

As God's Revivalist

by George Kulp

Revival is a result of the Holy Spirit's operation, and faith and prayer will secure that operation at all times and to an unlimited extent.

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 85:6, Habakkuk 3:2, Acts 1:8, James 5:16

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Revival Prayer"

Description

George Kulp preaches about the importance of revival, emphasizing that revivals are results of the Holy Spirit's operation and can be secured through faith and prayer. He highlights the necessity of determined prayer and the willingness to pay the price for revival, stressing that anyone, regardless of status, can experience revival through fervent prayer. Kulp encourages believers to have faith, courage, and spiritual discernment to recognize God's work and remove hindrances to revival. He underscores the need for relentless prayer, self-sacrifice, and a passionate pursuit of souls for revival to manifest.

Transcript

"O Lord, revive Thy work, in the midst of the years make known, in wrath remember mercy."

"Revive us again, fill each heart with thy love, Let each soul be rekindled with fire from above."

On the subject of Revivals, Mr. Smith's opinions may be expressed in a few words. He believed they are the results of the Holy Spirit's operation, and that faith and prayer will certainly secure that operation at all times and to an unlimited extent. He evidently believed that anybody could have a revival, and so do we -- anybody that will pay the price. The sister of one of our pastor-evangelists writes most forcibly along this line:

"The first and prime requisite for a revival, the absolutely necessary condition, without which there can be no revival, is somebody who can pray with the determination to have a revival, cost what it may. It is one of the things of which it is said, 'The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.'

"God is one pent-up revival. He breaks forth whenever He can find an instrument that is determined to break what hinders him. Anybody may do it; the lowliest man in the church, the most obscure person, provided that one knows how to pray.

"With all our praying, so few people know how to pray; so few have spiritual discernment enough to know that God is working for us powerfully, often when everything seems against us; or to perceive when God

ceases to work, and what it is that hinders Him. So few have the courage or faith to hold on through what may be a long, long struggle before full victory is manifested. But anybody can have a revival who knows how to pray. This truth is well illustrated by the fact that some revivals come as a surprise to the pastor, although usually they travel through his bleeding heart. Pinney tells us of a very lowly woman who beseeched her pastor again and again to call an inquiry meeting for the souls that she was sure were hungry for the bread of life. To get rid of her he finally yielded to what he considered an impertinence, and the room was filled. Do we want a revival? Then let us have one.

"Perhaps the most difficult part of the work will be in getting God's own people where He can give what is ordinarily understood by a revival. Why can't we see that only God's people can hinder Him giving a revival? He has so many more Christians to manage than in the days when the presence of a Methodist preacher and his saddle-bags in a log-house meant a revival every time, and alas! so many of them are weaklings, whom the rest must carry while they push the battle for sinners. Nevertheless any one can have a revival, if possessed of enough faith and courage. The time needed will depend upon the weight of the load to be lifted over the bar in the church, and whether those who are carrying the load manage to constantly have the mind of God.

"Who is willing to bear the burnt of things; to find out what it costs to have revivals? Who is willing to be so threshed clean of the self-life, that tremendous power may flow through him? Often we start out to pray for a revival with great desire and honest purpose, but with no conception of what it will cost, with no idea of the weakness in ourselves that will break down at the critical point. Are we willing that God shall discover it to us? Are we willing to be ground to powder in order that souls may be saved? Better not begin to pray for revivals, unless we are willing that they should cost every conceivable thing.

"Those who are so well saved from self-interest that they have nothing to lose, and so filled with Christ's passion for souls that hardship in securing them is not taken into account, are the people God can use to capture souls anywhere on the face of the globe. Christ did not weigh the cost of His sacrifice. Neither must we weigh the cost of ours if we want souls. And just in proportion as we are indifferent to what it costs us will the revival come easy."

The terms on which the influences of the Holy Ghost are granted are clear and unalterable: "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" Here is no restriction, either as to the time or degree in which we may expect our prayers to be answered. It is the presumption of unbelief alone, therefore, which can suggest any other restriction than the wants of men, or the measure of their prayers. Nay, more, as if to anticipate all objections, and silence all cavils, the promise is that we shall receive whatsoever we ask in the name of Christ; so that, unless it can be proved that no man can pray in faith for the reviving influence of the Holy Spirit, it must be admitted as one of the gifts which the veracity of God is pledged to grant the intercession of His people. Can it for a moment be supposed that man's exposition of the Divine promises can exceed in comprehension the benevolence of "Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think"? Is the atonement of Christ so circumscribed in its validity, that it is within the power of the lowest Christian daily to seek for blessings which it is unable to procure? It is not to be supposed.

But arguments in favor of Mr. Smith's views on this subject are abundantly supplied by every analogy which can be brought to bear upon the case. It is not to be denied that, in answer to prayer, God will vouchsafe grace sufficient for the sanctification of an individual believer, or the awakening, repentance, and justification of an individual sinner. He who questions this, makes all intercession for spiritual

blessings idle and profitless; and he is confronted by the evidence of thousands of examples, in which immediate salvation has been procured by this means. And if one soul can be saved in answer to prayer, why not a hundred? All that is required in the latter instance is a proportionate increase in the pleading of faith. God cannot change; the principle upon which prayer is answered in the one case must be maintained inviolate in the other; and when brought to bear must induce similar results. The mode of the Divine working is dictated by sovereign wisdom, but the degree depends on the faith of the church. God Himself determines whether He will descend as the dew upon Israel, or as the burning flame; but it is for His people to decide whether He shall come upon the single fleece while the rest of the floor is dry, or whether the whole of the camp shall be surrounded and gladdened by the scattering forth of angel's food.

It is no objection to Mr. Smith's views that revivals have arisen when, so far as we could trace, there existed no ardent spirit of believing prayer, and where there were indications of a low spiritual condition. It would be strange reasoning, indeed, that because, in some cases, God had transcended the express terms of His engagement, He would therefore, in others, fall short of them. As well argue, that because He, of His spontaneous compassion, gave His Son to die for the sin of the world, He therefore will not fulfill the covenant procured by His death; or that, because He is found of some who seek Him not, He will refuse to be found of those who do seek Him. No: the argument manifestly tends to the directly contrary conclusion. -- If God gave His Son, He will with Him also freely give us all things. If His grace comes to those who are comparatively indifferent about it, much more will it come upon those who long after it; and if some revivals occur where there is no importunate spirit of faith and prayer, it is the more certain that, if such a spirit can be produced in the church, a revival will succeed.

A spurious faith is to be distinguished from the genuine and scriptural, first, by its want of success; and, secondly, by its hurtful reaction upon its possessors. Now let us, by these infallible indications, try that faith which respects revivals. Mr. Smith made experiment, and what was the result? In every circuit in which he traveled, from the time he went to Brighton, it was productive of great effects. God owned and honored it, and that in no common degree. And would this have been the case, had it been a presumptuous interference with the Divine prerogative? -- which it must have been, if revivals be a mere question of the sovereignty of God. Let no man venture to impugn this order of faith, unless he himself has tried it, and found it to fail. To him who has in vain believed on the promise of the Spirit we will listen, as a rational opposer of Mr. Smith's principles; but it is obvious that the mere assertion of any other person is worth nothing in the argument. The only question which remains, therefore, is, whether those individuals and churches whose faith immediately respects revivals are really less holy and prosperous than their neighbors.

Mr. Smith, of course, decidedly rejected the popular maxim, in its common acceptation, that "we must do our duty, and leave the result to God." This is, on all hands, admitted to be a correct rule in respect to temporal blessings, since for them the Scriptures offer no unqualified promise. But Mr. Smith maintained, that while it is folly and presumption to suppose that any success can attend the Christian ministry except through accompanying Divine influence, it is equally contrary to the reason of things to make God responsible for that which He has put into our own hands. In other words, as it is within the power of the church to secure a certain measure of the Holy Spirit's operation, it is irrational and unrighteous to impute the absence of that operation to any thing but the want of effort and faith in the church. It is therefore, he argued, for every Christian minister in part to decide the measure of his own success: nor is it possible to avoid this conclusion, if the foregoing reasoning be correct.

A few extracts from Mr. Smith's correspondence may not be unacceptable to the reader:

"Oct. 7, 1826. -- I trust that there be many who will actively concur with the Spirit. The Spirit is grieved by opposition and inaction. Some scores have been set at liberty since I was at Cudworth, and many have obtained clean hearts. During the feast week at Ratcliff I think about thirty souls found peace. Last Tuesday in the prayer-meeting five souls were saved. Two years ago we had no society at Hyson; now we have fifty in the church and ten on trial, and a chapel that will hold three hundred people."

"Feb. 21, 1827. -- God makes some little use of me in awakening sinners, and in leading them to Jesus, the sinner's Friend, for which I praise His name. Last Sunday fortnight at Arnold eight or nine found peace with God. At Granby, three weeks ago, nine souls obtained pardon, and two were cleansed. At Ruddington, in our circuit, about fifty have joined the society within the last quarter, most of whom have peace with God. The cleansing work is also going on. This will secure permanency and give extension to the church."

"March 22. -- I am still choosing God for my portion, and His good service for my employment. I wish to be used much, and God to have all the glory. I cannot, I will not, be easy without seeing effects. Nay, I must not, I dare not, thanks be to God! and I am determined that He shall have all the praise. God is working mightily among us. I think we have on trial, this quarter, about four hundred and fifty. Laboring, pleading men are increasing. God will stand to His engagement: the work must go on. About a hundred have begun to meet in class at Arnold during the last quarter. The last time I was there, not fewer, I think, than twenty found peace. God seems to be agitating nearly the whole village. Lenton, which has long been desert, is fresh and green; the society has been more than doubled; Burton, the same. At Bulwell, last Monday night, my very dear father preached. Two were cleansed from sin, and eight or ten found peace. On Tuesday, at Old Basford, one obtained a clean heart, and twelve or fourteen found peace. Glory, glory be to God!"

"April 24. -- At Old Basford last Sunday night sixteen or eighteen obtained entire sanctification, and eight were pardoned. At Halifax ten or twelve found peace; and last night two were pardoned and one was cleansed. The work is sure to go on, for God and we are agreed. Labor, labor is absolutely necessary."

"May 19. -- At Normanton, the last time I was there, twelve found peace. The following evening, after a mighty struggle, twelve were saved. I heard this week that last Sunday and Monday nights thirty were set at liberty. A short time ago I saw nine or ten saved at Epperstone. Last Sunday week I was at Mt. Sorrell preaching for their Sunday Schools. I think nearly twenty got liberty and some others were awakened. Glory be to God!"

"July 11. -- Last night at Old Basford many were pardoned and several cleansed. On Monday night at Bulwell I suppose between twenty and thirty were either pardoned or cleansed. Our increase this year is about six hundred, and we have about three hundred on trial. I have been in the Loughborough and Derby circuits, and saw many cleansed and pardoned."

Mr. Smith's correspondence supplies many other equally striking details of a similar kind, which are only omitted from the fear of swelling the work to an improper size. The following incidents, however, seem worthy to be preserved:

Among others converted through Mr. Smith's instrumentality, in a country place of the Nottingham circuit, was one of those persons who, even in their sins, appear to be the subjects of peculiar providential care. He was at the battle of Waterloo, and had two horses shot under him, but himself escaped unhurt. Some time afterwards, four ruffians assailed him, and having beaten him severely, left him for dead. He

recovered, however; and the persons who ill-used him were transported for the offense. Only three days before he was awakened, he was fighting in the streets of Nottingham, and had his shoulder dislocated through a fall. In this condition Mr. Smith's ministry was made the means of giving him to feel the anguish of a wounded spirit. After he left the chapel, he spent nearly the whole night in agony, and the following morning, through the prayers and counsel of Mr. Smith, he was set at liberty, and made happy in God. That evening he led another person to hear Mr. Smith preach at an adjacent village where he also experienced the pardoning love of God.

At a love-feast in Halifax-place chapel, Nottingham, which Mr. Smith conducted in the month of July, 1827, an extraordinary Divine influence prevailed. There was much good speaking; and toward the close of the meeting, Mr. Taylor, a local preacher, rose to relate his experience. He said that he had once enjoyed the blessing of entire sanctification, but, through unwatchfulness, had suffered loss. With much feeling, he added that he was now earnestly longing and waiting for the restoration of this great privilege. Mr. Smith instantly started from his seat in the pulpit, and cried, "The cleansing power is on you now!" For a moment he hesitated, -- it was but a moment, -- and he then exclaimed, while the whole of his body quivered with emotion, "It is; I feel it in my heart!" The congregation then united in thanksgiving and prayer; and in a short time the windows of Heaven were opened, and there was a rush of holy influence, such as by the majority of that vast assembly was never before experienced. It seemed like a stream of lightning passing through every spirit. At one time, twenty persons obtained the blessing of perfect love, and rose up rapidly one after another, in an ecstasy of praise, to declare that God had then cleansed their hearts from all sin.

The following will exemplify Mr. Smith's tact and courage in reproving sin:

He was walking in the streets of Nottingham, and overtook two men in conversation, just in time to hear one of them say, "I'll be _____ if I do." Mr. Smith touched him on the shoulder, and with a mingled air of severity and compassion said, in a low impressive voice, "It is a serious thing to be damned!" The man turned pale, and instantly replied, "You are right, sir; it is so." "Then do not talk so fluently about it," returned Mr. Smith, and passed on.

One Saturday evening, soon after he had retired to rest, he was aroused by the outcries and execrations of a number of persons, who had come into the street to decide a public-house quarrel. Mr. Smith threw up his window, and with an overpowering voice exclaimed, "Who is that swearing and blaspheming the name of my God? I cannot allow such language in the ears of my children." Then, slipping on his clothes, he hastily mingled with the crowd, and began to remonstrate with the combatants. When they would not listen, he seized the more athletic of the two by his arm, who, feeling the force of his grasp, cried out, "You are too strong for me, sir." Mr. Smith led him away and received from him a promise never to fight again.

At Nottingham, after dining with a man converted under John Nelson, he turned to the son of his host and said, "Well, young man, have you got salvation?" To which the young man replied, "No, sir." Mr. Smith then said, "Well, do you think God is able to save you?" The young man replied, "Yes, I do believe He is able." "Then do you believe He is willing to save you?" "Yes, I do." "And do you believe God is willing to save you now?" The poor young man said, "Yes, I believe God, for Christ's sake, is willing to save me now." "Then," said Mr. Smith, "let us pray;" and, falling upon his knees, he cried to the Lord in an agony. The young man soon found Jesus, to the joy of his soul. His affliction terminated in three months after this change. He died most triumphantly, shouting praises to God and the Lamb to the last.

On the same day that he visited the above young man, Mr. Smith called upon a friend who had been a local preacher and leader for more than thirty years. His daughter being under some concern, Mr. Smith proposed prayer: they kneeled down and continued in supplication until she found peace with God. She continued a pious and consistent member of society for ten years. Several years after she sickened and died, a believer in Jesus Christ. Her death was a most happy and triumphant one.

In the beginning of the year 1828, Mr. Smith's health began to decline. One day, when he was very unwell, a person called and said he must see him, as he had come upwards of twenty miles for that purpose. His urgency procured him admission to the chamber where Mr. Smith was confined to his bed, suffering at once from weakness and pain. The man told him that he had been a backslider, and that, for some time past, he had been under deep convictions of sin; that he had sought the Lord with many tears, and had fasted and prayed, but still remained without comfort. "Yes," said Mr. Smith, "and you may do so a long time, and be no better, unless you believe God. You do not need to leave this room without salvation. God would rather save you today than tomorrow. You may die today; and, if you die unpardoned, you are lost forever; but God wishes to save you. He says it, and He means what He says." "But," said the man, "If I should believe and not get the blessing." "Do not meddle with God's business," replied Mr. Smith. "But it is God that saves, is it not," "Yes; but it is not God's work to believe; that's your business. Do your part, man, and God will do his. Go down on your knees and ask God to save you at once." He did as he was directed. Mr. Smith then began to pray; but finding his strength was gone, he stopped and said, "We cannot get a step farther unless you believe. How long is God Almighty to wait for you?" "I will believe," cried the penitent, "I will believe; I cannot do wrong in believing; I do believe," and that very moment God filled him with such joy he actually danced upon his knees. "Didn't I tell you God would attend to His business?" said Mr. Smith. The poor fellow rose from his knees, kissed Mr. Smith's hand and hurried home in wondrous delight.

We now give an extract from Mr. Smith's diary in regard to his own personal experience:

"Yesterday I had a very signal baptism of the Spirit, which had connected with it an assurance that the body of sin was destroyed, and that God had full possession of my heart. This assurance I retain, glory be to God! I feel indescribable pleasure in surrendering my all to Him. I have had today a very affecting view of the shattered and miserable state of the world, but I have also had a very relieving view of the efficacy of the atonement of Christ, of the power of the Spirit, and of the covenant engagements of the blessed God. He willeth that all should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. I have a strong desire that I may be better fitted for the good service of God, that I may be employed much, and that He may get all the glory. Amen. My body has been out of order, but my faith has not wavered. God is mine, and I am His; glory be to God!"

The religion of Mr. Smith was genuine, stamped with the blood of Jesus, and he fully expected that, regardless of all circumstances, it would carry him clear through. An English minister one time addressing a large number of workmen declared the same truth:

"I came here today in the cars. I am not a well-dressed man, as you see, and I generally travel second-class. I went to the booking-office to get my ticket, when a friend met me, asked me where I was going, and if I had a ticket. I told him I was going to Manchester, and that I was on my way to buy my ticket. 'Just wait,' he said, 'and I'll get you one.' The ticket admitted me to a first-class car. We had several changes to make, but my friend said, 'That ticket is good clear through.' On approaching the gate, the guard said to me, 'second-class?' 'No, first-class.' 'Let me see your ticket. All right, pass in.' I didn't look

much like a first-class passenger. It wasn't my clothes, nor my looks, that gave me my seat, but my ticket; that carried me through. We came to our first change. The man at the iron gate repeated the question, 'Second class?' 'No.' 'Let me see your ticket.' And on I went. Change followed change, till at length I was landed in the station at Manchester. One ticket brought me clear through. Nobody asked me where I came from, how old I was, whether I was rich or whether I was poor. The authorities asked for my ticket; if that was all right, I was all right. I took the right ticket at the booking-office before I started, and needed no changes, no alterations, no additions. It landed me just where I would be. It is just so with religion. Get it at the start, get it genuine. Have it stamped with the blood of the Savior, and it will carry you clear through to the pearly gates. No matter what may happen; no matter what there is in the future, you will be safe. Your ticket will pass as you enter the gates of death; and if the golden gates swing inward to your approach, it will be because your ticket is right."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/george-kulp/as-gods-revivalist/>

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