

Sermon on Revival

By Charles Spurgeon

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892) was a Calvinistic Baptist preacher from England and founder of Pastors' College. He was one of the most influential ministers of his era, captivating (and often infuriating) audiences with his powerful and convicting sermons. Known by many as the "Prince of Preachers, he remains influential among Christians of various denominations to this day.

Excerpts from "Spiritual Revival the Want of the Church"

1. Entirely God's Work

Scripture Text: "O LORD, revive thy work" (Habakkuk 3:2).

All true religion is the work of God. God is indeed the author of salvation in the world, and religion is the work of grace. If there is anything good or excellent found in His Church, it, too, is entirely God's work, from first to last.

It is God who quickens a soul which was dead, and it is God who maintains the life of that soul; God who nurtures and perfects that life in the Church. We ascribe nothing to ourselves and everything to God. We do not dare for a single moment to think that our conversion or our sanctification is affected by our own efforts or the efforts of another. True, there are means by which we are converted and sanctified, but they are entirely God's work.

2. A Revival of Piety

Therefore, trusting that it is the Spirit of God who helps me, I shall endeavor to apply this principle first to our own souls personally, and second, to the Church at large.

First, then, to ourselves. We too often flog the Church when the whip should be laid on our own shoulders. We should always remember that we are a part of the Church, and that our own lack of revival is in some measure the cause of the lack of revival in the Church at large. I will lay this charge before us: We Christians need a revival of piety in our lives. I have abundant grounds to prove it.

3. No Guarantee

In the first place, look at the conduct and conversation of too many of us who profess to be children of God.

It has become very popular to join the Church in our day. Many people have recently joined the Church in our country. But are there any fewer cheats than there used to be? Are there less frauds committed? Do we find morality more extensive? Do we find vice coming to an end? No, we do not. Our age is as immoral as any that preceded it. There is still as much sin, though perhaps it is more cloaked and hidden.

It is well known that it is no guarantee of a man's honesty that he is a member of the Church. The lives of too many of the men and women of the Church give the world cause to wonder if there is godliness in any of us. We reach after money, we covet, we follow the wicked ways of this world, we oppress the poor and deny rights to the working class and yet we profess to be people of God! The Church lacks revival in the lives of its members.

4. What Will They Talk About

Second, let us take a look at the conversation of many professing Christians. Pay attention to the conversation of the average professing Christian. You might spend from the first of

January to the end of December and never hear them speak about their faith. They will scarcely even mention the name of Jesus Christ at all. On Sunday afternoon, what will they talk about at the dinner table? It will not be about the minister's sermon, unless they want to point out some faults.

Do they ever talk about what Jesus said and did? What He suffered for us? When we go to each other's houses, what will we talk about? I have concluded this: You will not know how to get to heaven simply by eavesdropping on the conversations of the members of the Church! We talk too little about our Lord. Is this not the truth?

Many of us need to pray, "O Lord, revive your work in my soul, that my conversation may be more Christ-like, seasoned with salt, and kept by the Holy Spirit."

5. Holy Fellowship with Jesus

But even if our conduct and conversation were more consistent with our faith, I would still have this third charge against us: there is *too little real communion with Jesus Christ*. If, by the grace of God, our conduct and conversation were consistent and our lives were unblemished, many of us are still sorely lacking in that area we call holy fellowship with Jesus.

Men and women, let me ask you: How long has it been since you have had an intimate conversation with Jesus Christ? Some of you may be able to say, "It was only this morning that I last spoke with him; I beheld his face with joy." But I fear that the great majority of you will have to say, "It has been months since I have been with the Lord."

What have you been doing with your life? Is Christ living in your home and yet you have not spoken to him for months? Do not let me condemn you or judge; only let your conscience speak: Have we not all lived too much without Jesus? Have we not grown contented with the world to the neglect of Christ?

6. Groan for Your Revival

I have in some degree substantiated my claim that we are in need of revival, but now I must turn to the solution of this great problem that we face. Habakkuk prayed, "O LORD, revive thy work." Do you hear his groaning for revival? Our problem is this: There are many who say they want revival, but they do not groan for it, they do not long for it.

The true believer, when he is confronted with his need for revival, will long for it. He will not be happy but will at once begin to strain after it. The true believer will pray day and night, "O LORD, revive thy work!"

And what is it that will make that true Christian groan for revival? When he reflects on what Christ has done for him, he will groan for his own revival. When he hears someone tell a story about a fellow believer who is experiencing great joy in the Lord, he will groan for his own revival. When he attends a lively fellowship and feels no emotion in his heart, he will groan for his own revival.

Those of you who feel you are in need of revival, I would ask you only this: Can you groan for your revival? If you can, do it! May God be pleased to give you grace to continue to do it. And may you turn your groanings into prayers.

7. Make No Resolutions

Make sure that you turn your groanings into prayers. Do not say, "Sit, I feel my need of revival; I intend to get to work on it later this afternoon—then I shall begin reviving my soul." Make no resolutions as to what you will do; your resolutions will surely be broken as they are made. Instead of trying to revive yourself, offer prayers. Do not say, "I will revive myself," but cry, "O LORD, revive *Thy work*."

To say, "I will revive myself," reveals that you do not know your true state. If you knew your own true state, you would just as soon expect a wounded soldier on the battlefield to heal himself without medicine, or get himself to hospital when his arms and legs have been shot off as you would expect to revive yourself without the help of God.

I urge you: Do nothing until you have first prayed to God, crying out, "O LORD, revive thy work" Begin, then, by humbling yourself giving up all hope of reviving yourself, but beginning at once with firm prayer and earnest supplication to God: "O LORD, what I cannot, you do for me. O LORD, revive thy work!"

8. The Absence of Earnestness

And now I come to the second part of the subject upon which I shall be more brief. In the Church itself we must pray this incessant, urgent prayer: "O LORD, revive Thy work!"

In this present era, there is a sad decline of the vitality of godliness. This age has become too much the age of form instead of the age of life. We have preachers who read their sermons out of manuscripts—a pure insult to almighty God! It may sound beautiful and eloquent, but where is the fervent preaching such as that of George Whitfield?

Whitefield's sermons were not eloquent but were rough and unconnected. But it was not in the words themselves, but in the manner in which he delivered them, the earnestness with which he felt them, the pouring out of his soul as he preached them. When you heard him preach, you felt like you were listening to a man who would die if he could not preach. Where, where is such earnestness today? One sad proof that the Church is in need of revival is the absence of earnestness which was once seen in Christian pulpits.

9. An "Ology" Which Has Cast Out God

Second, I believe that the absence of sound doctrine is another proof that the Church is in need of revival. Sound doctrine has to a great degree ceased. It happened when ministers in the pulpit stopped preaching sound doctrine for fear of how it would be received. They stopped talking about "election" and "depravity" and "free grace" because they thought people might stop coming to listen.

Then they decided if it was not fit to preach, it might not be true. They then offered a "new theology," but it is anything but a theology. It is an "ology" which has cast out God utterly and enthroned man.

In similar fashion, the members of the Church became weak in their doctrine. Today's Church members change their doctrine as often as they change the company they are in. They are hardly the kind of people who would die for their beliefs. Look at their laxity! They have what they call "prayer meetings"; "spare meetings" they ought to be called, for they are sparsely attended.

All of this shows me that the Church has swerved from its course. Why do I know this? Because it has begun to be honored in the eyes of the world. The Church must be despised and cast out until the Lord comes, in whose eyes we are to find true honor.

10. Light a Fire

There will be some who will agree with me that the Church needs reviving. But let me ask that instead of complaining about your minister, instead of finding fault with certain parts of the Church, cry out, "O LORD, revive thy work!"

"O!" says one person, "if we had another minister. O! If we had another kind of worship. O! If we had a different sort of preaching." You do not need new ways or new people; you need

life in what you have. If you want to move a train, you don't need a new engine, or even ten engines—you need to light a fire and get the steam up in the engine you now have!

It is not a new person or a new plan, but the life of God *in them* that the Church needs. Let us ask God for it! Perhaps He is ready to shake the world at its very foundations. Perhaps even now He is about to pour forth a mighty influence upon His people which shall make the Church in this age as vital as it ever was in any age that has passed.

Read the following Bible selection: Habakkuk 3:1-6