

Revival Men

by Horatius Bonar

The sermon emphasizes the need for men who are bent upon success, walk by faith, are laborers, patient, bold as lions, and men of prayer to bring REVIVAL to the Church.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 1:9

Topics: "Revival", "Faith and Prayer"

Description

Horatius Bonar emphasizes the urgent need for 'Revival Men' in the Church, highlighting the qualities that define true prophets of God. He draws inspiration from Hannah's fervent prayer for a child, illustrating that God often gives more than we ask for, as He provided a prophet in Samuel. Bonar calls for men who are not just good, but who are Spirit-filled, laboring in faith, patience, and boldness to awaken the Church from complacency. He stresses the importance of prayer and reliance on God's power, urging believers to be diligent in their spiritual duties and to seek divine guidance in their ministries. Ultimately, Bonar's message is a clarion call for a generation of men dedicated to the revival of faith and holiness in the Church.

Transcript

"So Hannah arose after they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh.... and she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the Lord and wept in anguish. Then she made a vow and said 'Lord of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your maidservant and remember me and not forget your maidservant, but will give your maidservant a man child, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life.'" (1 Sam. 1:9-11) Precious Hannah in brokenness and anguish, wept and cried out to God for a man child, and yet she received much more than a mere man. In the midst of Israel's backslidings and unfaithfulness Hannah was given a prophet.

With all due respect for the men's movement in the Church today, I say without hesitation, we need more than mere good men. We need men who can do more than clean up football stadiums; we need men who can clean up the Church. We must have a holy race of prophets. We need a God-possessed generation of living trumpets to awaken the sleeping Church out of her stupor of self-indulgence and pride. We need an army of Spirit-filled Revival men. Throughout the centuries wherever the cause of Christ has been advanced such Christ-consumed prophets have been found pleading, praying, weeping and preaching. I have noticed that such men, regardless of denominational persuasion have often possessed the very same striking qualities. The following material is a description by Horatius Bonar of the virtues held in common by all true revival men throughout the ages. ~ Editor ~ D. S.

Revival Men Long For Success

They were men bent upon success. It was with a good hope of success that they first undertook the awful office of the ministry, and to despair of this would have been shameful distrust of Him who had sent them forth, while to be indifferent to it would have been to prove themselves nothing short of traitors to Him and to His cause. As warriors, they set their hearts on victory, and fought with the believing anticipation of triumph, under the guidance of such a Captain as their Head. As shepherds, they could not sit idle on the mountain-side in the sunshine, or the breeze, or the tempest, heedless of their straying, perishing, bleating flock. They watched, gathered, guarded, fed the sheep committed to their care.

Revival Men Walk By Faith

They were men of faith. They ploughed and sowed in hope. They might sometimes go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, yet these were the tears of sorrow and compassion, not of despair; they knew that in due season they should reap if they fainted not, that their labor in the Lord would not be in vain, and that before long they would return bringing their sheaves with them. They had confidence in the God whose they were and whom they served, knowing that He would not send them into warfare in their own strength. They had confidence in the Savior whose commission they bore, and on whose errands they were sent forth. They had confidence in the promises of glorious success with which He had armed and comforted them. They had confidence in the Holy Spirit's almighty power and grace, as the glorifier of Christ, the testifier of His work, and the Resurrection of dead souls. They had confidence in the word, the gospel, the message of reconciliation which they proclaimed, knowing that it could not return void to Him who sent it forth. Thus they went forth in faith and confidence, anticipating victory, defying enemies, despising obstacles, and counting not their lives dear unto them that they might finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they had received of the Lord Jesus.

Revival Men Are Laborers

They were men of labor. They were required to bear the burden and heat of the day. It might be truly said of them, that they scorned delights and loved laborious days. Their lives are the annals of incessant, unwearied toil of body and soul: time, strength, substance and health. All they were and possessed, they freely offered to the Lord, keeping back nothing, grudging nothing, joyfully, thankfully, surrendering all to Him who loved them and washed them from their sins in His own blood, regretting only this that they had so little, so very little to give up for Him who for their sakes had freely given Himself! They knew by experience something of what the apostle testifies concerning himself to the Corinthian church. They knew what it was to be in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. They had no time for levity, or sloth, or pleasure, or idle companionship. They prevented the dawning of the morning to commence their labors, and the shades of evening found them, though wearied and fainting, still toiling on. They labored for eternity, and as men who knew that time was short and the day of recompense at hand.

Revival Men Are Patient

They were men of patience. They were not discouraged, though they had to labor long without seeing all the fruit they desired. They continued still to sow. Day after day they pursued what, to the eye of the world, appeared a thankless and fruitless round of toil. They were not soon weary in well-doing, remembering the example of the Husbandman in regard to His perishable harvest: "behold the Husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and has long patience for it until He receive the early and latter rain." Many a

goodly plan has been rendered abortive by impatience. Many a day of toil has been thrown away by impatience. Many a rash step has been taken and hasty changes adopted in consequence of impatience.

Attempts have been made to force on a revival by men who were impatient at the slow progress of the work in their hand; and seldom have these ended in anything but calamitous failure, or at best a momentary excitement which scorched and sterilized a soil from which a little more patient toil would have reaped an abundant harvest. There may be and there always ought to be the calmest patience in conjunction with the most intense longing for success. "He that believes does not make haste." A friend and brother in the Lord some years ago was called to till a portion of the Master's vineyard in our own land. He labored and prayed and sought fruit with all his soul. Yet at that time he saw but little. He was called away to another circle of labor. After some years he heard that a work of God had taken place in his former field under another faithful brother and fellow-worker in Christ. On visiting the spot he was amazed and delighted to find that many of those who had been converted were the very individuals whom he had several years before visited, and warned, and prayed for. "One man sows and another reaps."

Revival Men Are Bold As Lions

They were men of boldness and determination. Adversaries might contend and oppose, timid friends might hesitate, but they pressed forward, in nothing terrified by difficulty or opposition. Timidity shuts many a door of usefulness, and loses many a precious opportunity; it wins no friends, while it strengthens every enemy. Nothing is lost by boldness, nor gained by fear. It seems often as if there were a Premium upon mere boldness and vigor, apart from other things. Even natural courage and resolution will accomplish much; how much more, courage created and upheld by faith and prayer. In regard, for instance, to the dense masses of ungodliness, and immorality in our large towns, what will ever be effected, if we timidly shrink back, or slothfully fold our hands, because the disarray is so terrific, and the apparent probabilities of success so slender? Let us but be prepared to give battle, though it should be one against ten thousand, and who shall calculate the issues? But there is needed not merely natural courage in order to face natural danger or difficulty; there is, in our own day, a still greater need of moral boldness, in order to neutralize the fear of man; the dread of public opinion, that god of our idolatry in this last age, which boasts of superior enlightenment, and which would bring every thing to the test of reason, or decide it by the votes of the majority.

We need strength from above to be faithful in these days of trouble, and rebuke, and blasphemy to set our faces like flint against the censure and applause of the multitude, and to dare to be singular for righteousness' sake, and to fight, single-handed, the battles of the faith. The sneer, the scoff; the contemptuous smile of superiority, the cold support, the cordial opposition, the timid friendship, the bold hostility, in private and public, from lips of companions, or neighbors, often under pretext of reverence for religion, these are fitted to daunt the mind of common nerve. To meet these, nothing less than divine grace is needed. Never, perhaps, in any age, has wickedness assumed a bolder front and attitude; and never, therefore, was Christian courage more required than now. It needs little, indeed, of this, to traverse the customary routine of parish duty. Men of the world, and mere professors, can tolerate, or perhaps commend such diligence; but to step beyond that and break the regularity of well-beaten forms and preach and labor in season and out of season in churches, or barns, or schoolhouses, or fields, or streets, or highways, to minister faith, fully and closely to men's consciences wherever you may happen to be brought into contact with them. To be always the minister, always the watchman, always the Christian, always the lover of souls, this is to turn the world upside down, to offend against every rule of good breeding, and to tear up the landmarks of civilized society. Ministers and private Christians do require

more than ever to be "strong and of good courage," to be "steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." This has ever been one of the great secrets of ministerial success. Them that honor God, God has never failed to honor and to bless.

Revival Men Pray!

They were men of prayer. It is true that they labored much, visited much, studied much, but they also prayed much. In this they abounded. They were much alone with God, replenishing their own souls from the living fountain that out of them might flow to their people rivers of living water. In our day there is doubtless among many a grievous mistake upon this point. Some who are really seeking to feed the flock, and to save souls, are led to exhaust their energies upon external duties and labors, overlooking the absolute necessity of enriching, ripening, filling, elevating their own souls by prayer and fasting. On this account there is much time wasted and labor thrown away. A single word, coming fresh from lips that have been kindled into heavenly warmth, by near fellowship with God, will avail more than a thousand others. If Christ's faithful ministers would act more on this principle, they would soon learn what an increased fruitfulness and power are thereby imparted to all their labors. Were more of each returning Saturday spent in fellowship with God, in solemn intercession for the people, in humiliation for sin, and supplication for the outpouring of the Spirit, our Sabbaths would be far more blessed, our sermons would be far more blessed, our sermons would be far more successful, our faces would shine as did the face of Moses, a more solemn awe and reverence would be over all our assemblies, and there would be fewer complaints of laboring in vain, or spending strength for naught. What might be lost in elaborate composition, or critical exactness of style or argument, would be far more than compensated for by the "double portion of the Spirit" we might then expect to receive.

In closing, let us consider the wise words of the late Leonard Ravenhill, "Prophets are God's emergency men for crisis hours. They thrive on perplexity, override adversity, defeat calamity, bring the new wine of the Kingdom to burst the withered wineskins of orthodoxy, and birth REVIVAL. Let no Christian's heart fail him because it seems that the enemy has come in like a flood, that the voice of the prophet is not heard in the land. God has His men hidden. They will come forth without price tags; with nothing to sell, nothing to propagate, but 'holiness unto the Lord'."

Reference Used - "Historical Collection's of Accounts of Revival" by John Gillies

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