

STRAIGHTWAY

And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him [Mark 1:18].

CHRISTIAN PURITIES FELLOWSHIP

The Witness Outreach of Foundations Bible College
P.O. Box 1166 · Dunn, North Carolina 28335

VOLUME 32

MARCH/APRIL 2004

NUMBER 2

Revival in the End Time

— Part One —

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Preaching the common salvation through the message of the Gospel of Christ is a most important part of an end-time minister's calling. But two other truths that must be an integral part of his preaching are the warning of the end-time apostasy and the need of revival among God's remnant. A number of articles presenting the end-time apostasy have been a part of the literary fabric of the *Straightway* articles over the years; however, this article presents the burden of the need of revival among God's remnant in the end time.

It is important that a Christian continue to understand the increasing subtle powers of his age as he nears the second coming of His Lord and the coming of Antichrist. Such powers are

the side effects of apostasy; they have a strong tendency to harden the Christian in his walk with God or to draw him away from a burning heart for his God. The end-time institutional church is marked by apathy and indifference in its relationship with Christ (Revelation 3:15-17). Truly, it drastically contrasts with the Philadelphia Church Age that preceded our church age. Though the Charismatic movement has tried to prop up a veneer over this spiritually apathetic age, it only has produced a "form" of this relationship with God while denying the power within. For amidst the public "sounds" of Christianity the Bible declares, "nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). These

are not the days conducive for Christian living and for a walk with God. The powers of sleep are taking hold within the churches in a most alarming way even among the wise virgins (Matthew 25:5). In fact, the abounding of iniquity (lawlessness), not only in the world but also in the church, is profoundly affecting a burning love for God: “And because iniquity [lawlessness] shall abound, the love [*agapae*] of many shall wax cold” (Matthew 24:12). Our greatest need today, when global apostasy is aggressively taking its toll on the institutional church, is a mighty, soil-shaking revival among the remnant. This awakening or revival is needed for virgins (Matthew 25:1-13); it is a most urgent cry of Scripture to the remnant.

What is Revival?

There are two classic words in the Greek that note the key purposes of a revival from God. The first word is *anaζao*, which means “to live again.” In this context there

is the understanding that something which has died in the Christian walk or heart has been brought back to life. If a Christian sins and continues in a sin or failure, without recovering in Christ, spiritual death can begin taking over the many aspects of that Christian life. Backsliding is inevitable. The revival needed is a return to the evidence of the life of Christ in the Christian walk.

The second word is *anathallo*, which means “to flourish or blossom again.” The Christian life should be one of a flourishing of the Christ life and the blossoming of His image and character within. This age has a way of draining a Christian from a vibrant and flourishing life in Christ. The powers of the world are always pounding away at the heart to disturb, to vex, and to mar the beauty and fragrance of Christ. Instead of the saints “marching” on, they are “dragging” on. The lack of this flourishing in the Christian life also is a sign of the need of revival.

Noah Webster in his 1828 first edition American dictionary gives the following classic definition of revival:

Revival is the return, recall or recovery of life from death or apparent death; it is the return or recall to activity from a state of languor [lack of energy, weakness, weariness, lack of interest, indifference]. It is coming from the state of neglect, carelessness, awakening of men to spiritual concerns.

This was a most appropriate definition in the aftermath of the Second Great Awakening in our country.

STRAIGHTWAY

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Although the word *revival* is not used in Scripture, there is the term *revive* or a similar term *renew* that describes this matter of revival and when it is needed. Revival is not an evangelistic campaign; it is a restoring to life of believers and churches that have previously experienced the life of God. Having been born again of the Spirit, they have now become cold, carnal, worldly, and ineffective. As a consequence, the overflow of a true revival then begins to affect unbelievers. Nevertheless, *revival* is the term designated for believers.

Awakenings and Revivals in the Past

After the early days of the founding of our beloved country America through the pilgrims and Puritans, there came a great spiritual lull and decline in the New England colonies. Biblical conversions had become rare by 1660, and the hunger for spiritual things was becoming obsolete. In those earlier years only those who had given persuasive evidence that their lives had been changed were permitted to join churches. Because of a spiritual decline in the lives of the people reflected in their church attendance, a certain covenant was enacted in 1662 called the “Half-Way Covenant.” This covenant allowed the children of the church members to join the churches with full membership and privileges with the exception of participation in the Lord’s Supper. The purpose of this “half-way” covenant was to extend the church influence with the hope that there would be more conversions in the

future. But the inevitable happened: instead of the church changing the sinners, the sinners were changing the church. By the 1680s ministers were permitting to full membership all those who wanted to come though they made no profession of conversion. They simply had to acknowledge the basic doctrines of the church and live somewhat an upright life. As a result, the churches only deepened in coldness and darkness.

A few men, on both sides of the Atlantic, were seeking God at this time in history. One of these men was Jonathan Edwards. On a Sunday in 1734, while Mr. Edwards was preaching to his Northampton congregation, God rained upon his flock righteousness and conviction that ultimately began to spread throughout the New England communities. Edwards, in his *Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God*, wrote these words:

The town seemed to be full of the presence of God. The noise amongst the dry bones waxed louder and louder. The revival struck the hearts first of the young people and then of the elders all over the town...the tavern was soon empty. People had done with their quarrels, backbiting, and intermeddling with other men’s matters.

When John Wesley read the narrative of Edwards, it inspired him in his own spiritual quest for his native England. From the Great Awakening, God opened doors of ministry and raised up preachers for the task: David Brainard, Francis Asbury, William Carey, Henry Martyn, Jim

Eliot, and many others not even found in the annals of written history.

But how strange the work of God often is: He took many of these men off the scene of history as quickly as they came. Edwards died of smallpox; Whitefield died in his mid-fifties in Newburyport, Massachusetts, of an asthma attack; David Brainard died at the tender age of twenty-nine after contracting tuberculosis. Though the move of God was a mighty one, our country fell back into sin in a few short years after that Great Awakening.

Then the American Revolution swept our country with clear evidences that our country was back into spiritual lethargy. Drunkenness was of epidemic proportion; fear reigned on the streets of the cities; the Methodists and Baptists fell prey to the times; ungodliness flooded the country; and churches were once again being emptied. Many pastors had gone for years without taking in any new members; denominations were contemplating merging because of the diminishing number of parishioners; even John Marshall, the chief justice of the United States, wrote to Bishop Madison of Virginia and said, "The church is too far gone ever to be redeemed." Thomas Paine's writing of *The Age of Reason* was conquering the minds of American leadership and the college academic world. On college campuses, many of which were birthed in the providence of God for the purpose of training godly ministers, there was a dearth of believers. By the 1770s it is reported that Harvard did not

have one believer in the whole student body; Princeton boasted of only two. Student riots were common; students were burning Bibles. Many eyewitnesses of that time stated that Christians were so few on campuses that they met in secret and kept their minutes in code so as to avoid persecution.

But again, a remnant was praying in America for God to change the hearts of men. A Scottish minister in Edinburgh named John Erskine wrote a little book entitled *A Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of All God's People in Extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom*. There were other men like Isaac Backus, a Baptist preacher in New England, who sent out a plea for prayer to be given regularly in behalf of a move of God among His people. Timothy Dwight, the president of Yale, was used of the Lord to bring an awakening and revival to that college that by this time was filled with agnostics and atheists.

The 1800s brought the workings of God through the Methodist evangelist Peter Cartwright, the Scotch-Irish Presbyterian minister James McGready, and the prayer meetings of Jeremiah Lanphier. There was also the work of Moody, Sankey, Torrey, and a number of others. The movement of God then swept the Atlantic to the lands of Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, England, South Africa, and South India. Its effect was felt for forty years; a movement of prayer sustained it.

The Popular Revivals of Modern Times

Although there is much talk about God, Jesus, and the Bible today, it is in the context of carnality, rock music, and reform without repentance. We are not witnessing the wailing, the repenting, the breaking up of the fallow ground, and the sowing in righteousness. The seeking of God today in America is all for the wrong reasons. Much of the motivation today in seeking God is money, health, materialism, healing from psychosis and neurosis, the building of religious empires, or the clothing of the message around a man rather than Christ. This is why we are seeing the spiraling rise of divorce among professing Christians as well as the powers of fornication laying hold of the churches. Amidst their boast of “awaking” to God, there is no awakening to righteousness!

Since World War II there has been the mighty rise of “Neo-Christianity” in America. Such a power has so polluted the Gospel and interwoven error with truth that the majority of its people will never see the purity of it again. The gospel has basically run its gamut in America; it has become so mongrelized by being sifted through Neo-Christianity. This is what the true Christian must face in his evangelistic endeavors. Basically, America and now the world view evangelism, a Christian life, and God through the Neo and not the true Christian Faith. The false has had time to permeate the public message; this is the end-time

global apostasy. This fact has added to the reality that these are the days of the dissolution of the ages and the commencement of the delusion sent by God to a nation that no longer loves truth. Religious leaders of our time are firmly persuaded that they and their ministries are turning the world back to God. But to the contrary, they are turning humanity to a deepening of sin and blindness of the apostasy. It must be said that we have witnessed in our generation the public death of true Christianity. What we are now publicly observing is a Neo-Christianity.

The God of Neo-Christianity is not the God of Scripture. It may be “like” the Gospel, but it is not the same. The God of Scripture is not a god of ecumenicity, the god of compromise with error, the god of befriending liberals, nor the god of “Christian” rock and roll. Such movements are cursed by God, not tolerated by God (Galatians 1:6-9). What denomination is standing against these errors today? What movement is militantly against this global apostasy? There seems to be only one movement remaining that is in support of “historic” Christianity and that is the Christian Fundamentalist Separatist movement.

Hollywood's Revival of Jesus

Hollywood has added its own interpretation of Christ and His gospel through a variety of films in our times. Some of them have portrayed Christ worse than others. *The Last Temptation of Christ* depicted him as a human who was caught in

the constant struggles within himself of the lusting powers of the flesh. It is a film that up-front does not pretend to base its presentation on the Gospels. Nearing the end of the film, Christ is taken off the cross by a guardian angel. He does not die, but lives to marry and have children. Others come later, such as the apostle Paul, and augment his history to state that He did die as the Messiah and arose from the dead. In the film the human Jesus, later in his life, personally denounces being the Messiah and refutes this message that is being preached about him. He endeavors to deny such a message but cannot stop it. This supposedly is how the myth of Jesus Christ of Scripture began in history.

Yet another side of Hollywood is the popular film by Mel Gibson, *The Passion of the Christ*. It is heralded as the most moving film ever made on the passion of the Lord. Covering the last twelve hours of the life of Jesus, about one hundred minutes of this one hundred twenty-six-minute film is consumed in the violence against Him. The film is the Passion according to Mel Gibson and his uniquely-sensitive traditional Roman Catholicism. The script is based upon several sources, including the diaries of St. Anne Catherine Emmerich (1774-1824) as collected in the book *The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, the book *Mystical City of God* by St. Mary of Agreda, and the four Gospels of the New Testament. It is evident that one of the scenes (when Jesus is being flogged), comes directly from the spurious *The Dolorous Passion of*

Our Lord Jesus Christ. As Jesus is being flogged, Claudia, the wife of Pilate, approaches the "Blessed Virgin" and Mary Magdalene bearing linens, which she gives to them. After Jesus is taken away, the two Marys go down on the flagstones and begin mopping up the blood of Jesus that has been spilled around the pillar. This shows another Roman Catholic myth subtly brought into the story. Several scenes pay close attention to the sacred nature of the blood sacrifice with even Mary the mother of Jesus kissing the bloody feet of Christ at the cross (and turning to the camera with the blood on her mouth), implying her identification with his sufferings (the Romanist view). Mary is portrayed in this film as if she knew why He was suffering and her own heart was supernaturally and vicariously a part of it. Another Romanist legend appearing in the film is the legendary St. Veronica, who supposedly was moved by the sight of Christ carrying His cross to Golgotha and gave Him her kerchief to wipe His brow, after which He handed it back imprinted with His face. Legend has it that she was married to Zacchaeus, the publican. The film truly follows closely the 14 Stations of the Cross and the five sorrowful mysteries of the rosary.

There are many Catholic and Protestant leaders who believe that this film will aid in bringing revival to America this coming year. Mr. Gibson is certainly wanting to accent the sufferings of the Christ to such a graphic point that the most

graphic scenes have not been allowed in the previews or in the various documentaries on the making of the movie. No doubt such scenes will emotionally move people. *But to what Christ will they be moved?* We must remember that this film is overtly Romanish in its portrayal of Christ and especially with Mary the mother of Jesus. She is raised to a subtle height in the film with the scene reenacting the famous statue of one of the "Stations of the Cross" where Mary is holding Christ after He is taken down from the cross. It has been clearly reported that daily Mel Gibson had a Roman priest to give the Mass on the set for the entire cast and crew. James Caviezel, a Roman Catholic who plays the part of Christ, stated in an interview with EWTN (a Roman Catholic TV station) that his portraying Christ on the cross made the Eucharist (the Mass) more meaningful to him. Roman Catholicism has strongly supported this film with declaration that Mary has finally been exalted to her true place in its presentation. How will Neo-Christianity fare with this film? How will Roman Catholicism fare?

We must remember that the remnant finds itself in the unique time of the falling away of the institutional church. We are in the unique time of a "Christless" church (Laodicea). We must continue to evangelize, but genuine conversions will be rare. We must not expect the book of Acts phenomena in our time; the mood of our world is different. In the book of Acts, the Gospel was fresh with no perversions.

Two thousand years has produced a vast array of counterfeit gospels, from the oldest Christian apostasy of Roman Catholicism to Neo-Protestantism. These have been so finely tuned in the deception that only the Elect will be able to see their subtleties.

Conclusion

A true end-time revival from God will not be like the ones of the past, for we are living in the time of the siftings and shakings of God. When a remnant of people begins praying earnestly for revival, they should be prepared for what God will do to answer that prayer. When a pastor begins seeking God for revival for his beloved church, he must be ready in his own heart for God's way and working. In Genesis 25:21-23, Isaac entreated the Lord in behalf of his wife for conception of a child. When God begins to send revival, there may be a struggling within the womb; we may not understand the struggle, the reason for it, or the outcome. As God is answering prayer, the final reality of His workings may be "two manner of people" who will be separated ultimately because revival's work proved they were not of the same heart. We tend to think that only "positive" results come from revival. But God seals people away from His truth, even those who seemed to have walked with God for a long time. When the Spirit of God begins to do His work, if the heart ever rebels, the very work of God for good in a heart will perform a hardening that finally becomes a

sealing for eternity. It is true that God's word "that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11). But its purpose is not always life.

For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? (II Corinthians 2:15,16)

The sermons of God's men today are sealing the hearts of people either for life or for death.

Before God sends judgment to the world in the Tribulation Period and judgment to the Jew in the understanding of Daniel's Last Week, judgment must begin at the house of God (I Peter 4:17). Before the coming of Christ, everyone will be brought to deception except the Elect. We are now in the time of this movement within the womb to divide the two manner of people: God's true Elect and the mixed multitude. Sometimes the deception is so close that it will take discernment from God to see the difference. And while the struggles are still in the womb, it is hard to detect what or who is right, for movements are coming from both. Within the womb, they are still hidden; but a day will come when they will be birthed and they will be known.

Though certain principles dominate all revivals, no two revivals are ever the same. The End-time Revival

will be unique in history, for its end result is to bring about the final division within the camp of God's professing people. Therefore, we must make our calling and election sure and not be carried about with the passions and thinking of the religious times. Remember, God's ways and thoughts are not naturally ours. He works at times in ways that will cause us to wonder and even question, for on the surface they do not seem logical (Isaiah 55:8-9). Therefore, the arm of flesh will always fail us both in living and in understanding God's ways of working. Only by the Word and Spirit of God will we get through; all other supports will fail.

But revival needs to come to our personal hearts, our homes, and our local churches in these last days. It is time for the remnant to seek the Lord until He comes and rains righteousness upon us (Hosea 10:12b). Repentance is needed to remove all our secret sins; our wills need to be broken that we have molded to be the guardian of our egos. All our spiritual props need to be kicked out from underneath us. The meditation upon God's Word needs to take the place of evil surmisings; self-inventory needs to be taken before God and His Word.

In our next issue we will view the workings of Sovereignty and the seekings of the human heart for revival in these last days. May God send to His remnant a call to revival; may we be prepared for the announcement, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him" (Matthew 25:6).

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