

STRAIGHTWAY

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

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The Need of Revival: But What Kind?

Dr. H. T. Spence

At this time in history, four burdens must be consistently evident in every true remnant preacher: (1) the existence of the apostasy, (2) the urgency of the second coming of Christ, (3) the need of daily communion with God, and (4) the call to the remnant for revival unto the glorious Christ. If amidst his declaration of the Gospel these four areas are not a regular cry from his preaching heart, then he has capitulated to the Neo-Christianity of his times. As the Lord leads in the coming months, perhaps an in-depth presentation of these four burdens would prove to be of spiritual benefit.

In this article the burden of revival comes to the forefront. Thank God, there are a few Fundamentalists who are calling us to this important need. However, we must be careful to understand what type of revival is appointed for us who live in the end time of the last church age in history. In the call for revival, what kind of revival are we looking for and expecting from God?

My dear earthly father, who passed away in July 2000, often told his students that a Christian must always know where he is in the timeline of the Scriptures. One of the great casualties of

This edition includes a second article

The Beginnings of Revival

interpreting Scripture is considering a passage outside its biblical context and apart from discerning the characteristics of one's own times. This problem can readily be discovered in three prominent areas of modern interpretation concerning the Day of Pentecost, evangelism, and revival.

The Charismatics' View of the Day of Pentecost

One of the prominent areas of modern interpretation is found among the Charismatics and their view of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. They are constantly looking to Acts 2 for today's understanding of the "infilling of the Spirit." The Bible does clearly indicate the distinction between being born of the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit. But historically and practically there are two different periods of history in which this "infilling" is to be viewed.

In type and shadow, Deuteronomy 11 expresses these two dif-

ferent periods in the context of the rains promised by God to His people. In Palestine from May to October there basically was no rain. However, when the rains fell from October to May, they fell in three categories: former, winter, and latter rains. The former rains were the showers of October to the first of November. These rains softened the parched ground so that the winter grain could be sown. Then came the winter rains from December to February. The latter rains came in April to ripen the fruit and stay the drought of summer. The "latter" rains were the most valued of the rains; Job described in 29:23 how men used to wait for his words as they did for the latter rain.

A spiritual view of these rains is given to us in Joel 2:23 and 28 with the prophecy that God would send these rains in the latter days. We are told in Acts 2 that the latter days commenced with the coming of Jesus Christ. Historically, this fell on the Day of Pentecost, for Peter declared, "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:16). This was the "former rain" which was given for the sowing of the seed. The sowing of the seed of the Gospel and the planting of the Church commenced with the Day of Pentecost; the Lord sent His Spirit for this planting. We read of this in Acts 2 at Jerusalem, Acts 8 in Samaria, Acts 10 with Cornelius, and Acts 19 with the Gentiles at Ephesus.

The latter rain indicates the time

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of harvest, the judgment of the fruit. Prophetically this is the End Time of the Latter Days. The seed-time of Acts 2 is now over. In finding our place in prophecy, we must turn to James 5, which speaks of the end-time apostasy.

Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. 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. Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh (vv. 7, 8).

We are prophetically and historically in the latter rain; this is heaven's final preparation of the fruit for harvesting. This period seems to have started around the mid-1800s, and brought with it a deeper understanding of the Second Coming of Christ. (The Fundamentalist Movement was born during this prophetic time period.) Genuine moves of God came throughout the world with an emphasis upon the Holy Spirit and the Christian life as seen in the Northfield conferences of D. L. Moody and the Keswick movement in England.

There were other places of biblical, spiritual moves of God, but counterfeits followed on the heels of these genuine outpourings. One such counterfeit came in 1906 in Los Angeles, California, at Azusa Street. The prominent Charismatic historian Dr. Vinson Synan gives an account of this event in his book *The*

Holiness-Pentecostal Movement:

[There were] physical demonstrations as the jerks and treeing the devil were in evidence in the mission. Before long spiritualists and mediums from the numerous occult societies of Los Angeles began to attend and to contribute their séances and trances to the services (p. 110).

It must be said that while there is a growing, wholesale falling away in the earthly church and its movements, there is a remnant of Christians who know the anointing of the Spirit of God for personal living and preaching, for maturing in sound doctrine, for fruit of the Spirit in character, for prayer, for discernment into the conditions of our times, and for patience in waiting for the catching away of Christ's Bride. We are not at the time of the planting of Acts 2, the "former rain"; but we prophetically are at the end of the "latter rain" outpouring of God's Spirit in the Church (James 5), waiting for the Husbandman to come and harvest His fruit.

The Popular View of Evangelism

Evangelism is another prominent area of modern interpretation that has been separated from its biblical context and a discernment of our present time. Many people read in the book of Acts of the dramatic number of believers and the movements of God believing that the same should take place in our day. Because of this view, a number of

good men become discouraged when they do not see this happening in their ministries. Although our *principles* and *message* are to be the same, the results may not be so.

The “soul-winning experts” give us this guarantee: follow the principles of the book of Acts, and they will automatically bring the same results. This may not be true, because the times in which we live are different and their characteristics must be taken into consideration. For example (1) at the beginning of the Church there had never been N.T. Christianity before. (2) Although there was a Judaistic apostasy at the time of the birth of Christianity, there was not a Christian apostasy. (3) Christianity was “new wine” being poured into new wineskins (Luke 5:36-39). (4) The Church was pure and fresh then; only one gospel was preached in those early years. (5) God was establishing His Son’s Word then, and man knew he was bankrupt naturally. (6) At that time they were not facing or confronting a false Christ or a false Gospel as we are today.

After the existence of two thousand years of Christianity, we are living in a time when *the* apostasy is Christian apostasy. The Institutional Church has changed its view of itself. It is no longer pure; it now claims a “Neo” Christianity, a new gospel, a new Holy Ghost, and a new Jesus. Man no longer views himself as bankrupt; secular humanism is

prospering and man is no longer in need of the Gospel. We are in the times of many false prophets and many false Christs. This truly is a different time and thus the results of evangelism will not be the same. Today the world is accepting a modern Christianity, and it is very hard for the sinner to separate true and false Christianity when the Gospel is presented to him. To the world biblical Christianity is extinct; the public view of Christianity today is Neo-Christianity. Mankind is accepting this false Gospel instead. Only a few are biblically being saved today; most “conversions” that we hear of today are of the Neo-Christianity description.

The Burden for Revival

The concept of revival is a third area that has been beset by modern interpretations. What is a true revival and what kind of revival are we seeking?

To define revival from a simple perspective, it is the periodic restoration of God’s people after a time of indifference and decline. Revival is needed often in the Christian’s life; we naturally tend to apathy and indifference. Revival is firmly taught in Scripture, and one of the provisions in the Atonement is the ability of Christ to restore our soul (Psalm 23). It is not that the Holy Spirit cannot sustain the Christian; it is simply that human passions tend to wane. There is the proclivity of the Christian to decline from God,

not so much in mind but rather in heart. Matthew 25 states that both wise and foolish virgins slept. In Matthew 24 Christ warned of the “abounding of iniquity” and how it would affect our love for God. When man does not go on with God it is the result of selfishness, self-centeredness, and pride. Yet, the Holy Spirit allows it to happen; this should cause us to pray for renewing.

Thus revival is a renewing of the heart and mind for God. It is a quickening, a making alive because some things are dying in the Christian life. In the Hebrew Old Testament, one of the key words for revival is *bayah*, which means “to live,” or “to cause to live.” In the Greek New Testament the word *anaizo* means “to live again.” The tendency of the Christian is to wane in his affections toward God, to wane in his love for God, and to let elements of the Christian life die. Consequently, there is the need for revival.

It must be declared with firm conviction that revival is a sovereign work of God. Yet there seems to be a pattern in history that God uses to motivate His people’s hearts toward the desire for revival. This work of God commences by the stirring of the hearts of a remnant during a time of spiritual depression and apathy, and even when gross sin begins to take over individual lives, congregations, or student body. This burden could also arise from the Lord when the great majority of

the professing Christians seem to be no different than those of the secular world. When such a spiritual concern arises from God within an individual or a small group of God’s people who are conscious of their sins and backsliding condition, this move of God births within their heart the need to forsake all that is displeasing to Him. Perhaps part of the promptings of their heart will arise through memory or readings, or from recalling the past outpourings of God’s grace. They begin to long for such manifestations again.

When this spiritual process begins unfolding in the providence of God, He then begins to raise up a man or men with prophetic insights into the causes of and the remedies to the problems. Their preaching brings fresh understanding to the holy and pure character of God. The standard of holiness exposes the degeneracy of the age and the falling away of professing Christians from the standard of holiness. Under this preaching a remnant of hearts begin to yield. God then begins to grant a reviving and in this reviving comes an understanding and appropriation of higher and deeper spiritual living.

Although often there are some sinners saved, *revival is not the same as evangelism*. Revival is the word for believers. The greater need today, because of the apostasy of the Institutional Church, is not evangelism but a deeper move of God in revival among God’s people. The greatest grief we view today is not the deca-

dence and lawlessness within society but the falling away, the carnality, and the loose and worldly living of the Church! Global apostasy will be known from within the Church, not from without.

Revivals of the Past Versus the Present Need

We must come to clarification about the times in which we live. Past revivals and awakenings in Church history were in differing time periods. When I was a younger man and would read of the awakenings and revivals of history, I longed for God to do the same thing in my day. We read that the revival in Wales at the turn of the twentieth century brought a closing down of all the drinking establishments in that country. Hardened men came to God. Those were days when God was known as God; absolutes reigned in the view of Truth. Distinctions of right and wrong were known then; people knew that God did not tolerate certain things.

Now, however, America has come to believe in a Neo-God, a Neo-Christ, and a Neo-Christianity. Existentialism is the philosophy of our times, denying absolutes and principles. Everything, including God and the hereafter, is now viewed from the pragmatic, relativistic, and dialectic perspective. It is difficult now, even in most churches, to speak of the things of God without the minds of people thinking of Christianity from the perspective of

Billy Graham, Jerry Falwell, and others. The contemporary definition of the Holy Spirit is defined by such false teachers as Rod Parsley and Oral (and Richard) Roberts. The popular Christianity of today is a mongrelized religion that will never be able to return to a biblical definition. The true Christian must realize that the end-time apostasy has basically destroyed a pure, linguistic and conceptual environment in which to speak of God and the things of the Bible to the average person.

Each of the eight classic revivals presented in Scripture is different. There will be no two revivals manifested alike in history. If an end-time revival is to come to God's people before the Second Coming of His Son (the awakening of the virgins in Matthew 25), it will be similar to the revival in the days of Hezekiah rather than in David's time or Solomon's. The former revival, recorded in II Chronicles 29:3-36, needs to be carefully read.

If Fundamentalism is to see a move from God through revival (and it desperately needs one), it will necessitate an acknowledgment of much spiritual and carnal debris similar to the conditions in Hezekiah's day. Many incidents of neutrality and compromise will have to be dealt with. We have gone so long without a true move of God in our churches that the polished programs and professionalism have taken the place of the Holy Spirit.

We are fast leaning into the winds of the Neo-Christianity, and sadly we do not see it. Obvious changes have taken place over the years in the music, in principles, in dress standards, in preaching, in the worldview, in views of apostasy, in broader views of the text of Scripture, in a growing sympathy for Neo-Evangelicalism, and in educational views of accreditation. Some changes may come for freshness sake, but we must be careful that the changes are not compromises and capitulations to the Neo thought and look. Changes of mandate and terminology are in vogue now; the charting of a different course for the future has become what we believe to be our greatest need.

Conclusion

Oh that God would call us to revival. If He does not, Fundamentalism will perish as an honorable movement in the earth in the last days. Evidences are becoming prominent in the loss of the heart of true, inward worship. The grandness of our sanctuaries, our music abilities, the increase of communication skills, and even the increase numerically of our churches have given us a false security and assurance of the presence of God. We have been convinced by the Charismatics that “praise” brings God’s presence; it does not. God will accept nothing in the place of a broken and contrite heart.

A Davidic revival is one of glory;

the End-time Church is not in such a relationship with God. Christ is on the outside of the Institutional Church knocking, and only individuals are opening the door to Him (Revelation 3:20). We do need a revival in the days of apostasy, the days as those of Hezekiah; but such a revival will be costly. Second Chronicles 29 reveals the great disarray and dissolution that the House of God was in. Such is the case today: so many sins, failures, changes, and damages have taken place that much will have to be repented of. Time has a way of revealing the need of repairs, cleansings, restoring of things, opening of closed doors, etc. But the sobering question is: Will we have the humility to acknowledge it? What will God call upon us to do, to give up, to radically change, yea, to repent of?

May our Heavenly Father send a soul-shaking revival to Fundamentalism as we near His coming; it is our only hope for returning to the historical vision of its founding. It will not be a laughing revival or a shouting revival or one of glory. But it will be one of deep humbling, of repentance, of forsaking the changes that have been made to set us in the direction of Neo-Evangelicalism, of reaffirming our allegiance to personal and ecclesiastical separation, and of our deliverance from those things that have taken the place of a deep love for Christ in obedience. God truly is willing; the question is, “Are we?”

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Volume II

H. T. Spence, Th.D.

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The Beginnings of Revival

Dr. H. T. Spence

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land (II Chronicles 7:14).

One of the things affecting revival throughout history has been the variety of views of theology. Some theological systems do not allow the seeking or praying for revival and sometimes even the existence of revival itself. We've heard the statement, "If God wants to send us a revival He will; it is totally left up to Sovereignty." With such thinking there is no praying for or desiring for revival in the life or in the church.

The truth of biblical revival is tied up in a paradox; a paradox is two seeming opposites molded together into one principle, bringing about a balance of both. We tend to think that Sovereignty and human responsibility are dialectic in nature, and as light and darkness cannot be brought together. Rather than dialectic, in reality they are paradoxical. Notice in the following passages of Scripture how two seeming opposites are molded together into one principle, thus bringing about a balance of both:

John 6:44 states, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." This is emphatically true and cannot be undermined. Then John 5:40 states, "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life," or "ye do not will to come."

Jeremiah 29:10 records that God sovereignly appointed seventy years for the Babylonian captivity. Yet in Jeremiah 29:12-14a near the end of the captivity the Lord said, "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity." Daniel came to understand sovereignty's appointment in Daniel 9, by reading books such as Jeremiah's writing. Following this understanding, then Daniel said, "And I set my face unto the LORD God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes" (9:3).

In Acts 27:22 the Lord tells the Apostle Paul, "And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship." This was sovereignty's appointment. Then in 27:31 Paul commands, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." All of these examples express the harmony of a biblical paradox.

The Effects of the Reformation

Pelagianism and Augustinianism are two important theologies that arose in the fourth and fifth centuries affecting the theology of the Church down through history. Both concern a view of the depravity of man.

Pelagius (Latin name, Morgantoo) was a British monk who was a friend to Augustine and Jerome (of the famous Latin Vulgate Bible). In his early 50s he gave to the Christian world the theological belief of what has come to be known as Pelagianism. In his childhood he was a perfect and model child for his parents. He lived in a Christian atmosphere all his life. From this natural “perfect” life he concluded that man was born well—without sin. His theology birthed the belief that the sin of Adam only affected Adam and none other, and that all children are conceived well and only need a Savior *if* they personally sin.

Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, strongly reacted to this growing theology of his friend and denounced it. His early life was not like that of Pelagius. Although Augustine had a godly mother, he lived a reckless life filled with deep sin. He did not come to profess the Christ until his mid-thirties. Considering his past life in light of the Scriptures, he concluded that man was born depraved, dead in sin; therefore, all men needed redemption.

During the early days of the Reformation a newer view slipped in between Pelagianism and Augustinianism known as Covenant Theology. Covenant Theology suggested that the children of Christians grew up into a saving knowledge of Christ, entering their prime life as Christians. This approach was embraced in order to keep the children from eventually leaving and becoming Romanists. These children were baptized in infancy, acknowledging they were a part of the visible Church, the Kingdom of God on earth. There then followed an “age of discretion” (or an age of accountability) at which time a child was required to make their own confession of personal conversion if they were to attain full communicant status.

As Protestantism came to its third and fourth generations, especially here in America, an increased number of adults could not qualify for communicant status. The parents did not perceive in their children what the first generation saw in their offspring. In fact, some of the children when reaching adulthood left the church altogether. Others who continued in the church without a profession still wanted their children to be baptized. To accommodate this enigma in their theological system these American Covenanters passed in 1662 what was known as the “Half-Way Covenant.” This concept became a part of Covenant Theology. Such a compromise brought great destruction to spirituality in the churches of New England.

Solomon Stoddard of Northampton

In the providence of God, Solomon Stoddard (1643-1729) became the pastor at Northampton, Massachusetts. During his ministry he observed how the Half-Way Covenant was destroying the churches of New England. With prayerful burden before the Lord, he realized something needed to be done. His readings of past revivals drew him to the awakenings that came to Scotland in 1596 and later in 1625-30 at the parish of Stewarton. These brought hope to his heart that God could also work in his church and in New England.

Stoddard's church at Northampton was started in 1661 under Rev. Eleazer Mather. After Stoddard came to assist, Mather died. Stoddard then married Mather's widow and began a pastorate that lasted sixty years. He preached so strongly that people in the Connecticut Valley called him "Pope" Stoddard. But after God sent some five revivals to the area, the people grew to deeply love him.

Solomon Stoddard finally abandoned the Half-Way Covenant. He opened communion to any professing Christian, stating that only God knew who was truly regenerated. Another important change did *not* require new converts to have come from a Christian home. He believed that if a person were present for the communion and the preaching of the Word, he could be helped toward the moment when grace would enter his heart. He believed there were two stages for preparation: humiliation and contrition. These two stages would come, Stoddard believed, if one attended the church.

He told the ministers in the Connecticut Valley that they must preach against all the evil ways that they found in the people; if not, sin would increase among them. In addition, he declared that most people would hate such preaching at the outset because of its condemnation of their sins; however, after conversion they would greatly love the preacher.

How was this preaching to be accomplished? Stoddard gave the preachers several suggestions. They were not to read the manuscript of their sermons. Although he did not request that they preach extemporaneously, he required they know their manuscript well before entering the pulpit. (Stoddard was one of the first men in the New England area who did not read his sermons.) He also exhorted these ministers that they preach with authority: it must hit hard for the "conversion of change." Stoddard pled that this change must truly be seen in the genuinely converted and that men must be led into the understanding of the evil of their hearts and the strictness of the law before they will be convinced of the

preciousness of Christ. Stoddard was thoroughly assured that men were in a deep spiritual sleep and that they tended to flatter themselves as if there was no coming judgment from God or hell. He implored the ministers to give no one rest who was in such a sleep condition; they were to pull them as brands from the burning. And when such individuals were converted, they must be warned of the need of going on with God, for piety is not natural to a people. The minister must press them on their way in Christ!

There were many men of greatness associated with the First Great Awakening in America, such as William Tennett, Gilbert Tennett, George Whitefield, and Jonathan Edwards. But Solomon Stoddard was the man God used preliminarily among his own Calvinistic, Covenant Theology men. He boldly told his fellow ministers in New England that what they were preaching was not working, that the families were losing their children to the world and still calling them “Christian.” He believed the only hope was for the minister, the man of God, to rise up and call upon God for an awakening among the people and their children. They must “preach” for this awakening and they must “pray” for this awakening.

Then there arose among his peers the reasoning that such awakenings would only come in the Lord’s time. This, they claimed, was a sovereign matter negating the need of such preaching and praying for it. Stoddard truly believed in the Sovereignty of God and that such a move must come from Him, but he came to believe that the clergy and laity could assist in preparing the heart for such a work from heaven.

The Need of Balance in Theology

One of the great weaknesses in the theological systems of Church history is that they are built upon an overemphasis of a certain truth to the neglect of another. They are all “human” systems—only the Bible is divine and infallible. Some systems may be more biblical than others, but they are all built by men. Sometimes they can become an enemy to deepening one’s walk with God. Some systems will have to be altered, if only a little, in order for the acceptance of God’s workings.

It is interesting to note that most of the revivals in later history have been through Calvinist men. Although God used the message of their system that addresses law and grace, in every situation these preachers had to alter their preaching by calling the people to accept, to repent, to believe, and to yield—all matters of human responsibility. The paradox may be denied in the system, but it will come out in the practical burden of the life before the Lord. I have known some precious men who were strong in Reformed Theology but read much among the revivalists. This brought a passion and burning in their living, preaching, and praying that would not otherwise have

been found in their system.

One of the great contributions that Solomon Stoddard made in trying to bring a balance in Covenant Theology and Reformed Theology was the matter concerning the Elect. At this time in American history, there was a growing number who believed they were not part of the Elect and therefore had no hope for revival or conversion. This belief had become so strong that even ministers were telling certain individuals that they were not a part of the Elect, thus bringing hopelessness to those individuals. But Stoddard, to give hope to these people, taught that Election cannot be known for sure in this life and therefore everyone should respond to the gospel as if they were elected.

Concerning Calvinism's TULIP acronym, he viewed the perseverance of the saints (P) a knowledge only realized at the end of one's life. He also declared in the preaching for the awakening that men should have a greater scope in their cooperation with God than Calvinism had traditionally allowed. It must be remembered that up to this point in New England theology, a minister was not to persuade individuals to seek salvation if they were as lost and helpless as Calvinism seemed to decree. The seeming contradiction between Calvinism and Stoddard's hope of revival was that he insisted upon the unknowability of the Elect. He clung tenaciously to the scriptural doctrine of man's total inability before God; he also preached that as God draws the individual by His grace and Spirit, that man must come and accept God. The actual granting of the grace was to be found in God's power alone. This preaching became the breakthrough in Calvinism that opened the door for his grandson Jonathan Edwards, Jonathan Dickinson, and every other revivalist of consequence in the Great Awakening.

Prayer and II Chronicles 7:14

Within the context of Solomon's dedicatory prayer for the new Temple (II Chron. 6:14-7:22), the English word *prayer* appears seventeen times. For our English word *prayer* there are three Hebrew words. The first word *tephillah* means a "prayer of praise" and appears nine times in this passage. Although the praise of the Charismatic is a false praise due to the fact they are praising in the context of heresy and "another gospel of another kind," there is the necessity of praise being an integral part of our praying. Unlike Lot's wife, our prayers should be filled with praise to God for His deliverances in our life and with the evidence that we are deeply appreciative for these deliverances.

A second Hebrew word for prayer is *palah* and appears seven times. It is the second English word for prayer in II Chron. 6:19. This word means "to

judge.” Judgment is also important in our praying: the judging of self, of our sins, of our family, of our church, of the age in which we live, and of the world at this end time. This judging leads to confession and repentance. Although one could be too severe upon himself in judgment without the consciousness of Christ’s provisions, one must ever be judging pride and any religious self-righteousness. This kind of praying, sadly, is receiving less of an emphasis in public prayer today. The prophets often prayed this *palab* prayer (see Daniel 9).

The third Hebrew word for prayer is *chanan* and is found in 6:37. *Chanan* means “to entreat grace and pity.” Especially amidst *palab* praying we need *chanan* praying; this kind of prayer is the hope that God will be gracious to us in both the dealing and forgiveness of that which is confessed and repented of.

It was after Solomon’s prayer that we read in II Chronicles 7:12 the Lord “appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice.” Do we view our church sanctuaries as an appointed place that God has chosen? Do we believe it to be a “House of Prayer”? Do we acknowledge that it is a place of hope for God to do and work among His people? II Chron. 7:15 states, “Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.”

God deals with His people who go back on Him or become apathetic: He tells Solomon in 7:13, “If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people . . .” God’s words to Solomon speak of three calamities that could affect one’s life. (1) The shutting up heaven without rain spiritually represents a time when distance comes between men and God. This is when His people have not known His spiritual presence for a long time; when they have not been refreshed, renewed, revived; when there has been no rain on the soul or on the congregation for a great season of time. (2) The devouring of the locusts is when the believer is no longer experiencing the blessings of God as he once did. (3) The sending of pestilence is when the Christian life becomes barren in the light of what was formerly done for God.

In the devastation of these workings of God upon the spiritually retreating Christian, there comes the promise of II Chronicles 7:14:

If my people which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

This is not a promise to the unregenerate; this is a promise to God's own people. They must humble themselves: they must bring themselves low and mortify their pride. And they must *pray*! This Hebrew word is *palah*! They must honestly judge themselves; they must honestly judge their sins, open and secret. They are not to pray generically, but to specifically judge the failures and sins of their life. Such praying is not found within the churches of our times or the private prayers of individuals. Praying has become too general, too generic, and carefully avoids shame and hurting. These are the days of "self-esteem" praying and the pretense that everything is all right.

Coming out of this deep prayer there must be the seeking of the *face* of God, which in Scripture is the Holiness of God. And there *must* be a turning from our wicked ways! This kind of praying and seeking will only come from a broken and contrite heart, one that has been broken of its stubbornness, rebellion, resistance, and has come to an absolute submission to God and His Word in obedience. It is only then that God's people will know the "hearing" from heaven, the "forgiveness" of sin, and a "healing" of the life (the land).

Conclusion

Have you been longing for a revival in your heart, in your family, and even in your local church? There must be a beginning to this revival. It will be hard on pride, but the breaking of it truly is the right way for God's spiritual blessings. The Laodicean Church Age proclaims, "I have need of nothing" (Revelation 3:17). *Acknowledgment* of the need of revival is the first step. "I am in need of revival; my family is in need; and, my church is in great need of revival." It is only when the leaders of the Fundamentalist movement, the pastors of local churches, and the presidents of Christian schools go public with the cry, "We are in need of a mighty revival from God," will we ever enter into the burden of it. Pastors are preaching their programs and their safe sermons, for they are afraid to acknowledge the real condition of their church. As the President of the United States of America must always give a positive "State of the Union" address (otherwise it will reflect badly upon him), so do the leaders of the churches and denominations. We are deeply afraid to acknowledge our spiritual need of God. *But* this acknowledgment is the beginning of revival.

Let us rise with honesty, let us rise with hope in God, and let us rise with a deep desire for revival and recovery of our churches, schools, and families. It is time for us to acknowledge before God: "We are in need, O God, of revival." "Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved" (Psalm 80:3, 7, 19). Thank the Lord that such a benefit is provided in the Atonement of Christ: "He restoreth my soul" (Psalm 23:3a).