



REVIVAL, THE NEED OF THE TIMES

#3 IN A SERIES OF ARTICLES ON REVIVAL

REVIVAL CONDITIONS

“If My people who are called by My Name humble themselves and pray, and seek My Face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

(2 Chronicles 7:14)

IN this day of Grace, and especially when things are going comfortably, many Christians do not like to think or remember that there are commands and conditions in God’s Word that must be applied before any revival, individual or national, can take place.

Some sincere believers think that man can do nothing to bring revival. But it has been truly written, “We cannot make revival, but we can prepare for it.”

Spiritual revival is imperative according to our Master’s words in Revelation 2 & 3; therefore we must listen to His commands and conditions. But as we study these, we realise that they are meant to lead us to the true spiritual life that God intends for us.

In 2 Chronicles 7:14, Yahweh gives four conditions to Solomon and the Israelites, if they are to see His blessing in the natural realm. We should understand these are also conditions for spiritual blessing today.

God addresses His people, who are called by His Name. The LORD’s people today, in general, are called “Christians” (Christ’s ones - Messianic believers). And it is to **believers** that the Almighty speaks.

1. HUMBLE THEMSELVES

“If My people humble themselves.”

The first condition is humility. If we are to see spiritual blessing, we must begin here. Unless we start with our own pride and reluctance to submit to the Lord, it is no good praying for revival. And yet our tendency is to avoid any hurt to “self.” We would rather first start praying, rather than humbling ourselves.

In the New Testament we are commanded -

“Humble yourselves in the Presence of the Master.” (James 4:10)

“Clothe yourselves with humility ... humble yourselves, then, under the mighty hand of God.” (1 Peter 5:5-6)

We are to humble ourselves in the sight of God - not just in the sight of men. Our Master does not want mock or superficial humility.

Pride is no small sin. It is called an abomination (Proverbs 6:16-17). Pride panders to all our carnal tendencies. How many sins come from our pride - the pride, anger, bitterness and hatred that fills our souls when an adverse word is spoken about us; unless we are humbled under God's Hand!

One of the most subtle and abominable sins is spiritual pride. And yet it is not uncommon among God's people. We become proud of our gifts, our attainments, our work for the Lord, what we have given to God, and what He has done through us.

What pride it is when we pat ourselves on the back in word, thought or attitude, when blessings come from the Master Himself. Our pride is an insult to the Holy One, and robs Him of His Glory.

Spiritual pride of denomination, non-denomination, or inter-denomination is a major reason that the Heavenly Father has not always answered our prayers. Sometimes we seem to think that Yahweh should bless through me, or my group; and if He worked through another group, we should be quite hurt, and disappointed. This shows the falsity of our motives, and our pride.

True humility in Scripture means submission to God. James presents it this way:

“God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Submit therefore to God.” (James 4:6-7)

If we would be humble, let us submit to God. Submission means death to “self” - an essential condition for Christian discipleship.

What a terrible mistake it is for us to seek to preserve our carnal natures. We are commanded to reckon ourselves dead to sin - death to the carnal nature. But we are to yield ourselves (gladly) to God (Romans 6:11, 13); or as Paul exhorts:

“Present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God.”
(Romans 12:1)

Pride is the enemy of these requirements. Pride would seek to justify itself.

In a life of continuous submission to God, there is no room for pandering to the flesh. If we are indeed sub-missive to the Master, no matter what assails us - circumstances, or men's evil words, thoughts and actions, we will remain at His feet in humility. Our lives will take on a spiritual outlook, and we will abhor the things that seek to promote our flesh and pride.

When we take the deliberate step of humbling ourselves, by submission to God, our lives will be prepared for the next important condition for revival.

2. PRAY

“If My people pray.”

The meaning of the word “pray” in this verse, is intercession - prayer for others - interceding for the church and the world; or, as in Ezekiel, “standing in the gap.”

This is the second condition for revival. And no doubt, all genuine believers agree that prayer is necessary.

Brethren, I need not to convince you that prayer is necessary, but maybe I do need to convince you that the work of prayer is not for a few special “prayer warriors” - it is for you! For every one of us!

Intercession is vitally essential before the windows of Heaven can be opened; before the Lord can heal the land. Intercession is not praying for yourself; it is not worship, it is more than asking petitions. Intercession is entering into the spiritual realm where the actual battle rages. What happens in the physical world, is the result of the victory won, or not won, in the spiritual realm.

Intercession is a spiritual fight against the adversary and his hosts of wickedness. It means warfare!

We might naturally recoil from such conflict, but the Master has called us to engage in this supernatural, spiritual warfare.

One of the instruments of the **revival in Wales** in 1904 was **EVAN ROBERTS**. Burdened for Wales, this young man asked the Lord for 100,000 souls. The Almighty answered; and Wales was on fire with revival. Roberts paid the price and fought against the powers of darkness.

One Monday night his congregation numbered seventeen. “I explained to them the purpose of my mission, and told them what the Spirit had wrought and was working at New Quay and Newcastle Emlyn. And I urged them to prepare for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.”

The meeting was hard, the people unresponsive. Three times Roberts resorted to prayer, then returned to his appeal for total commitment and a public confession of Christ. In the end all seventeen yielded, among them, his brother and three sisters.

Next morning Evan Roberts found himself in conflict with Satan. The whole project was presented to him as presumptuous and delusory. But he fought through. Six more made public confession at the next meeting.

On Wednesday evening people were eager to listen as he vividly explained the vision the Spirit had given him, and outlined his programme for revival:

- 1 Confession of all past sins
- 2 Repentance and restitution
- 3 Surrender to the Holy Spirit and consequent obedience
- 4 Public confession of Christ

Roberts urged each person to take these four steps. But the meeting was silent and unresponsive. The preacher went down on his knees and pleaded for the convicting power of the Spirit. Gradually the people yielded until in the end twenty persons had stood up and made public commitment to Christ.

As the meetings progressed they grew in numbers and went on into the early hours of the morning. The Spirit’s outpouring that followed was the beginning of the great flood of revival. From now on no preacher needed to persuade the people to do anything. God the Holy Spirit had taken over. The people flocked in crowds to the chapels. Often there was no preaching. The people sang and prayed and testified as the Spirit led them, and the holy fire leapt from village to village and from town to town.

The Father has raised us up to sit in Heavenly places with Christ. (Eph. 1:20, 21; 2:6). He has provided His own armour for us to engage in the war - not armchairs for relaxing, for there can never be relaxation or discharge until the Lord comes.

This ministry takes time, strength, self-denial and sacrifice. We talk about intercession, we believe in intercession, but our talk and belief is not intercession. We need to **practice** intercession - be doers of the Word.

Instead, we usually make excuses about our neglect of this holy necessity. We say we have so much to do. Our work for the Lord takes so much time. I am convicted that our excuses are vain.

“Let every man examine himself!” (1 Corinthians 11:28)

First, how much time do I spend in intercession per day? 10 or 15 minutes? Secondly, how much time do I spend in reading newspapers? In eating, in idle talk, in relaxation? Are the newspapers, chatting, eating and relaxing more important than intercession - more important than translating the victory of the Messiah at Calvary into reality in our lives?

Away with our excuses! How many precious hours are spent by Christians in listening to the radio; watching the devil’s vision - television - which is one of the greatest soul-destroying abominations; or these days, surfing the Net?

Beloved, be delivered from the world. Why should we give any time to the world’s cause, while Yahweh the Eternal One is seeking intercessors for His cause?

The operation of the Holy Spirit depends on man’s **obedience**.

“And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who are obeying Him.” (Acts 5:32)

The supernatural working of the Holy Spirit in revival power is something that no man can fully describe. There are, however, features of the Lewis revival which characterize revivals of the past also, one of which is the **spirit of expectancy**.

In Lewis there was a group of men who seemed to be living on the high plane of implicit confidence in God. They were assured absolutely that revival had come.

Not far from this praying group of men were two godly women, 84 and 82 years of age. They had interceded for many years for an awakening. On the same night that God gave assurance to the men, God spoke to them as they spent the night in prayer. “In two weeks, I shall send upon this community the greatest Spiritual Awakening it has known.”

It was revealed to them that Duncan Campbell would be the instrument used.

A wire was sent to Campbell, but when he received it, he was already booked for another meeting. He replied: “It is impossible for me to come at this time, but keep on praying and I will come next year.”

When the reply was given to the sisters, they answered: “That is what man has said. God has said that he will be here in two weeks.” Strangely enough, Campbell’s engagement was cancelled and within a fortnight he was in Barvas.

The first meeting was held in the old parish church. Many people had gathered in great expectancy of a great moving of God, but strangely enough, nothing happened. It was just an ordinary service.

Seeing the disappointment upon the preacher’s face, one of the praying deacons came up to him: “Don’t be discouraged,” he said, “It is coming. I already hear the

rumbling of Heaven's chariot wheels; we will have another night of prayer, and then we will see what God is going to do."

Three o'clock in the morning; God swept in and about a dozen were laid prostrate upon the floor, and lay there speechless. Something had happened! God had moved into **action**, as He had promised. Revival had come, and men and women were going to find deliverance.

As they left that cottage that morning, they found men and women seeking God! Lights were burning in the homes along the road. No one seemed to think of sleep. Three men were found lying by the roadside, in a torment of **conviction**, crying for God to have mercy upon them. The Spirit of God was moving into action, and soon the parish of Barvas was to be stirred from end to end.

In the days of Isaiah and Ezekiel, *Adonai Yahweh* "wondered that there was no intercessor." Today He must still be wondering why there are not more intercessors.

Alexander Whyte wrote: "My brethren, will nothing teach you to pray? Will all His examples, and all His promises, and all your own needs, and cares, and distresses, not teach you to pray? Will you not tell your Saviour what a dislike, even to downright antipathy, you have at secret prayer; how little you attempt it, and how soon you are weary of it? Only pray, O you prayerless people of His, and the Heaven will soon open to you also, and you will hear your Father's voice, and the Holy Ghost will descend like a dove upon you."

We often sacrifice many things, and work for the Heavenly Master, but fail in this, the most important work of intercession.

I beseech you brethren, by the love you have for your great Redeemer, to stand in the gap, until He comes.

A. T. Pierson has written: "From the day of Pentecost, there has been not one great spiritual awakening in any land which has not begun in a union of prayer, though among two or three; no such outward, upper movement has continued after such prayer meetings have declined."

Concern for the Souls of Sinners

"In the Fall of 1825, there lived a woman in Oneida County who was in feeble health, who had never been in a powerful revival. Her soul became exercised to the point of agony for the souls of sinners in the land.

"She did not know what ailed her, but nevertheless she kept on praying, until it seemed as though agony would destroy her body. At length she became full of joy, and exclaimed, 'God has come! God has come! There is no mistake about it, the work has begun and is going on all over the region.'

"And sure enough, the work began, and her family were almost all converted, and the work spread all over the country. She had prevailed with God in prayer. She had travailed in birth for souls, and she knew it." - C.G. Finney, "Lectures on Revivals."

God Can Use a Stammerer

No revival, as such, had occurred in a certain town for many years, whilst the Church was almost extinct. An aged man, a retired blacksmith, lived there, but so stammering was his tongue that it was painful to hear him speak. One Friday he sat in his shop alone and there became greatly exercised about the state of the church

and that of the impenitent. His agitation became so great that he locked the door and spent the afternoon in prayer.

On the following Sunday he asked the minister to appoint a “conference meeting” which after some hesitation the minister did, at the same time fearing that few would be present. The gathering was to be in the house. Imagine their surprise when there assembled more than could be accommodated!

For a time all were silent until one man broke out in tears, and asked if any would pray for him? Another followed and yet another until many were brought under deep conviction. A remarkable feature was that they discovered that their concern occurred the very hour when the aged man had been praying. A powerful revival followed.

John Livingston, when he heard of the blessing in Ulster, came and preached at Hollywood on a Communion Sunday. He spent the previous night in prayer, and as a result of that sermon 2,000 souls turned to God.

3. SEEK THE FACE OF GOD

“If My people seek My Face.”

Here is a necessity that we are all too often prone to forget - to seek the Face of God. This is not especially intercession, but it is the seeking of the Presence of the Master Himself, and the knowledge of His will - fellowship and guidance.

God made man, planned, worked and provided for his redemption. Believers, He has justified and seated in Heavenly places, in Christ. God now desires the worship, adoration and close fellowship of His people.

“For the Father is seeking such *people* to worship Him.” (John 4:23)

We have been brought so near to God, in position, having being justified; but alas, we may be very far from God in spiritual fellowship.

The Father longs for the communion of His children; the Son seeks fellowship with His beloved.

How cold is a child who seldom approaches his father except to ask for something. Or an espoused who does not enjoy the blessing of her lover’s presence. And yet so often our love for our Saviour is lukewarm. Our fellowship with God is so lacking. We are exhorted:

“Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.” (James 4:8)

It is possible for us to be very busy serving the Lord, and yet be far from Him. First things first. Like Mary we need to worship Him. Our presence at a worship meeting, or a conference, does not guarantee that our hearts are close to God. In thought they may be far away. It may be that we have suffered heart-departure from the Lord; we may have lost the joy of our first-love. We need to continually draw near, and seek His Presence. Evangelistic work, numerous meetings, and even intercession, cannot replace fellowship with God.

Friendship with the world is one reason for our departure from God’s presence. How we should shun the world’s influences, and crave the pure loveliness of the Holy One. James 4:4 also says:

“Do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever decides to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.”

The early church was concerned with being delivered from the World. Today Christians seem to be concerned with how far they can go into the world, and still remain “safe.” The world will draw us away from God.

We need also to seek the Face of the Lord for the knowledge of His will - for his direction and authority.

As we intercede for others and pray for revival, we seek also His face for what He would have us do, individually, each day.

How much of our “Christian work” is Christ’s work? How often do we make our own plans, and then ask God to bless? How often is the Holy Spirit grieved and quenched by Christians ignoring God’s Presence?

How often the Head of the Church is forgotten and His authority reduced to nominal recognition, as though Jesus were but a patron of man’s organisation to whom no reference or report needs to be made.

Committees and church meetings must seek the Lord’s mind, in all things. It is not enough to simply “have a prayer,” and then go ahead and make our own plans. God’s Word should be consulted, and constant reference made to the risen Saviour, as though He were bodily present.

We need the consciousness of His Presence. Without Him we will not see revival blessing.

“In Your Presence is fullness of joy.” (Psalm 16:11)

4. TURN FROM WICKED WAYS

“If My people turn from their wicked ways.”

What a terrible condition they are in, when God’s people need to be commanded to turn from their wicked ways. How terrible it is today, that the Church has largely forgotten her holy calling, and is practicing or condoning wicked ways.

Some will answer, “But God was here speaking to Israel, not to Christians.” True, but in the NT there are similar weighty words to believers. Christians need to repent! It is imperative that we turn from our wicked ways, so that revival may come.

It is not enough that we confess our sins, we must turn from them. To confess our sins and not forsake them is to tell God what we intend to do. Paul writes:

“Awake to righteousness, and do not sin!” (I Corinthians 15:34)

“Let everyone who names the Name of the Messiah turn away from wickedness.” (2 Timothy 9:19)

The Scriptures search the believer for those sins that linger in the heart. In James 4:8 God commands:

“Cleanse *your* hands, you sinners:
and purify *your* hearts you double-minded!”

Think for a moment of how terrible double-minded-ness is. Maybe we have become double-minded about the Master's demand for holiness in our lives. We know we should be holy, but we are often satisfied with a sub-normal - a carnal life.

Now-a-days many Christians are afraid of the term "holiness." We should rather recoil from the thought of **un-holiness** in our lives. We usually criticize the idea of "sinless perfection," but much more we should judge our own state of sinful **im-perfection**.

YHWH our God has exhorted, pleaded and commanded us to pursue holiness.

"Just as He who called you is set-apart *and holy*, you also be set-apart *and holy* in all *your* behaviour; because it is written, you shall be set-apart, for I am set-apart." (I Peter 1:15-16)

A Brethren leader, Montague Goodman, once challenged a convention of believers:

"If we are God's people we are committed to a holy life. If we are not a holy people, we are nothing at all, and worse than nothing."

The keynote to Mosaic worship and to the blessing of the people of Israel, was the words engraved on the golden plate the high priest wore - "Holiness unto the Lord." God demands that His people be holy, for all believers in this age are priests unto God.

I Peter 2:5 says we are "a holy priesthood." We are also called the "Temple of the Holy Spirit." Therefore how imperative it is that we be holy!

Because of our very relationship to God, we need to be holy. Are we not called by a holy God (1 Pet 1:16); saved by a holy Sacrifice (Heb 9:14); indwelt by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19)? Are we not called holy brethren (Heb. 3:1), a holy priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9), a holy nation (1 Pet. 2:9), and a holy temple (Eph. 2:21)? Is our Bible not the Holy Scriptures (Rom. 1:2), and is our heavenly home not God's holy habitation (Rev 21:2)? Is our calling not a holy calling (2 Tim 1:9), and are we not told to lift up holy hands (1 Tim 2:8)?

Our conversation, our walk then, **must** be holy!

The key to understanding the meaning of holiness, and experiencing holiness, is **separation**.

Firstly, we have been separated unto God, and by God. (Hebrews 13:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:13)

Secondly, we are to separate ourselves from the world, and from all sin, and present ourselves to God. (2 Corinthians 6:17, Romans 12:1-2)

This brings us back to our text:

"If My people ... turn from their wicked ways."

Our repentance must be continuous. It is not enough to look back on the past and say, "I repented so many years ago, or, I consecrated myself so many weeks ago." We must maintain our separation to God. Unless we maintain this, we will find sin creeping in and regaining its power over us.

"What partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? ... Therefore come out from among them and be separate, says YHWH, and do not touch what is unclean; and I will receive you. ... Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement

of body and spirit, perfecting holiness in reverence, standing in awe of God.” (2 Corinthians 6:14, 17, 7:1)

If we feel our weakness, failure and uncleanness, let us remember the Lord has provided the basis and power for our holiness - His Sacrifice at Calvary, the Holy Spirit's filling, and our Advocate in Heaven.

In 1949, some believers on the Isle of Lewis, Scotland, became concerned about the spiritual condition of their people. Spiritual men and women decided to do something about it. They published in their leading newspapers, an appeal to the people to become awakened to the state of things. They mentioned the fact that the Lord's Day was being profaned, worship services were unattended by the masses, and mentioned the light regard given to the vows of those who were church members.

“The Presbytery affectionately plead with their people - especially with the youth of the Church, to take these matters to heart and to make serious inquiry as to what must be the end should there be no repentance; and they called upon every individual as before God to examine his or her life in the light of that responsibility which pertains to us all, that happily, in the Divine mercy, we may be visited with the spirit of repentance and may turn again unto the Lord whom we have so grieved with our iniquities and waywardness.”

A group of men in the church at Barvas were deeply concerned. They met several nights a week in a wooden barn and poured out their hearts to God. It came to them that God is a covenant-keeping God.

2 Chronicles 7:14 flashed to their minds. They put their faith in the divine promise:

“If My people who are called by My Name humble themselves and pray, and seek My Face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

That night they entered into a solemn covenant with God, to hold to, and to prevail in prayer **until revival came!** And there was expectancy.

One night, after several months of prayer, this group of men was wrestling in prayer. Then one young man arose from his knees and read Psalm 24:

“Who may ascend into the Mountain of YHWH? And who may stand in His Holy Place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart ... he shall receive blessing from YHWH and righteousness from the God of his salvation.” (Psalm 24:3-5)

Then he said: “We have been praying for months, pleading for revival. Are our hands clean? Are our hearts pure?” All fell on their knees in confession of sin. Heaven came down, and the barn was filled with the glory of God. All of them felt they had victory and that the revival had begun.

We Have Our Part

Let us remember also that we have our part - we must turn from our wicked ways.

Here we should be definite and frank with ourselves. It is folly to preserve the “flesh.” If we fail to acknowledge our sins, we fail to turn from them. We should read passages such as the following and let the Spirit of God reveal the dark places:

MALACHI 3:7-10

GALATIANS 6:19-23

EPHESIANS 4:14-32, 5:1-25

TITUS 1:16, 3:2-3

2 TIMOTHY 3:2-5

COLOSSIANS 3:2-9

JAMES 3:3-10

“If My people, who are called by My Name (*believers*), humble themselves (*submission*), and pray (*Intercession*), and seek My Face (*worship and guidance*), and turn from their wicked ways (*separation, holiness*), then (*and only then*) I will hear from Heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

AMEN. AMEN!

Next issue: HINDRANCES TO REVIVAL