yes, we are getting on very well, we do not want any revival that I know of," I fear [that] he is not low enough to be blessed. And when you and I pray to God with pride in us, with self-exaltation,

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<sup>11</sup> **Wesleyan** – a follower of the teachings of John Wesley and the Methodist tradition.

with a confidence in our own zeal, or even in the prevalence<sup>12</sup> of our own prayers of themselves, we have not come low enough to be blessed. A humble church will be a blessed church. A church that is willing to confess its own errors and failures and to lie at the foot of Christ's cross is in a position to be favored of the Lord. I hope we are agreed, then, with God, as to our utter unworthiness and helplessness, so that we look to Him alone.

I charge you all to be agreed with God in this thing that if any good shall be done, any conversions shall occur, all the glory must be given to Him. Revivals have often been spoiled, either by persons boasting that such-and-such a minister was the means of them or else, as in the case of the North of Ireland, by boasting that the work was done without ministers. That revival, mark you, was stopped in its very midst and seriously damaged by being made a kind of curiosity, and a thing to be gazed at and to be wondered at by persons both at home and abroad. God does not care to work for the honor of men—minister or laymen—or of churches either. If we should say, "Ah! well, I should like to see the presence of God with us that we may have many conversions and put it in the magazine, and say, 'That is how things are done at the Tabernacle,'" we should not have a blessing that way. Crowns! crowns! crowns! but all for Thy head Jesus! Laurels and wreaths! But none for man—*all for Him* Whose own right hand and Whose holy arm hath gotten Him the victory. We must all be agreed on this point, and I hope we are.

*Now, let us put away all those things that offend our God.* Before God appeared upon Mount Sinai, the children of Israel had to cleanse themselves for three days. Before Israel could take possession of the promised rest of Canaan, Joshua had to see to it that they were purified by the rite of circumcision. Whenever God would visit His people, He always demands of them some preparatory purging that they may be fit to behold His presence; for two cannot walk together unless that which would make them disagree be purged out (Amo 3:3). A few suggestions then, as to whether there is anything in us with which God cannot agree. Here I cannot preach to you indiscriminately, but put the task into the hand of each man to preach to himself. In the days of the great weeping, we read that every man wept apart and his wife apart, the son apart, and the daughter apart; all the families apart. So it must be here.

**Is there *pride in me*?** Am I puffed up with my talent, my substance, my character, my success? Lord, purge this out of me...for none shall ever say that God and the proud soul are friends: He "giveth grace to the humble" (1Pe 5:5). As for the proud, He knoweth them "afar off" (Psa 138:6) and will not let them come near to Him.

**Am I *slothful*?** Do I waste hours that I might usefully employ? Have I the levity of the butterfly, which flits from flower to flower but drinks no honey from any of them? Or have I the industry of the bee, which, wherever it lights, would find some sweet store for the hive? Lord, Thou knowest my soul. Thou understandest me. Am I doing

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<sup>12</sup> **prevalence** – effective force or power; influence.

little where I might do much? Hast Thou had but little reaping for much sowing? Have I hid my talent in a napkin? Have I spent that talent for myself, instead of spending it for Thee? Slothful souls cannot walk with God! “My Father worketh,” saith Jesus, “and I work” (Joh 5:17); and you who stand in the marketplace idle may stand there with the devil, but you cannot stand there with God. Let every brother who is guilty of this purge away his sloth.

**Am I guilty of *worldliness*?** This is the crying sin of many in the Christian church. Do I put myself into association with men who cannot by any possibility profit me? Am I seen where my Master would not go? Do I love amusements that cannot afford me comfort when I reflect upon them, and that I would never indulge in, if I thought that Christ would come while I was at them? Am I worldly in spirit as to fashion? Am I as showy, as volatile,<sup>13</sup> as frivolous as men and women of the world? If so, if I love the world, “the love of the Father is not in” me (1Jo 2:15); consequently He cannot walk with me, for we are not agreed.

**Again, am I *covetous*?** Do I scrape and grind? Is my first thought not how I can honor God, but how I can accumulate wealth? When I gain wealth, do I forget to make use of it as a steward? If so, then God is not agreed with me; I am a thief with His substance; I have set myself up for a master instead of being a servant, and God will not walk with me until I begin to feel that this is not my own but His, and that I must use it in [the fear of God].

**Again, am I of an *angry spirit*?** Am I harsh towards my brethren? Do I cherish envy towards those who are better than I am or contempt towards those who are worse off? If so, God cannot walk with me, for He hates envy, and all contempt of the poor is abhorrent to Him.

**Is there any *lust* in me?** Do I indulge the flesh? Am I fond of carnal indulgences by which my soul suffers? If so, God will not walk with me; for chambering, wantonness, gluttony, and drunkenness separate between a believer and His God: these things are not convenient<sup>14</sup> to a Christian. Before the great feast of unleavened bread, a Jewish parent would sweep out every piece of leaven from his house. So anxious would he be, and so anxious is the Jew at the present day, that he takes a candle and sweeps out every cupboard; no matter though there may have been no food put in there at any time, he is afraid lest by accident a crumb may be somewhere concealed in the house. So, from the garret<sup>15</sup> to the cellar, he clears the whole house through to purge out the old leaven. Let *us* do so!

I cannot think you will do so as the effect of such poor words as mine—but if my soul could speak to you and God blessed the utterance, you would. For my own part, I cry unto my Master that if there be anything that can make me more fit to be the messenger of God to you and to the sons of men, however painful might be the preparato-

<sup>13</sup> **volatile** – readily changing from one interest or mood to another; fickle.

<sup>14</sup> **convenient** – fit; suitable; proper.

<sup>15</sup> **garret** – attic; that part of a house that is immediately under the roof.



ry process, He would graciously be pleased not to spare me of it. If by sickness, if by serious calamities, if by slander and rebuke, more honor can be brought to Him, then hail! and welcome! all these things. They shall be my joy, and to receive them shall be delight. I pray you, utter the same desire: “Lord, make me fit to be the means of glorifying thee.”

From a sermon delivered Sunday morning, October 30, 1864, at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington; available from CHAPEL LIBRARY with two other sermons in a booklet entitled *Revival*.

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**Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892):** English Baptist minister; history’s most widely read preacher (apart from those found in Scripture); born at Kelvedon, Essex, England.



# PRAY FOR THE SPIRIT

James W. Alexander (1804-1859)

**I**N order to have mighty and unexampled revival, what we especially need is for the whole Church to be down on its knees before God. Past redemptions should make our cravings great. “I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt; open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it” (Psa 81:10). Thousands have already been seen gathered in one place for prayer, but when “the Spirit of grace and of supplications” is poured out on the great body of Christians, touched with pity for the desolations of the spiritual Jerusalem, that word will come true: “Thou shalt arise *and* have mercy upon Zion, for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come; for thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof” (Psa 102:13-14). Oh! That God’s people were awake to the privilege of crying aloud for His great gift!

Open your mind, believing reader, to the extraordinary truth that God has an infinite willingness to bestow in answer to prayer that which, since the sending of His Son, is the greatest of all His possible gifts. “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (Luk 11:13). O parent! Ponder on this blessed verse: there is that within thy heart that will reveal its meaning! What is it that God is so ready to give? It is that which secures and applies all the benefits of Christ’s mediation, that which makes revivals here and heaven hereafter; it is the Holy Spirit! Ought not all disciples, all over the world, to be prostrate before the throne of grace, beseeching God for Christ’s sake to communicate this all-comprehensive boon?<sup>1</sup> To Him only do we look because with Him is “the residue of the spirit” (Mal 2:15). But we ask in the name of Christ, for the very name means “anointed,” and the anointing, which flows from Him as Head to all the members, is this very gift, the Holy Spirit, “For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him” (Joh 3:34). He hath it immeasurably, and for His Church—and they draw for it in His name by prayer. Occupy a few moments upon this great gift; it will aid your prayers.

**1. THERE IS SUCH A THING AS THE POURING OUT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.** As Moses “poured of the anointing oil on Aaron’s head” (Lev 8:12), so God pours the unction of His Spirit on the head of our Great High Priest. And as the ceremonial fragrance flowed down to “the skirts of his garments” (Psa 133:2), so the gift of the Spirit comes on all believers. “The anointing which ye have received of him,” says the Apostle John, “abideth in you” (1Jo 2:27). But the effusion<sup>2</sup> is sometimes uncommonly great, even to outpouring. Some have found fault with the term, which nevertheless is in-

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<sup>1</sup> **boon** – prayer to God; request.

<sup>2</sup> **effusion** – pouring out.

tensely biblical and consecrated in the Church. Among promises to Israel in the latter day, the Lord says, “Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD” (Eze 39:29). Apostolic comment applies to New Testament times the words of another prophet: “I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh” (Joe 2:28). So in another place: “Behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you” (Pro 1:23).

The idea necessarily presented is that of bountiful effusion. Let us ask for it! The Lord Jesus comforted His sorrowing disciples by the promise of this gift as the result of His ascension. “If I depart, I will send him unto you” (Joh 16:7). This Comforter He did send, O! how graciously and gloriously, at the first Christian Pentecost. “Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost,” said the Apostle Peter, “he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear” (Act 2:33). There had just been suddenly a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, filling all the house where they were sitting, “and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost” (Act 2:4). Do not fail to observe that believers had been in union of prayer for this very gift, thus complying with the Lord’s injunction that they should “wait for the promise of the Father” (*cf.* Act 1:4-5, 14; 2:1).

The gift was continued under early preaching: “the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word” (Act 10:44). The same apostle, many years afterwards, refers to the known fact of “the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven” (1Pe 1:12). Every great awakening and plentiful harvest of souls has proceeded from the same Spirit, sought by the same importunity of beseeching prayer. Therefore, pray for the Spirit!

**2. THE INFLUENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD IS EXCEEDINGLY POWERFUL.** We ask for something mighty and revolutionizing. We are praying for Omnipotence. A wicked city, a wicked world, will yield to no inferior strength. What an encouragement that “in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength” (Isa 26:4). It is as applicable to revival of the Church as to the rebuilding of the Temple: “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts” (Zec 4:6). Let Christians no longer despair of the conversion of high-handed sinners, even the vilest of the vile, in our filthiest and bloodiest places; as if we expected in answer to our prayers only some weak, halfway operation. “Our gospel,” says the Apostle of the Gentiles, “came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance” (1Th 1:5). This is our ground of hope when the ministers of the Word proclaim the glad tidings that the preaching may be “in demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (1Co 2:4). God grant us deliverance from our unbelief as to the power of the Holy Spirit in giving efficacy<sup>3</sup> to the truth!

**3. THE SPIRIT, WHOM WE SEEK, IS THE AUTHOR OF REGENERATION AND SANCTIFICATION.**<sup>4</sup> If God gives us these in wide extent, our revival will be indeed

<sup>3</sup> **efficacy** – power to produce a desired result.

<sup>4</sup> See FGB 215, *Sanctification*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

complete. “That which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (Joh 3:5-6, 8). All believers shout the same praise: “According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Ti 3:5). Look at thousands, utterly blind as to spiritual realities, and say, What can we ask for them so indispensably important, as that Spirit of Truth, Who will “reprove [or convince] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (Joh 16:8)? He is just as able to convert the murderer or the fallen woman as the church-going Pharisee, just as able to renew a thousand as one. Who is sufficiently awake to the necessity of imploring God to convert a multitude of sinners?

All revival of the Church is increased sanctification; all reclaiming of the impenitent<sup>5</sup> is sanctification begun. For both, we need the gift of the Spirit, and we need it now. We need it to break the power of sin in professing Christians and to nail their lusts to the cross, for it is by this influence that we “do mortify the deeds of the body” (Rom 8:13). Some of the primitive<sup>6</sup> believers had been atrocious sinners; “But,” says the Apostle Paul, “ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1Co 6:11). Hope, joy, love, and consequent activity and success are fruits of the same Spirit (Rom 5:5; 1Th 1:6). In a word, the Spirit of God is the Spirit of revival. Earnest, daily, united prayer of the people of Christ for this high gift puts honor upon God in a remarkable degree. We already have cause to note how signally He blesses endeavors that were openly begun in prayer. Beloved brethren, let us not mistake the token nor fail to go in the path pointed out by Providence and the Spirit.

**4. THE HOLY SPIRIT SENDS THOSE GIFTS NECESSARY FOR SUCCESSFUL WORK.** When miraculous gifts were necessary, they were not withheld. All inspiration, wisdom, and ministry are from the same source. So also are the common qualifications for service demanded in the daily walk of an earnest Christian who seeks to save souls. “There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all; but the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal” (1Co 12:6-7). The Lord promised that the Spirit should prompt His disciples when arraigned<sup>7</sup> (Luk 12:12). Equally does the blessed Monitor<sup>8</sup> fill their hearts and lips for common service! Apostles themselves sought for “utterance” by means of prayer (Eph 6:19), and a praying church will have a ministry and members [who are] bold and loving in owning and recommending their Lord. The supplications that bring down such influences are themselves wrought of God when believers, keeping themselves in the love of God, are at the same time “praying in the Holy Ghost” (Jude 20). See thus how completely dependent we are for all upon the Holy Spirit of God. Grace manifestly began the work; grace keeps it alive; grace must carry it on and give it extension.

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<sup>5</sup> **impenitent** – someone who does not repent.

<sup>6</sup> **primitive** – from a very long time ago; in context, of the first century.

<sup>7</sup> **arraigned** – called before a court to answer a criminal charge.

<sup>8</sup> **Monitor** – one who gives advice or warning to another as to his conduct, i.e., God’s Spirit.

Brethren, we must pray as we have never yet prayed. Our lack of success is due to our coldness of desire and of request. We are not limited in God, but in our own low, slender conceptions and hopes. We have not, because we ask not (Jam 4:2). If we were under a deep and solemn impression of the divine power, bounty, and faithfulness, “How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight” (Deu 32:30)! The lesson that the Revival should teach us is the duty of being instant in supplication for the larger and more glorious effusion of the Holy Spirit. Acting on this, we shall behold new marvels of love in the place of prayer.

Although places of instruction and worship are greatly needed, and although all wealthy Christians should feel guilty until such is established, it is not enough to provide these means. Experience proves that good buildings may remain empty and able preachers unheard. We need a shock to rouse these benumbed souls, an impulse to urge them toward inquiry, a mighty drawing to bring them to the Word. The chief need of those outside is that of interest, awakening, motive; something to make them go to church and care for their own souls. Popular reformations under the truth have this effect in some measure. Indeed, we can think of nothing more likely to compel the attention of worldly, violent, and blasphemous men and women, than a mighty tide of revival, pressing its repeated waves into their miserable homes and hearts. Bad influences are propagated thus—why not good influences? All through the electric circle of a certain class, one hour will suffice to thrill the morbid, passionate excitement of a prizefight, a murder, or a rising mob; why should not the same human conductors bear such impulses as have driven multitudes to hear a Luther,<sup>9</sup> a Whitefield,<sup>10</sup> or a Spurgeon?<sup>11</sup> Would to God that we could see the day in which the messages of salvation and the meeting for prayer should be crowded by the very class who now fills bars, dance halls, caverns of lawless pleasure, and jails! Nothing will effect this but great unexampled awakening; and for this, we are to pray. If we carefully read what our blessed Lord spoke in the parable concerning the two sons, we shall see that these are the people who not only need the truth, but who are accessible to its power. “Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans<sup>12</sup> and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you” (Mat 21:28-32).

When in so remarkable a manner God is displaying His readiness to convert great numbers to Himself, all who fear His name and love the souls of men ought to be prostrate before Him—in beseeching cries that He would vouchsafe<sup>13</sup> to urge the work of grace more widely and profoundly through the depraved multitude. As certainly as

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<sup>9</sup> **Martin Luther** (1483–1546) – German Protestant theologian, the leading figure of the German Reformation.

<sup>10</sup> **George Whitefield** (1714-1770) – the best-known evangelist of the 18th century that God greatly used in England and the American Colonies during the “Great Awakening.”

<sup>11</sup> **Charles Spurgeon** (1834-1892) – influential Baptist preacher.

<sup>12</sup> **publicans** – tax collectors.

<sup>13</sup> **vouchsafe** – give or grant in a gracious manner.

faith and love beget prayer, so certainly will prayer beget action...The blind and vicious, from whose ranks the levies are made for riots and prisons, will not flock to the preached Word until some fresh and irresistible influence, affecting the whole population, finds its way to the very scenes of their sin. Prayer for such an influence is clearly laid before us as a duty. While we pray, we must work. These children of the wicked one will not come to the light: it must be carried to them. By making the effort in concert and exhaustively, so as to leave no nook or corner untouched, and by giving to the miserable some tidings of that rich gospel feast that awaits their acceptance, we shall instrumentally “compel them to come in” (Luk 14:23).

From *The Revival and Its Lessons*, American Tract Society, New York, 1858; available as a tract from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

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**James W. Alexander (1804-1859):** Presbyterian minister, son of Archibald Alexander; born in Hopewell, Virginia.



Revival leads people to take refuge in the cross of Christ. The end of revival is not groans or cryings out in agony of soul, but rather the light that comes with true and living faith in the Lord Jesus.—*John R. de Witt*

# THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Robert M. M'Cheyne (1813-1843)

**D**IVERSITY and ceaseless change appear to be enstamped on all the works of God. Perpetual change pervades the universe; and the variety of the external world, from the mightiest object to the minutest, evinces<sup>1</sup> the unsearchable wisdom and infinite resources of the omnipotent and unchangeable Creator. This earth on which we dwell is endlessly diversified with continent and ocean—mountain and plain—the fruitful field and the primeval<sup>2</sup> wilderness—trees and shrubs and beauteous flowers—the glassy lake and the majestic river—the foaming cataract<sup>3</sup> whose “mighty waters” roll evermore their deafening thunders, and the meandering rivulet<sup>4</sup> that creeps along the grassy vale—the peopled territory and the untenanted<sup>5</sup> Sahara—the city’s crowded thoroughfares and stupefying din,<sup>6</sup> and the sequestered<sup>7</sup> retreats of rural solitude.

Earth’s nations are ever changing; and they, too, are endlessly diversified in their characteristic features: place, power, position, and civilization. During the course of the “slow-treading ages,” one nation after another rises into a prominent position and assumes a commanding influence, carries its conquering arms over half the globe, attains to preeminence in the arts and sciences, in literature and commerce, and eventually falls into decay and perishes in oblivion. The people are now at rest; and political quiet, deep as the silent moon of night, broods over them—and anon, they surge and tumultuate<sup>8</sup> like the storm-lashed waves of the “ancient sea.” Revolution reigns. Undying change has assumed the insignia of supremacy, and the thrones of dynasties, long thought to be [as] stable as the firm foundations of the “everlasting hills,” are convulsively overthrown. The diadems<sup>9</sup> of the mightiest monarchs are dashed in the dust, and the scepter of empire falls from the enfeebled grasp of tyrants, who have been a scourge and terror to the world, like the rejected plaything of a pampered child.

“Things under the earth” also are liable to silent, convulsive, and periodical change. The subterranean fires appear for many a day to have been extinguished, and again they burst forth at the belching mouths of the quivering volcano. The earth-

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<sup>1</sup> **evinces** – proves beyond doubt.

<sup>2</sup> **primeval** – pertaining to the first age of the world; of anything ancient.

<sup>3</sup> **cataract** – large waterfall.

<sup>4</sup> **meandering rivulet** – small stream that follows a winding course.

<sup>5</sup> **untenanted** – not occupied.

<sup>6</sup> **stupefying din** – a noise so loud that it stuns with amazement.

<sup>7</sup> **sequestered** – isolated; secluded or separated from society.

<sup>8</sup> **tumultuate** – violently disturb.

<sup>9</sup> **diadems** – crowns.

quake, in its terrific and devastating course, tears up the loveliest regions of our world, transforms cities and villages into heaps of ruins, and tens of thousands of their unfortunate inhabitants are crushed to death between its devouring jaws.

The seasons, too, are ever changing—in one place silently and gradually, at another suddenly and violently. Man himself, physically, mentally, and morally, is also the subject of incessant<sup>10</sup> change. Nature and society are thus characterized by infinite diversity, periodical and convulsive change, as well as by quiet and less noticeable mutation.

And “the grace of God that bringeth salvation” appears to manifest the same general features and to be subject to the same general laws. The great work of awakening and conversion<sup>11</sup> is generally accomplished silently and gradually under the regular ministrations of the sanctuary; but there are times when God, in His wise and holy Providence,<sup>12</sup> answers prayer “by terrible things in righteousness” (Psa 65:5). Close upon the back of a judgment period, the Holy Spirit descends upon a whole community as “a rushing mighty wind” (Act 2:2), like “floods upon the dry ground” (Isa 44:3), or “like rain upon the mown grass” (Psa 72:6). The great heart of society begins to heave and palpitate as the heart of one man—and myriads<sup>13</sup> of careless sinners are arrested, alarmed, filled with anxiety about salvation, and turned simultaneously to look on Him Whom they have pierced, and mourn those sins that pierced Him and brought Him to the dust of death.

The quiet conversion of one sinner after another under the ordinary ministry of the gospel must always be regarded with feelings of satisfaction and gratitude by the ministers and disciples of Christ. But a periodical manifestation of the simultaneous conversion of thousands is also to be considered because of its adaptation to afford a visible and impressive demonstration to a world lying in wickedness, that God has made that same Jesus, Whom they have rejected and crucified, both Lord and Christ; and that, in virtue of His divine mediatorship,<sup>14</sup> He has assumed the royal scepter of universal supremacy and must reign until all “his enemies be made his footstool” (Heb 10:12-13). And, considering that He is “by the right hand of God exalted” (Act

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<sup>10</sup> **incessant** – continuing for a long time without stopping.

<sup>11</sup> See FGB 195, *Conversion*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

<sup>12</sup> **Providence** – What are the works of providence? A. God’s works of providence are His most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all His creatures, and all their actions. (Spurgeon’s Catechism, Q. 11)

<sup>13</sup> **myriads** – countless numbers.

<sup>14</sup> **mediatorship** – the office of being a mediator, i.e., one who intervenes between two hostile parties in order to restore them to a relationship of harmony and unity. “It pleased God in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus His only begotten Son, according to the covenant made between them both, to be the Mediator between God and man; the Prophet, Priest and King; Head and Savior of His Church, the heir of all things, and judge of the world: unto Whom He did from all eternity give a people to be His seed, and to be by Him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.” (Second London Baptist Confession, 8.1); See FGB 183, *Christ the Mediator*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.



2:33) as the rightful though rejected Sovereign of the world, is it not reasonable to expect that, from time to time, He will repeat that which, on the day of Pentecost, formed the conclusive and crowning evidence of His Messiahship and Sovereignty? By so doing, [will He not] startle the slumbering souls of careless worldlings, gain the attentive ear of the unconverted, and in a remarkable way break in upon those brilliant dreams of earthly glory, grandeur, wealth, power, and happiness, which the rebellious and God-forgetting multitude so fondly cherish?

Such an outpouring of the Holy Spirit would form at once a demonstrative proof of the completeness and acceptance of His once offering of Himself as a sacrifice for sin, and a prophetic “earnest”<sup>15</sup> of the certainty that He shall “appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Heb 9:28), to “judge the world in righteousness” (Act 17:31), and to “give every man according as his work shall be” (Rev 22:12). In every age of the Church, the God of our salvation has graciously bestowed the Holy Spirit in His demonstrative<sup>16</sup> power, that He might glorify Jesus by discovering Him in all His fullness to the regenerated souls of multitudes of His ransomed people. When “the promise of the Father” (Act 1:4) was first realized on the solemn day of the first Pentecost, after the ascension of Jesus to the right hand of power, an all but universal awakening was experienced, and thousands of Jerusalem sinners were simultaneously convinced of sin and converted to God. We read that “about three thousand souls” (Act 2:41) repented and were baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins and received the gift of the Holy Ghost (Act 2:38), as the result of one exhibition of the Cross and Scepter of the glorified Emmanuel. With one voice we exclaim, “How blessed!”

But how very many of us are, at the same time, entertaining the idea that—although it was peculiarly needful then as a testimony for Jesus, and to solemnize the inauguration of the new dispensation, which is termed emphatically “the ministration of the Spirit” (2Co 3:8)—such a remarkable outpouring of the Holy Spirit and such a vast number of simultaneous conversions are not to be expected in subsequent ages. But, by harboring such a thought, we entertain an opinion that both Scripture and ecclesiastical<sup>17</sup> history unite to disclaim:<sup>18</sup> for the Word of God leads us still to expect the Holy Spirit, “like floods upon the dry ground” (Isa 44:3). Such “times of refreshing” (Act 3:19) and widespread, simultaneous conversion have repeatedly occurred in the history of the Church, as to prove conclusively that extraordinary religious awakening and simultaneous conversion ought not to be regarded as peculiar to the day of Pentecost, but as part of the ordinary working out of God’s great purpose of grace: for the conviction and conversion of the ungodly and for ultimately “bringing many sons unto glory” (Heb 2:10).

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<sup>15</sup> **earnest** – pledge of anything afterwards to be received in greater abundance.

<sup>16</sup> **demonstrative** – serving as conclusive evidence.

<sup>17</sup> **ecclesiastical** – related to the Christian church.

<sup>18</sup> **disclaim** – deny.

The history of the Church in our own land bears ample and frequent testimony to such periodical awakening and remarkable revival; and for some time, the Christian professors of these realms have been partially awakening from their spiritual slumbers by news of the Holy Spirit falling upon multitudes of the inhabitants of the United States of America. A great awakening is still going forward there. The Spirit of God seems to have descended in His awakening power upon various localities over the entire nation; for, in all parts of the country and among all classes of society, there appears to be an intense desire and a very general movement to “go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts” (Zec 8:21).

Religion has become the all-absorbing topic, and the salvation of the soul the all-engrossing subject. The press, both religious and secular, has been teeming with details of the mighty awakening. Hundreds of thousands have been converted. What a minister in New York said in the course of a sermon in 1851 of the triumphs of Christ’s cause has been realized almost to the very letter:

“The time is coming, when His successes shall be reported with more than the rapidity of Napoleon’s victories; when the press shall teem with intelligence of Christian movements in the world; when the steamer shall furrow the deep to speed the tidings of His power; when the electric wires shall thrill with heavenly life to convey from city to city, and from continent to continent, the news of revivals of religion and of ‘a nation born at once’ (Isa 66:8). The kingdom of Christ is yet to be the one thing thought of in the world and at every market, in every exchange, in every bulletin. At the street corners, men shall speak of the glory of His kingdom and talk of His power one to another, making known His mighty acts and the glorious majesty of His kingdom.”

“These words,” says an American paper, “given as they were written, and spoken seven years ago, may then have passed for impassioned rhetoric; now they are but a literal transcript of what is daily passing before our eyes.”

Hope is a little word, but it is a pregnant one. It is the verbal symbol for one of the mightiest, most pleasing, and powerful emotions of the human mind. It is also all pervading and is therefore as common as it is needful in this sin-blighted world. It forms the sunshine of childhood, the daydream of youth, and the entrancing vision of ripening manhood. It is the summer of the soul, the lever of fortune, the lamp of the unfortunate, and the ready solace of daily toil. It is, in short, the delicious music of futurity, which falls in flute-like notes upon the harassed mind, as it issues forth from the untrodden solitudes of coming years. Ours is an expectant nature!

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**Robert Murray M’Cheyne (1813-1843):** Scottish Presbyterian minister; a godly pastor and evangelist with a great love for souls, whose ministry was marked by deep personal holiness, prayer, and powerful evangelical preaching; born in Edinburgh, Scotland.



A revival, like a genuine conversion, is wrought of God by means of the Word—the Word applied by the Holy Spirit, of course. Therefore, there is something more needed (on our part) than prayer: the Word of God must have a place, a prominent place, *the* prominent place. Without that, there will be no revival, whatever excitement and activities of the emotions there may be.—A. W. Pink

Oh ye to whom all this is as an idle tale, who love not God, neither serve Him, I beseech you stop and think for a moment...God has striven with some of you. You have had your times of conviction. You are trying now, perhaps, to be infidels. You are trying to say now, “There is no hell; there is no hereafter.” It will not do! You know there is a hell, and all the laughter of those who seek to ruin your souls cannot make you believe that there is not. You sometimes try to think

so, but you know that God is true. I do not argue with you now. Conscience tells you that God will punish you for sin. Depend upon it: you will find no happiness in trying to stifle God’s Spirit. This is not the path to bliss, to quench those thoughts that would lead you to Christ.—*Charles Spurgeon*

# SOLEMN PLEADINGS FOR REVIVAL

Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)

*“Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength.”—Isaiah 41:1*

I cannot suggest to Christian people a more urgent topic than this: we should plead with God that He would display among us greater works of grace than our eyes have yet seen. We have read of wonderful revivals; history records the prodigies<sup>1</sup> of the Reformation, and the marvelous way in which the gospel was spread during the first two centuries. We pine to see the like again or to know the reason why it is not so, and with holy boldness it is our desire to *come before the Lord and plead with Him*, as a man pleadeth with his friend. May God help us so to do in the power of the Holy Ghost.

1. **LET US BE SILENT.** “Keep silence before me, O islands.” Before the controversy opens, let us be silent with solemn *awe*, for we have to speak with the Lord God Almighty! Let us not open our mouths to impugn<sup>2</sup> His wisdom, nor allow our hearts to question His love. What if things do not look as bright as we could wish? The Lord reigneth. What if He seems to delay? Is He not the Lord God with Whom a thousand years are as one day, and Who is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness? We are going to make bold to speak with Him; but still, He is the eternal God and we are dust and ashes. Whatever we may say with holy boldness, we would not utter a word in rash familiarity. He is our Father, but He is our Father *in heaven*. He is our Friend; but at the same time, He is our Judge. We know that whatsoever He doeth is best. We would not say unto our Maker, “What makest thou?” nor to our Creator, “What hast thou done?” Shall the potter give account to the clay for the works of his hands (Isa 29:16)? It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good (Jdg 10:15).

When we look at what He doeth, it may seem to our dim apprehension to be exceeding strange and we may fail to read its meaning; but we need not wish to read it. It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; and if He chooses to conceal it, let it be concealed. Truly, God is good to Israel and His mercy endureth forever. If this world’s history is to drag on through another score of mournful centuries, it will only reveal so much the more matter for praise when the great hallelujahs of the ultimate victory shall peal<sup>3</sup> forth.

**Our silence of awe should deepen into that of *shame*.** For, my brethren, though it is certainly true that the cause of God has not prospered, whose fault is this? If there has

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<sup>1</sup> **prodigies** – amazing or marvelous things.

<sup>2</sup> **impugn** – fight against; call into question.

<sup>3</sup> **peal** – ring loudly.

been straitening,<sup>4</sup> it has not been in God. Where then has it been? If the seed has rotted under the clods or if the cankerworm has eaten the green shoot so that the reaper has not joyfully filled his arm, whence cometh it? Has there not been sin among us, ay, sin in the church of God? What if Israel has turned her back in the day of battle? Is there not an accursed thing in the camp and an Achan who has hidden away the goodly Babylonish garment and the shekel of gold (Jos 7)? God saith, “Is there not a cause? Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amo 3:3). “If ye...walk contrary unto me; Then will I also walk contrary unto you” (Lev 26:23-24).

Truly, when I see how God has blessed us, I am not so much astonished that He has not given more, as I am amazed that He has given so much. Does He bless such unworthy instruments, such laggards,<sup>5</sup> such slothful workers? Does He do anything by tools so unfit? Does He place any treasure in vessels so impure? This is to be ascribed to His grace. But if He doth not use us to the highest point, let us take shame and confusion of face to ourselves; and before the throne of His glory, let us sit down in silence. What, indeed, can we say? We have no charges to bring against Him, no accusations against the Most High, but we must silently confess that we ourselves are vile (Job 40:4). Unto us belongeth shame and confusion of face.

**Go further than this and keep the silence of *consideration*.** This is a noisy age, and the church of Christ herself is too noisy. We have very little silent worship, I fear. I do not so much regret the absence of silence from the public assembly as from our private devotions, where it has a sacred, hallowing influence, unspeakably valuable. Let us be silent, now, for a minute, and consider what it is that we desire of the Lord: *the conversion of thousands, the overthrow of error, the spread of the Redeemer’s kingdom.*

Think in your minds what the blessings are that your soul pants after. Get a correct idea of them, and then enquire whether you are prepared to receive them. Suppose they were to be now bestowed—are you ready? If thousands of converts were to be born unto this one church, are you prepared to teach them, instruct them, and comfort them? Are you doing it now, you Christian people? Are you acting in such a way that God knows you to be fit to have the charge of those converts that you are asking for? You pray for grace: are you using the grace you have? You want to see more power: how about the power you have? Are you employing it? If a mighty wave of revival sweeps over London, are your hearts ready? Are your hands ready? Are your purses ready? Are you altogether ready to be carried along on the crest of that blessed wave? Consider!

If you reflect, you will see that God is able to give His church the largest blessing and to give it at any time. Keep silence and consider, and you will see that He can give the blessing by you or by me. He can make any one of us, weak as we are, mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; can make our feeble hands, though

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<sup>4</sup> **straitening** – circumstance that tends to hardship or poverty.

<sup>5</sup> **laggards** – those who take more time than necessary; those who lag behind.

we have but a few loaves and fishes, capable of feeding myriads with the bread of life. Consider this, and ask yourselves this morning in the quiet of your spirits: “What can we do to get the blessing?” Are we doing that? What is there in our temper, in our private prayer, in our acts for God that would be likely to bring down the blessing? Do we act as if we were sincere? Have we really a desire for these things, which we say we desire? Could we give up worldly engagements to attend to the work of God? Could we spare time to look after the Lord’s vineyard? Are we willing to do the Lord’s work, and are we in the state of heart in which we can do it efficiently and acceptably? Keep silence and consider. I would suggest to every Christian that he should sit a while before God when he reaches his home and worship with the silence of awe, with the silence of shame, and then with the silence of careful thought concerning these things... We will accept His Word as law, light, and life to our souls, and nothing else beside. The Lord send that solemn silence over all His people *now*.

**2. LET US RENEW OUR STRENGTH.** Noise wears us; silence feeds us. To run upon the Master’s errands is always well, but to sit at the Master’s feet is quite as necessary; for, like the angels that excel in strength, our power to do His commandments arises out of our hearkening to the voice of His Word. If even for a human controversy quiet thought is a fit preparation, how much more is it needful in solemn pleadings with the Eternal One? Now let the deep springs be unsealed; let the solemnities of eternity exercise their power while all is still within us.

But how happens it that such silence renews our strength? **It does so, first, by giving space for the strengthening Word to come into the soul and the energy of the Holy Spirit to be really felt.** Words, words, words—we have so many words, and they are but chaff! But where is *the Word* that in the beginning was God and was with God (Joh 1:1-2)? That Word is the living and incorruptible seed. “What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord” (Jer 23:28). We want *less* of the words of man and *more* of Him Who is the very Word of God. Be quiet, be quiet, and let Jesus speak. Let His wounds speak to you; let His death speak to you; let His resurrection speak to you; let His ascension and His subsequent glory speak to you; and let the trumpet of second advent ring in your ears. You cannot hear the music of these glorious things because of the rattle of the wheels of care, and the vain jangle of disputatious<sup>6</sup> self-wisdom.

Be *silent* that you may hear the voice of Jesus; for when He speaks, you will renew your strength. The eternal Spirit is with His people, but we often miss His power because we give more ear to other voices than to His. Quite as often, our own voice is an injury to us; for it is heard when we have received no message from the Lord and therefore gives an uncertain sound (1Co 14:8). If we will wait upon the blessed Spirit, His mysterious influence will sway us most divinely, and we shall be filled with all the fullness of God. Even as we have seen the frost yield suddenly to the influence of the

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<sup>6</sup> **disputatious** – inclined to disagree; fond of having heated arguments.

warm south wind, so shall our lethargy<sup>7</sup> melt before His sovereign energy. How often have I felt in a moment my ice-locked spirit yield to the breath of the Holy Ghost... Be silent, then, that the Spirit may thus work upon you. Let other spirits be gone; let the spirit of the world, and the spirit of the flesh, and the spirit of self be banished—and let the Spirit of the Ever-Blessed be heard speaking in your soul. Thus shall you renew your strength.

**We must be silent to renew our strength, next, by using silence for consideration as to Whom it is that we are dealing with.** We are going to speak with God about the weakness of His Church and the slowness of its progress. Be silent, that you may remember Who He is with Whom you are expostulating.<sup>8</sup> It is God the omnipotent Who can make His Church mighty if He will, and that at once. We are coming to plead now with One Whose arm is not shortened and Whose ear is not heavy. Renew your strength as you think of Him. If you have doubted the ultimate success of Christianity, renew your strength as you remember Who it is that has sworn by Himself that surely all flesh shall see the salvation of God (Isa 40:5).

*You are coming to plead with Jesus Christ.* Be silent, and remember those wounds of His with which He has redeemed mankind! Can these fail of their reward? Shall Jesus be robbed of the power He has so dearly earned? The earth is the Lord's, and He will unswathe<sup>9</sup> her of the mists that dimmed her luster at the Fall. He will make this planet shine as brightly as when she first was rolled from between the palms of the omnipotent Creator. There shall be a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Think of that, and renew your strength. Hath not the Lord said concerning His beloved Son that He shall divide the spoil with the strong and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hands (Isa 53:12)? Shall it not be so?

*Think, too, that you are about to appeal to the Holy Spirit!* There again you have the same divine attributes. What cannot the Spirit of God do? He sent the tongues of fire at Pentecost; and Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and men of every nation heard the gospel at once. He turned three thousand hearts by one sermon to know the crucified Saviour to be the Messiah. He sent the apostles like flames of fire through the whole earth, until every nation felt their power. He can do the like again. He can bring the Church out of darkness into noonday (Isa 58:10). Let us renew our strength as we think of this. The work we are going to plead about is not ours one-half as much as it is God's. It is not in our hands, but in hands that cannot fail; therefore, let us renew our strength as we silently meditate upon the Triune Jehovah with Whom we have to speak.

*In silence, too, let us renew our strength by remembering His promises.* We want to see the world converted to God, and He has said, "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab 2:14). "The

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<sup>7</sup> **lethargy** – a great lack of energy; sluggishness; dullness.

<sup>8</sup> **expostulating** – reasoning earnestly.

<sup>9</sup> **unswathe** – unwrap.

glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it” (Isa 40:5). “They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust” (Psa 72:9). “The idols he shall utterly abolish” (Isa 2:18). There are a thousand promises. Let us think of that, and however difficult the enterprise may be and however dark our present prospects, we shall not dare to doubt when Jehovah has spoken and pledged His word.

I wish we could have had a quarter of an hour’s silence that you might reflect upon these topics; but I leave them with you, trusting that you will seek that silence at home and so renew your strength.

From a sermon delivered Sunday, January 3, 1875, at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington. Available from CHAPEL LIBRARY with two other sermons in a booklet entitled *Revival*.



Revivals begin with God’s own people: the Holy Spirit touches their heart anew and gives them new fervor, compassion, zeal, new light, and life. When He has thus come to you, He next goes forth to the valley of dry bones...Oh, what responsibility this lays on the Church of God! If you grieve Him away from yourselves or hinder His visit, then the poor perishing world suffers sorely!—*Andrew Bonar*



# THE MEN GOD USES IN REVIVAL

Horatius Bonar (1808-1889)

**T**HE world is still sleeping its sleep of death. It has been a slumber of many generations, sometimes deeper [and] sometimes lighter, yet still a slumber like that of the tomb—as if destined to continue until the last trumpet sound, and then there shall be no more sleep.

Yet God has not left [the world] to sleep on unwarned. He has spoken in a voice that might reach the dullest ears and quicken the coldest heart. Ten thousand times has He thus spoken, and still He speaks. But the world refuses to hear. Its myriads slumber on, as if this sleep of death were the very blessedness of its being.

Yet, in one sense, the world's sleep has never been universal. Never has there been an age when it could be said there is not one awake. The multitude has always slept, but there has always been a little flock awake. Even in the world's deepest midnight, there have been always children of the light and of the day. In the midst of a slumbering world, some have been in every age awake. God's voice had reached them, His mighty power had raised them, and they walked the earth—awake among sleepers, the living among the dead...

Then, when the voice of God awakes not one, but thousands, it may be in a day—when whole villages and districts seem as if arising and putting on new life—how intensely, how unutterably interesting! At such a crisis it seems as if the world itself were actually beginning to awake, as if the shock that had broken the slumbers of so many were about to shake the whole world together. Yet alas! The tokens of life soon vanish. The half-awakened sleepers sink back into deeper slumber, and the startled world lies down in still more sad and desperate security.

The history of the Church is full of these awakenings, some on a larger and some on a smaller scale. Indeed, such narratives form the true history of the Church, if we are to take our ideas of this from the inspired Church history given us in the *Acts of the Apostles*...

Let us look for a little [while] at the instruments and their success. Let us note their character and contemplate their success. They were men of like passions as we are, yet how marvelously blest in their labors! Whence, then, came their vast success? What manner of men were they? What weapons did they employ?

**They were in earnest about the great work of the ministry on which they had entered.** They felt their infinite responsibility as stewards of the mysteries of God, and shepherds appointed by the Chief Shepherd to gather in and watch over souls. They lived, labored, and preached like men on whose lips the immortality of thousands hung. Everything they did and spoke bore the stamp of earnestness and proclaimed to all with whom they came into contact that the matters about which they had been sent

to speak were of infinite moment<sup>1</sup>—admitting of no indifference, no postponement, even for a day. Yet their fervor was not that of excitement: it was the steadfast but tranquil purpose of men who felt the urgency and weight of the cause entrusted to them and who knew that necessity was laid upon them...

**They were bent upon success.** It was with a good hope of success that they first undertook the awful<sup>2</sup> office of the ministry and to despair of this would have been shameful distrust of Him Who had sent them forth, while to be indifferent to it would have been to prove themselves nothing short of traitors to Him and to His cause. As warriors, they set their hearts on victory and fought with the believing anticipation of triumph, under the guidance of such a Captain as their Head. As shepherds, they could not sit idle on the mountainside in the sunshine, the breeze, or the tempest—heedless of their straying, perishing, bleating flock. They watched, gathered, guarded, and fed the sheep committed to their care.

**They were men of faith.** They ploughed and sowed in hope. They might sometimes go forth weeping, bearing precious seed; yet these were the tears of sorrow and compassion, not of despair. They knew that in due season they would reap if they fainted not, that their labor in the Lord would not be in vain, and that ere long they would return bringing their sheaves with them... Thus they went forth in faith and confidence, anticipating victory, defying enemies, despising obstacles, and counting not their lives dear unto them that they might finish their course with joy (*cp.*<sup>3</sup> Act 20:24) and the ministry they had received of the Lord Jesus.

**They were men of labor.** They were required to bear the burden and heat of the day. It might be truly said of them that “they scorned delights and lived laborious days.”<sup>4</sup> Their lives are the annals of incessant, unwearied toil of body and soul. Time, strength, substance, health, all they were and possessed, they freely offered to the Lord—keeping back nothing, grudging nothing; joyfully, thankfully, surrendering all to Him Who loved them and washed them from their sins in His own blood; regretting only this: that they had so little, so very little to give up for Him Who for their sakes had freely given Himself!...

**They were men of patience.** They were not discouraged, though they had to labor long without seeing all the fruit they desired. They continued to sow. Day after day they pursued what, to the eye of the world, appeared a thankless and fruitless round of toil. They were not soon weary in well doing, remembering the example of the husbandman regarding his perishable harvest: “Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain” (Jam 5:7).

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<sup>1</sup> **moment** – importance; consequence.

<sup>2</sup> **awful** – that which fills with awe.

<sup>3</sup> *cp.* – Latin = *compara*, which means “compare.”

<sup>4</sup> From *Lycidas* (1637), a poem by John Milton (1608-1674).

Many a good plan has been rendered abortive by impatience...Attempts have been made to force on a revival by men who were impatient at the slow progress of the work in their hand; and seldom have these ended in anything but calamitous<sup>5</sup> failure, or at best a momentary excitement, which scorched and sterilized a soil from which a little more patient toil would have reaped an abundant harvest...

**They were men of boldness and determination.** Adversaries might contend and oppose, timid friends might hesitate, but *they* pressed forward, in nothing terrified by difficulty or opposition. Timidity shuts many a door of usefulness and loses many a precious opportunity; it wins no friends, while it strengthens every enemy. Nothing is lost by boldness nor gained by fear. It seems often as if there were a premium upon mere boldness and vigor, apart from other things. Even natural courage and resolution will accomplish much, how much more courage created and upheld by faith and prayer...There is, in our own day, a still greater need of moral boldness, in order to neutralize the fear of man, *the dread of public opinion*—that god of our idolatry in this last age, which boasts of superior enlightenment, and which would bring everything to the test of reason, or decide it by the votes of the majority. We need strength from above to be faithful in these days of trouble and rebuke and blasphemy—to set our faces like flint, alike against the censure<sup>6</sup> and applause of the multitude, and to dare to be singular for righteousness' sake, and to fight, single-handed, the battles of the faith...

**They were men of prayer.** It is true that they labored much, visited much, studied much—but they also prayed much. In this, they abounded. They were much alone with God, replenishing their own souls out of the living fountain that out of them might flow to their people rivers of living water. In our day, there is doubtless among many a grievous mistake upon this point. Some, who are really seeking to feed the flock and to save souls, are led to exhaust their energies upon external duties and labors, overlooking the absolute necessity of enriching, ripening, filling, elevating their own souls by prayer and fasting. On this account, there is much time wasted and labor thrown away. A single word coming fresh from lips that have been kindled into heavenly warmth by near fellowship with God will avail more than a thousand others...

**They were men whose doctrines were of the most decided kind,** both as respects Law and gospel. There is a breadth and power about their preaching, a glow and energy about their words and thoughts that make us feel that they were men of might. Their trumpet gave no feeble nor uncertain sound, either to saint or sinner, either to the church or the world...Their preaching seems to have been of the most masculine and fearless kind, falling on the audience with tremendous power. It was not vehement.<sup>7</sup> It was not fierce. It was not noisy—it was far too solemn to be such. It was massive, weighty, cutting, piercing, sharper than a two-edged sword (Heb 4:12)...Hence so many fell

<sup>5</sup> **calamitous** – disastrous; tragic.

<sup>6</sup> **censure** – expression of disapproval or condemnation.

<sup>7</sup> **vehement** – marked by extreme intensity of emotions or convictions.

wounded under them, such as in the case of the celebrated Thomas Shepard of Cambridge (1604-1645), regarding whom it is said that, “He scarce ever preached a sermon but some or other of his congregation were struck with great distress, and cried out in agony, ‘What shall I do to be saved?’”<sup>8</sup>

**They were men of solemn deportment and deep spirituality of soul.** Their lives and their lips accorded with each other. Their daily walk furnished the best attestation and illustration of the truth they preached. They were always ministers of Christ, wherever they were to be found or seen. No frivolity, no worldly companionships neutralized their public preaching or marred the work they were seeking to accomplish. The world could not point to them as being but slightly dissimilar from itself, or as men who, though faithful in the pulpit, forgot throughout the week their character, their office, their errand. Luther once remarked, regarding a beloved and much admired friend, “He lives what we preach.” So it was with these much-honored men, whose names are in the Book of Life...

We quote the following account of Gilbert Tennent’s<sup>9</sup> life and doctrine from the pen of Thomas Prince.<sup>10</sup> It will illustrate some remarks under the former head.

From the terrible and deep convictions he had passed through in his own soul, he seemed to have such a lively view of the Divine Majesty, the spirituality, purity, extensiveness, and strictness of His Law—with His glorious holiness and displeasure at sin, His justice, truth, and power in punishing the damned—that the very terrors of God seemed to rise in his mind afresh when he displayed and brandished them in the eyes of unreconciled sinners. Though some could not bear the representation and avoided his preaching, yet the arrows of conviction by his ministry seemed so deeply to pierce the hearts of others, and even some of the most stubborn sinners, as to make them fall down at the feet of Christ and yield a lowly submission to Him.

Such were the convictions wrought in many hundreds in this town by Mr. Tennent’s searching ministry, and such was the case of those many scores of several other congregations as well as mine who came to me and others for direction under them. Indeed, by all their converse, I found it was not so much the terror as the searching nature of his ministry that was the principal means of their conviction. It was not merely nor so much his laying open the terrors of the Law and wrath of God, or damnation of hell (for this they could pretty

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<sup>8</sup> From *Six Sermons by the Late Thomas Prince, A.M.: One of the Ministers of the South Church in Boston*, (published by John Erskine), 60.

<sup>9</sup> **Gilbert Tennent** (1703-1764) – pastor and evangelist, born in County Armagh, Ireland; one of the leaders of the Great Awakening in Colonial America, along with Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield. He was son and brother of three other Presbyterian clergymen. His father, William Tennent, emigrated to America in 1718, and was the founder of a theological school at Warminster, Pennsylvania, called the Log College.

<sup>10</sup> **Thomas Prince** (1687-1758) – American clergyman, scholar, and historian.

well bear as long as they hoped these belonged not to them, or they could easily avoid them), as his laying open their many vain and secret shifts<sup>11</sup> and refuges, counterfeit resemblances of grace, delusive and damning hopes, their utter impotence, and impending danger of destruction; whereby they found all their hopes and refuges of lies to fail them, and themselves exposed to eternal ruin, unable to help themselves and in a lost condition. This searching preaching was both the suitable and principal means of their conviction.

And now was such a time as we never knew. More came to one minister in one week in deep concern about their souls, than in the whole twenty-four years of his preceding ministry.

As an illustration of how remarkably the work was of God and not of man, we quote without comment the following passages from *A Narrative of Surprising Conversions* by Jonathan Edwards.<sup>12</sup>

It is observable how, at this remarkable day, a spirit of deep concern would seize upon persons. Some were in the house, and some walking in the highway; some in the woods, and some in the field; some in conversation, and some in retirement; some children, some adults, and some elderly persons, would sometimes of a sudden be brought under the strongest impressions, from a sense of the great realities of the other world and eternal things. But such things, as far as I can learn, were usually, if not [always], impressed upon men while they were in some way exercising their minds upon the Word of God or spiritual objects. For the most part, it has been under the public preaching of the Word that these lasting impressions have been fastened upon them.

A great and earnest concern about the great things of religion and the eternal world became universal in all parts of the town, and among persons of all degrees and all ages. The noise among the dry bones waxed louder and louder (Eze 37:4ff). All other talk but about spiritual and eternal things was soon thrown-by... The minds of people were wonderfully taken off from the world; it was treated among us as a thing of very little consequence. They seemed to follow their worldly business more as a part of their duty, than from any disposition they had to it...

The only thing in their view was to get the kingdom of heaven, and everyone appeared to be pressing into it. The engagedness<sup>13</sup> of their hearts in this great concern could not be hid; it appeared in their very countenances.<sup>14</sup> It was then a dreadful thing amongst us to lie out of Christ, in danger every day of drop-

<sup>11</sup> **shifts** – deceitful schemes or methods.

<sup>12</sup> **Jonathan Edwards** (1703-1758) – American Congregational preacher; regarded as America's greatest evangelical theologian and well known for his preaching in the Great Awakening.

<sup>13</sup> **engagedness** – earnest consideration; interest.

<sup>14</sup> **countenances** – facial expressions.

ping into hell; and what persons' minds were intent upon was to escape for their lives, and to fly from the wrath to come (Luk 3:7). All would eagerly lay hold of opportunities for their souls, and were wont<sup>15</sup> very often to meet together in private houses for religious purposes; and such meetings, when appointed, were greatly thronged.<sup>16</sup>

There was scarcely a single person in the town, old or young, left unconcerned about the great things of the eternal world. Those who were wont to be the vainest and loosest, and those who had been most disposed to think and speak slightly of vital and experimental<sup>17</sup> religion, were now generally subject to great awakenings. The work of conversion was carried on in a most astonishing manner and increased more and more. Souls did, as it were, come by flocks to Jesus Christ. From day to day, for many months together, might be seen evident instances of sinners brought out of darkness into marvelous light.

Our public assemblies were then beautiful; the congregation was alive in God's service, every one earnest, intent on the public worship, every hearer eager to drink in the words of the minister as they came from his mouth. The assembly in general was, from time to time, in tears while the Word was preached; some weeping with sorrow and distress, others with joy and love, others with pity and concern for the souls of their neighbors...Those amongst us that had formerly been converted were greatly enlivened and renewed with fresh and extraordinary incomes of the Spirit of God, though some much more than others, according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Many, who had before labored under difficulties about their own state, had now their doubts removed by more satisfying experience and more clear discoveries of God's love.

When man proceeds to the accomplishment of some mighty enterprise, he puts forth prodigious<sup>18</sup> efforts, as if by the sound of his axes and hammers he would proclaim his own fancied might and bear down opposing obstacles. He cannot work without sweat, dust, and noise. When God would do a marvelous work, such as may amaze all heaven and earth, He commands silence all around, sends forth the still small voice, and then sets some feeble instrument to work—and straightway it is done! Man toils and pants, and after all effects but little; the Creator, in the silent majesty of power, noiseless yet resistless, achieves by a word the infinite wonders of omnipotence!<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> **wont** – accustomed.

<sup>16</sup> **thronged** – closely packed with people.

<sup>17</sup> **experimental** – known by or derived from personal experience.

<sup>18</sup> **prodigious** – of great size, power, extent; enormous; huge.

<sup>19</sup> **omnipotence** – the quality of having unlimited power and authority.

In order to loose the bands of winter and bring in the verdure<sup>20</sup> of the pleasant spring, He does not send forth His angels to hew in pieces the thickened ice or to strip off from the mountain's side the gathered snows or to plant anew over the face of the bleak earth flowers fresh from His creating hand. No! He breathes from His lips a mild warmth into the frozen air. And forthwith, in stillness but in irresistible power, the work proceeds. The ice is shivered,<sup>21</sup> the snows dissolve, the rivers resume their flow, the earth awakes as out of sleep, the hills and the valleys put on their freshening verdure, the fragrance of earth takes wing and fills the air—until a new world of beauty rises in silence amid the dissolution of the old!

Such is God's method of working, both in the natural and in the spiritual world—silent, simple, majestic, and resistless! Such was the Reformation! Such were the revivals in Scotland under our fathers of the Covenant! Such was the Kirk o' Shotts<sup>22</sup> on that memorable Pentecost when the unstudied words of a timid, trembling youth carried salvation to five hundred souls. Such was Ayr in its Pentecostal days, when from the lonely church at midnight, there went up to heaven the broken sighs of that man of prayer, John Welsh (1568-1622). And such was Northampton in later times, when Jonathan Edwards watched and prayed for its citizens; and when, from the closet of that holy man, there went forth the living power that wrought such wonders there!

Is the Lord's hand shortened that it cannot save, or is His ear heavy that it cannot hear (Isa 59:1)?

From the sermon, *True Revivals and the Men God Uses*,  
available as a booklet from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

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**Horatius Bonar** (1808-1889): Scottish Presbyterian minister whose poems, hymns, and religious tracts were widely popular during the 19th century; born in Edinburgh, Scotland.



When God works a revival, one of its most prominent features is to cause His people to return to the written Word. Let us note this carefully. A heaven-sent revival consists not so much in happy feelings and spasmodic enthusiasm and fleshly displays, nor great crowds of people in attendance—those are not the marks of a heaven-sent revival—but when God renews His work of grace in His churches, one of the first things that He does

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<sup>20</sup> **verdure** – greenness; freshness of vegetation.

<sup>21</sup> **shivered** – broken; shattered.

<sup>22</sup> **Kirk o' Shotts** – a church in Shotts, Scotland, in which John Livingstone of Kilsyth, experienced the mighty power of God's Spirit while preaching. "Five hundred were convicted, some falling to the ground, having to be carried out. Others went out groaning in agony and were in this agony for days. But as the result of that one sermon, five hundred people were added to the churches—truly, permanently, soundly converted. That is the kind of thing that happens in a revival." (D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *Revival*, 116)

is to cause His people to return to the written Word from which they have departed in their ways and in their practices.—*A. W. Pink*

Men may change their churches and only change their refuge of  
lies. But if they come to Christ, whatever church they are in,  
if they have found Him and are trusting in Him and in  
Him alone, their peace will be like a river and their  
righteousness as the waves of the sea!

—*Charles Spurgeon*



# PREACHING FOR REVIVAL

William Reid (1814-1896)

OUR matured conviction is that the great thing needed at present is not so much revival sermons or revival prayer meetings, as *revival truth*. As the very essence of that truth is “the gospel of God...concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 1:1-3)—or, in other words, the testimony of the Holy Spirit (*externally* in the preaching of the Word and *internally* in its spiritual application) to the all-sufficiency and infallible efficacy of “the precious blood of Christ” (1Pe 1:19). That which is pre-eminently required in order to the general revival of religion is a full, clear, intelligent, and earnest utterance of the grand, leading doctrines of “the gospel of the grace of God” (Act 20:24).

True revival is not obtainable by merely preaching *about* revival, but by the constant proclamation of that all-important truth that is employed by the Holy Spirit to produce it—that “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God” (1Pe 3:18). He will prove the most effective preacher in bringing about a holy, deep, spiritual revival, who gives the greatest prominence to these three great facts: “That *Christ died* for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he *was buried*; and that he *arose again* the third day according to the scriptures” (1Co 15:3-4). I am convinced that the reason why so many ministers exhaust nearly all their converting power (I mean *instrumentally*<sup>1</sup>) during the first few years of their ministry, while some continue to possess it and finish their course with joy, is greatly owing to the former leaving the simplicity that is in Christ and betaking themselves to sermon-writing about secondary matters, while the latter make *Christ crucified* their alpha and omega.<sup>2</sup> Oh, that all the ministers of Jesus Christ would return, for a few months at least every year, to all the common texts from which they preached discourses that seemed to be so much blessed to awaken and save souls in the early days of their ministry! Were they to take a series of such texts as Matthew 11:28, John 3:16, Romans 1:16, 1 Corinthians 2:2, 1 Timothy 1:12-17, 1 John 1:7, restudy and bring all the light of their reading, spiritual insight, and experience to bear upon the exposition and enforcement of them, [they could] preach from them with the Holy Ghost and a lively faith. By the grace of the Holy Spirit accompanying their preaching, the unconverted among their people would be immediately converted, [that] there might be a great and general awakening, and tens of thousands might be added to the Lord.

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<sup>1</sup> **I mean *instrumentally*** – that is, the minister has no power in his human nature to convert anyone, but is God’s instrument to do so as he faithfully preaches the Word.

<sup>2</sup> **alpha and omega** – first and last letters of the Greek alphabet; therefore, the beginning and ending of something; the main focus.

It is also of vast importance to present “the truth of the gospel,” as the Holy Spirit Himself has presented it to us in “the word of Christ” (Col 1:5; 3:16). It has been well said, “The derangement of God’s order of truth is quite as dangerous [as] and far more subtle than the denial of the truth itself. In fact, to reverse the order is to deny the truth. We are not merely to maintain both Christ’s work and the Spirit’s work in their individual integrity, but in their exact scriptural order.” We believe that the refreshing truth—“the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin” (1Jo 1:7)—is the great central sun that sheds a flood of light on the whole system of divine revelation. Atonement by the blood shedding of Christ is the substratum<sup>3</sup> of Christianity, for the sole ground of a sinner’s peace with God is “the blood of Jesus” (1Pe 1:2). We who were at one time “far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace” (Eph 2:13-14); “in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins” (Eph 1:7); and so, “being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood” (Rom 3:24-25), “we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Rom 5:1-2).

In the Westminster Assembly’s *Shorter Catechism*,<sup>4</sup> which is considered by all orthodox<sup>5</sup> people to be an excellent summary of Christian doctrine, you will find the very same truth stated that we have advanced and confirmed by the above quotations and that we have been writing for publication almost daily for the last ten years.

The answer to the question in that catechism, “What doth God require of us that we may escape His wrath and curse due to us for sin?” commences with, “God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life,” etc. Now, this shows that the framers of that symbol of sound doctrine were accurate in their conceptions and precise in their statement of the *order* and *position* of this great scriptural truth. They suppose an anxious inquirer desirous of knowing how he is to escape the wrath and curse of God due to him for sin; and do they say that the first thing he is to do is to pray for the Holy Spirit, and get his mind changed and his unholy heart sanctified previously to his believing in Jesus? No! The very first thing they teach the awakened sinner to do is *to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved* (Act 16:31).

Now this is even more remarkable considering that, when laying down the system of divine truth theologically, they had placed *effectual calling* by the divine Spirit before *justification by faith*. There they speak to the intellect of the converted man and instructed Christian; but here the matter is reversed, when an anxious sinner is to be

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<sup>3</sup> **substratum** – that which lies beneath; foundation.

<sup>4</sup> **Shorter Catechism** – short questions and answers for giving fundamental instruction in the doctrines of the Christian faith, especially to children, written by the Westminster Assembly of Divines; this was an assembly of 121 theologians appointed by the “Puritan” Long Parliament for making proposals to reform the Church of England.

<sup>5</sup> **orthodox** – consistent in belief and worship with the revelation of Holy Scripture.

guided as to what he is to do to be saved, and we have *faith* in Jesus Christ placed before *repentance unto life*. [This is] showing us that they held—while we must ever acknowledge the necessity of the Holy Spirit’s work in order to the creation and exercise of saving faith—we should never direct an anxious sinner to look to the Spirit as his Saviour, but to Christ alone. Never direct an inquirer to seek first an *inward* change, but an *outward* one—a justified state in order to enjoy a sanctified heart, the former being the necessary precursor<sup>6</sup> of the latter.

Repentance is, properly speaking, *a change of mind*, or a new mind about God; regeneration is *a change of heart*, or a new heart towards God; conversion is *a change of life*, or a new life for God; adoption is *a change of family*, or a new relationship to God; sanctification is *a change of employment*, or a consecration of all to God; glorification is *a change of place*, or a new condition with God. But justification, which is *a change of state*, or a new standing before God, must be presented to the anxious inquirer as going before all, for being “accepted in the beloved” (Eph 1:6) is the foundation and cause of all, or more properly speaking, the “precious seed” (Psa 126:6) from which all the rest spring, blossom, and bear fruit. Consequently, the first and great duty of those who have to deal with awakened souls is to make this very clear, and to keep them incessantly in contact with the blessed evangelical truth: “A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ” (Gal 2:16).

From all this you will observe, dear reader, that I am not settling the position that a doctrine in theology ought to hold, but simply dealing with the *practical necessities* of an anxious inquirer. Were I called upon to state my views theoretically, I would say they are described by what another has termed *Jehovahism*, “for of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever” (Rom 11:36). But [here,] I am not contemplating the sinner as standing before the throne of glory, but before the throne of *grace*. I am not endeavoring to settle a subtle question in theology, but to give the practical solution of an urgent question of *salvation*. I am not attempting to lay down a system of divinity, but to discover the kind and order of truth divinely appointed and fitted to bring immediate peace to awakened and inquiring souls. And hoping to accomplish this most important end, I present “Jesus only” (Mat 17:8), “for he is our peace” (Eph 2:14), Who “having made peace through the blood of his cross,” (Col 1:20), has come “and preached peace” (Eph 2:17) by His “everlasting gospel” (Rev 14:6) to them who were far off and to them that were nigh (see Eph 2:13).

The first practical step towards realizing and acknowledging the sovereignty of God is to “let the peace of God rule in your hearts” (Col 3:15). You may hold a sound creed with a proud, unbroken heart, and be more deeply damned on that very account. But if you wish to know God in all the glory of His being and attributes, you must grasp the manifestation of that glory as it is embodied and manifested in the person of Jesus Christ. You can know the glory of God as a Sovereign only by realizing His *grace* as a

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<sup>6</sup> **precursor** – something that precedes and indicates the approach of something else.

Saviour. For “God was manifest in the flesh” (1Ti 3:16). “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (Joh 1:14). “Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him” (Mat 11:27).

*A mind at “perfect peace with God; Oh, what a word is this!  
A sinner reconciled through blood; This, this, indeed, is peace!*

*By nature and by practice far—How very far!—from God;  
Yet now by grace brought nigh to Him, through faith in Jesus’ blood.*

*So nigh, so very nigh to God, I cannot nearer be;  
For in the Person of His Son, I am as near as He.*

*So dear, so very dear to God, More dear I cannot be;  
The love wherewith He loves the Son, Such is His love to me.*

*Why should I ever careful be, Since such a God is mine?  
He watches o’er me night and day, And tells me, “Mine is thine.”*

From the booklet *The Blood of Jesus*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

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**William Reid (1814-1896):** Scottish Presbyterian minister.



Great excitement may no doubt attend a true revival, but it is not part  
and parcel of it; and it may be very great and yet there be  
no true revival at all.—*B. B. Warfield*

# CRUCIAL DOCTRINE AND REVIVAL

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981)

**T**he doctrine of *justification by faith only* is absolutely essential. There has never been a revival but that this has always come back into great prominence. This doctrine means the end of all thinking about ourselves and our goodness, and our good deeds, and our morality, and all our works. Look at the histories of revivals, and you will find men and women feeling desperate. They know that all their goodness is but filthy rags, and that all their righteousness is of no value at all. There they are, feeling that they can do nothing and crying out to God for mercy and for compassion. Justification by faith. *God's* act. "If God does not do it to us," they say, "then we are lost." So they wait in utter helplessness before Him. They pay no attention and attach no significance to all their own past religiosity, and all their faithfulness in church attendance, and many, many other things. They see it is all no good, even their religion is of no value; there is nothing that is of value. God must justify the ungodly. That is the great message that comes out, therefore, in every period of revival... It was the realization of justification by faith that really led to the outpouring of the Spirit. It has always been the case. So we cannot afford to neglect or to ignore this crucial doctrine.

**Then, the other is, of course, the doctrine of *regeneration*...**What makes us Christians? The work of regeneration: the Holy Spirit of God doing a work down in the very depths of the personality, and putting there a new principle of life, something absolutely new, so that there is the "new man." Now that, always, is a doctrine that comes out in every period of revival and of reawakening. That is how you get, invariably at such times, these remarkable and dramatic changes. Men who had been utterly hopeless, and who had been abandoned even by their dearest relatives and friends; men who had even abandoned themselves, feeling that nothing could be done for them, feeling utterly hopeless, feeling rejected of all people and of God: suddenly this work takes place, and they find themselves new creatures with an entirely new outlook on living, and anxious to live a new kind of life. *Regeneration*. It stands out in the story and in the history of every revival that has ever taken place in the long history of the Christian Church. In other words, everything about a revival emphasizes the activity of this sovereign God. He is intervening. He is working. He is doing things. And this is shown very plainly by the results and the effects of the work of regeneration.

# THE EFFECT OF REVIVAL

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)

**W**HATEVER imprudences<sup>1</sup> there have been and whatever sinful irregularities; whatever vehemence of the passions and heats of the imagination, transports, and ecstasies;<sup>2</sup> whatever error in judgment and indiscreet<sup>3</sup> zeal; and whatever outcries, faintings, and agitations of body; yet, it is manifest and notorious that there has been of late a very uncommon influence upon the minds of a very great part of the inhabitants of New England, attended with the best effects.

**There has been a great increase of seriousness and sober consideration of eternal things:** a disposition to hearken to what is said of such things, with attention and affection; a disposition to treat matters of religion with solemnity and as of great importance; to make these things the subject of conversation; to hear the Word of God preached and to take all opportunities in order to it; to attend on the public worship of God and all external duties of religion in a more solemn and decent manner, so that there is a remarkable and general alteration in the face of New England in these respects.

Multitudes of vain, thoughtless, regardless<sup>4</sup> persons in all parts of the land are quite changed and become serious and considerate. There is a vast increase of concern for the salvation of the precious soul and of that inquiry, “What shall I do to be saved?” (Act 16:31). The hearts of multitudes had been greatly taken off from the things of the world—its profits, pleasures, and honors. Multitudes in all parts have had their consciences awakened and have been made sensible of the pernicious<sup>5</sup> nature and consequences of sin, and what a dreadful thing it is to be under guilt and the displeasure of God and to live without peace and reconciliation with Him. They have also been awakened to a sense of the shortness and uncertainty of life, [of] the reality of another world and future judgment, and of the necessity of an interest in Christ. They are more afraid of sin, more careful and inquisitive that they may know what is contrary to the mind and will of God that they may avoid it, and what He requires of them that they may do it, more careful to guard against temptations, more watchful over their own hearts, earnestly desirous of knowing and of being diligent in the use of the

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<sup>1</sup> **imprudences** – actions that do not show caution.

<sup>2</sup> **transports** and **ecstasies** – experiences of being “carried out of oneself,” that is, with vehement emotion and emotional religious frenzy.

<sup>3</sup> **indiscreet** – showing a readiness to reveal things that should remain secret or private.

<sup>4</sup> **regardless** – careless.

<sup>5</sup> **pernicious** – tending to destroy, kill, or injure; destructive.

means that God has appointed in His Word in order to salvation. Many very stupid, senseless sinners and persons of a vain mind have been greatly awakened.

**There is a strange alteration almost all over New England amongst young people.** By a powerful invisible influence on their minds, they have been brought to forsake, in a general way, as it were at once, those things of which they were extremely fond and in which they seemed to place the happiness of their lives—[things] which nothing before could induce them to forsake, [such] as their frolicking,<sup>6</sup> vain company-keeping, night-walking,<sup>7</sup> their mirth and jollity, their impure language, and lewd songs. In vain did ministers preach against those things before, in vain were laws made to restrain them, and in vain was all the vigilance of magistrates and civil officers. [Yet] now, they have almost everywhere dropped them, as it were, of themselves.

**There is great alteration amongst old and young as to drinking, tavern-haunting, profane speaking, and extravagance in apparel.** Many notoriously vicious<sup>8</sup> persons have been reformed and become externally quite new creatures. Some that are wealthy and of a fashionable, gay education—some great beaux<sup>9</sup> and fine ladies that seemed to have their minds swallowed up with nothing but the vain shows and pleasures of the world—have been wonderfully altered [and] have relinquished these vanities. [They have] become serious, mortified,<sup>10</sup> and humble in their conversation.

It is *astonishing* to see the alteration there is in some towns, where before there was but little appearance of religion or anything but vice and vanity. Now they are transformed into another sort of people. Their former vain, worldly, and vicious conversation<sup>11</sup> and dispositions seem to be forsaken. They are, as it were, gone over to a new world. Their thoughts, their talk, and their concern, affections, and inquiries are now about the favor of God, an interest in Christ, a renewed sanctified heart, and a spiritual blessedness, acceptance, and happiness in a future world.

**Now, through the greatest part of New England, the holy Bible is in much greater esteem and use than before.** The great things contained in it are much more regarded as things of the greatest consequence and are much more the subjects of meditation and conversation. Other books of piety that have long been of established reputation, as the most excellent and most tending to promote true godliness, have been abundantly more in use. The Lord's Day is observed more religiously and strictly. And much has been lately done at making up differences, confessing faults one to another, and making restitution<sup>12</sup>—probably more within two years than was done in thirty years before. It has been undoubtedly so in many places. And surprising has been the

<sup>6</sup> **frolicking** – giving and attending parties for dancing, merry-making, and wild pranks.

<sup>7</sup> **night-walking** – roving the streets at night with evil designs.

<sup>8</sup> **vicious** – immoral.

<sup>9</sup> **beaus** – men who give excessive attention to dress and appearance.

<sup>10</sup> **mortified** – dead to sin and the world; having the appetites and passions in subjection.

<sup>11</sup> **conversation** – behavior.

<sup>12</sup> **restitution** – compensation for a loss, damage, or injury.

power of this spirit, in many instances, to destroy old grudges, to make up long-continued breaches, and to bring those who seemed to be in a confirmed irreconcilable alienation to embrace each other in a sincere and entire amity.<sup>13</sup> Great numbers under this influence have been brought to a deep sense of their own sinfulness and vileness—the sinfulness of their lives, the heinousness<sup>14</sup> of their disregard of the authority of the great God, and of their living in contempt<sup>15</sup> of a Savior. They have lamented their former negligence of their souls and their neglecting and losing precious time. The sins of their life have been extraordinarily set before them; and they have had a great sense of their hardness of heart, their enmity against that which is good, and proneness to all evil. [They have also had a sense] of the worthlessness of their own religious performances, how unworthy of God’s regard were their prayers, praises, and all that they did in religion. It has been a common thing that persons have had such a sense of their own sinfulness that they have thought themselves to be the worst of all, and that none ever was as vile as they were. Many seem to have been greatly convinced that they were utterly unworthy of any mercy at the hands of God—however miserable they were and though they stood in extreme necessity of mercy—and that they deserved nothing but eternal burnings. They have been sensible that God would be altogether just and righteous in inflicting endless damnation<sup>16</sup> upon them, at the same time that they have had an exceedingly affecting sense of the dreadfulfulness of such endless torments and apprehended themselves to be greatly in danger of it. Many have been deeply affected with a sense of their own ignorance, blindness, and exceeding helplessness, and so of their extreme need of the divine pity and help.

**Multitudes in New England have lately been brought to a new and great conviction of the truth and certainty of the things of the gospel.**<sup>17</sup> [They have been brought] to a firm persuasion that Christ Jesus is the Son of God and the great and only Savior of the world and that the great doctrines of the gospel touching reconciliation by His blood, acceptance in His righteousness,<sup>18</sup> and eternal life and salvation through Him are matters of undoubted truth. They have had a most affecting sense of the excellency and sufficiency of this Savior and the glorious wisdom and grace of God shining in this way of salvation; of the wonders of Christ’s dying love and the sincerity of Christ in the [call] of the gospel. They have experienced a consequent affiancement<sup>19</sup> and sweet rest of soul in Christ as a glorious Savior, a strong rock and high tower, accompanied with an admiring and exalted apprehension of the glory of the divine perfections, God’s majesty, holiness, sovereign grace, etc., with a sensible, strong, and sweet love to

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<sup>13</sup> **amity** – friendship.

<sup>14</sup> **heinousness** – extreme wickedness.

<sup>15</sup> **contempt** – the condition of treating something as vile and worthless.

<sup>16</sup> See FGB 211, *Hell*; all suggested FGBs are available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

<sup>17</sup> See FGB 198, *The Gospel*.

<sup>18</sup> See FGBs 187, *Justification*, and 191, *Imputed Righteousness*.

<sup>19</sup> **affiance** – confidence; assurance.



God and delight in Him, far surpassing all temporal delights or earthly pleasures. [They have experienced] a rest of soul in Him, as a portion and the fountain of all good. And this has been attended with an abhorrence of sin and self-loathing for it and earnest longings of soul after more holiness and conformity to God, with a sense of the great need of God's help in order to holiness of life.

Together they have had a most dear love to all that are supposed to be the children of God, a love to mankind in general, and a most sensible and tender compassion for the souls of sinners and earnest desires of the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world. These things have appeared with an abiding concern to live a holy life, great complaints of remaining corruption, and a longing to be freer from the body of sin and death. Not only do these effects appear in new converts, but great numbers of those who were formerly esteemed the most sober and pious<sup>20</sup> people, have been greatly quickened, under the influence of this work, and their hearts renewed with greater degrees of light, renewed repentance<sup>21</sup> and humiliation, and more lively exercises of faith, love, and joy in the Lord. Many have been remarkably engaged to watch, strive, and fight against sin, to cast out every idol, sell all for Christ, give up themselves entirely to God, and make a sacrifice of every worldly and carnal thing to the welfare and prosperity of their souls. And there has of late appeared in some places an unusual disposition to bind themselves to it in a solemn covenant with God. Now, instead of meetings at taverns and drinking-houses and of young people in frolics and vain company, the country is full of meetings of all sorts and ages of persons—young and old, men, women, and little children—to read, pray, and sing praises, and to converse of the things of God and another world. In very many places, the main of the conversation in all companies turns on religion and things of a spiritual nature. Instead of vain mirth among young people, there is now either mourning under a sense of the guilt of sin or holy rejoicing in Christ Jesus. Instead of their lewd songs, there are now to be heard from them songs of praise to God and the Lamb that was slain to redeem them by His blood. And there has been this alteration abiding on multitudes all over the land, for a year and a half, without any appearance of a disposition to return to former vice and vanity.

The divine power of this work has marvelously appeared in some instances I have been acquainted with: in supporting and fortifying the heart under great trials, such as the death of children and extreme pain of body; and in wonderfully maintaining the serenity, calmness, and joy of the soul in an immovable rest in God and sweet resignation to Him. Some under the blessed influences of this work have, in a calm, bright, and joyful frame of mind, been carried through the valley of the shadow of death.

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<sup>20</sup> **pious** – characterized by reverence to God.

<sup>21</sup> See FGB 203, *Repentance*.

I suppose there is scarcely a minister in this land, but from Sabbath to Sabbath is used to pray that God would pour out His Spirit and work a reformation and revival of religion in the country and turn us from our intemperance, profaneness, uncleanness, worldliness, and other sins. We have kept from year to year days of public fasting and prayer to God to acknowledge our backslidings, [to] humble ourselves for our sins, and to seek of God forgiveness and reformation.

From "Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New England" in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, Vol. 1, 374-75, The Banner of Truth Trust, [www.banneroftruth.org](http://www.banneroftruth.org).

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**Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758):** American Congregational preacher; well known for his preaching in the Great Awakening along with George Whitefield; born in East Windsor, Connecticut Colony.



It is true that there are not a few who are praying for a worldwide revival, but it appears to the writer that it would be more timely and more scriptural for prayer to be made to the Lord of the harvest that He would raise up and thrust forth laborers who would fearlessly and faithfully preach those truths that are calculated to bring about a revival.—*A. W. Pink*