

Restoration of Truth and Revival (December, 1887)

by C.H. Spurgeon

The sermon emphasizes the need for a general revival of true religion, and calls for believers to purge out the things which weaken and pollute, and to seek a fuller baptism of the Spirit of God.

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 85:6, Isaiah 57:15, Acts 3:19, Romans 12:2, Ephesians 5:11, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 2 Timothy 4:2, James 5:16, 1 Peter 1:16

Topics: "Revival", "Spiritual Awakening"

Description

C.H. Spurgeon passionately calls for a genuine revival of true religion, emphasizing the need for a real awakening by the Holy Spirit rather than mere excitement. He warns that without divine intervention, churches risk descending into error and ungodliness, and he laments the spiritual death prevalent in many congregations. Spurgeon stresses the importance of purging worldliness and frivolity from worship, asserting that true doctrine and holiness must be upheld for the Spirit to work effectively. He encourages believers to seek a deeper relationship with God through prayer and repentance, believing that a collective cry for revival can lead to a powerful transformation. Ultimately, he urges the faithful to pray fervently and preach the Word clearly, trusting in God's ability to restore truth and bring about revival.

Transcript

OH for a great and general revival of true religion! Not a burst of mere excitement, but a real awakening, a work of the Eternal Spirit. This would be a glorious reply to skepticism, and would act like a strong wind in clearing the air, and driving away the miasmata which lurk in the stagnant atmosphere. There would then be small honor paid to men who mar the gospel of our Lord, and truth, which has fallen in our streets, would again ascend her throne. Let us pray for such a visitation of the Holy Ghost with our whole souls.

It is not only desirable, it is essential; we must either be revived by the Lord himself, or the churches will descend until error and ungodliness swallow them up. This calamity shall not happen but only divine grace can avert it. At the same time, we cannot expect a gracious revival till we are clear of complicity with the deadening influences which are all around us. A man of God writes us: "You cannot well overstate the spiritual death and dearth which prevail in the provinces.

Where the 'minister is successful' no Unitarian would be offended with the preaching, and where 'not successful,' we see a miserably superficial handling of the Word, without power. Of course there are

valuable exceptions. What can be expected as to spirituality in the church when deacons are better acquainted with 'Hamlet,' and Irving's actings, than with the Word of God? And what about the next age, when the children are treated to pantomimes, and a taste is created for these things?"

This brother's lamentation is of a piece with hosts of others which load our table. They come from men who are second to none in spiritual weight. Either these brethren are dreaming, or they are located in specially bad places; or else there is grievous cause for humiliation. We will not go deep into this question, it is too painful. The extent to which sheer frivolity and utterly inane amusement have been carried in connection with some places of worship would almost exceed belief.

We call the attention of our readers to the fact that doctrine has been the ground of battle in the Down-Grade struggle which has been chosen by our opponents, but on the matter of prayer-meetings and worldliness they have been prudently silent. Certain of them have in this affair exhibited that discretion which is the better part of valor. If any of our churches have been guilty in this respect, how can they expect the divine Spirit to work with them? Wherever the statement which we have quoted, or a similar one, can be proved, we are at a loss to know how conversions can be looked for.

The Lord our God is holy, and he cannot compromise his own glorious name by working with persons whose groveling tastes lead them to go to Egypt--we had almost said to Sodom--for their recreations. Is this walking with God? Is this the manner in which Enochs are produced? It is a heart-sorrow to have to mention such things, but the work of the Lord must be done faithfully, and this evil must be laid bare. There can be no doubt that all sorts of entertainments, as nearly as possible approximating to stage-plays, have been carried on in connection with places of worship, and are, at this present time, in high favor.

Can these things promote holiness, or help in communion with God? Can men come away from such things and plead with God for the salvation of sinners and the sanctification of believers? We loathe to touch the unhallowed subject; it seems so far removed from the walk of faith, and the way of heavenly fellowship. In some cases the follies complained of are even beneath the dignity of manhood, and fitter for the region of the imbecile than for thoughtful men. Brethren in Christ, in every church let us purge out the things which weaken and pollute.

It is clear to every one who is willing to see it that laxity of doctrine is either the parent of worldliness, or is in some other way very near akin to it. The men who give up the old faith are the same persons who plead for latitude as to general conduct. The Puritan is not more notorious for his orthodoxy than for his separateness from the world. Liberal divines do not always command the respect of the public, but they gain a certain popularity by pandering to prevailing tastes.

The ungodly world is so far on their side that it commends them for their liberality, and rails at the orthodox as bigots and kill-joys. It is a very suspicious circumstance that very often the less a man knows of the inner life, and the less he even cares to speak of it, the more heartily he is for the new theology, the theory of evolution, and the condemnation of all settled doctrine. Those who would have a blessing from the Lord must avoid all this, and determine to follow the Lord fully.

Not only must they quit false doctrine, but they must receive the gospel, not as dogma, but as vital truth. Only as the truth is attended with living faith will it prove its own royal power. Believers must also sweep the house of the leaven of worldliness, and the frivolities of a giddy generation. The evil which is now current eats as doth a canker, and there is no hope for healthy godliness until it is cut out of the body of the church by her again repenting, and doing her first works.

Those who through divine grace have not defiled their garments must not content themselves with censuring others, but must arouse themselves to seek a fuller baptism of the Spirit of God. Perhaps these evils are permitted that they may act as a sieve upon the heap gathered on the Lord's threshing-floor. Possibly they are allowed that our apathetic churches may be aroused. We know already of several cases in which true ministers have gone over the foundation truths again with their people, and have preached the saving Word with clearer emphasis.

In other cases churches have been summoned to special prayer about this matter. This is a good beginning: let it be carried out on the widest scale. As one man let us cry mightily unto the Lord our God, that he would arise and plead his own cause. Now, if never before, let those who are loyal to Jesus and his Word be up and doing. A boundless blessing is waiting for the asking. We believe in prayer. LET US PRAY LIKE ELIJAH'S. In reference to the Down-Grade controversy and the Baptist Union, we are urged to further action; but it would be far easier to take a foolish step than to retrace it.

We will move when we are moved, and not before. Conferences, societies, and leagues are proposed: all are admirable, no doubt; but which out of many suggestions is the most suitable? We do not see our way. May the Lord himself direct his people! Meanwhile, to redouble our prayers, and to seek a revival in all our churches, cannot possibly be a mistake. Prayer, mighty prayer, can do wonders. This is the work of the present hour. Pray without ceasing, and preach the faithful Word in clearer terms than ever.

Such a course of conduct may seem to some to be a sort of standing still and doing nothing, but in very truth it is bringing God into the battle; and when HE comes to avenge the quarrel of his covenant, he will make short work of it. "Arise, O Lord, plead thine own cause!"

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