

# Personal Revival of the Soul

by J.C. Philpot

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of personal revival and experimental religion, highlighting the causes of sinking and rising in the soul and the experience of revival.*

**Scripture:** Job 33:25

**Topics:** "Spiritual Revival", "Union With Christ"

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## Description

J.C. Philpot delves into the personal revival of the soul, exploring the alternating sinking and rising of the mind based on circumstances and conscience. He describes the struggles of a believer experiencing darkness, deadness, trials, and temptations, as well as the impact of church troubles and spiritual views on the state of churches. Philpot emphasizes the need for a soul to confess sins, look solely to the Lord, and experience a sweet change leading to a revival of faith, hope, and love. He highlights the importance of union with Christ for true religion and the joy that comes from the Lord's presence and blessings.

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## Transcript

Personal revival of the soul

by J. C. Philpot

It is surprising how our minds alternately, and as if instinctively, sink or rise as various circumstances in ourselves or in others come before our view, or press with weight and power upon our conscience. A few instances on both sides of the question may illustrate this.

For some days or weeks, then, it may be, our mind may have been dark and beclouded; coldness and deadness may have much chilled our heavenly affections; trials and temptations may have harassed our soul; the presence of the Lord may have been much withheld; sin and corruption may have worked within at a fearful rate; and, under a feeling sense of our vileness and sinfulness, painfully aggravated by all these circumstances, we may have cried, almost in a fit of despair, "Can ever God dwell here?" How can the soul that is alive unto God, and living, or desiring to live--continually to his honor and glory, and to walk in the light of his countenance--not but sink into a low spot when all within is so opposed to, or so far from, that peace in believing which is its element and home?

Or, if comparatively free from personal trials, some circumstances of a very painful and distressing nature may have come before our mind, or press upon our conscience, connected with others. Some gross

inconsistency in a member of the church has perhaps come to light; or there has been a sad display of anger and temper at a church meeting; or two members have fallen out, and one or both have manifested a bitter, unforgiving spirit.

Or, apart from church troubles--the heaviest of all after personal afflictions, we may, in a solemn moment of prayer and meditation, have had a spiritual view of the general state of the churches of truth, as either torn with strife and division, or much sunk into barrenness and unfruitfulness. Or, to come still more closely home, to a still more tender point, a difference may have arisen between us and a beloved friend; or where we have looked for sympathy and comfort, under some trial and affliction--we may have met with just the reverse, and so have been "wounded in the house of our friends," learning thereby, in a way of personal though painful experience, the meaning of those words, "The best of them is as a brier--the most upright is sharper than a thorn-hedge." (Micah 7:4.)

Or if engaged in the work of the ministry, as is the case with some of our readers, we may have been for some time much shut up in the preaching of the word of truth, and may have felt much darkness of mind and bondage of spirit in the house of prayer; if hearers, there may have been much deadness under the preached word; nothing for a long time may have dropped with power and savor into the soul either from the prayer or the sermon; and Satan may have taken great advantage from these things to harass the mind and cast a gloomy cloud over the whole of our experience.

Under these and similar circumstances, which we need not more fully particularize, the soul possessed of the grace of God sinks at times very low; and as we are too much disposed to measure things by our own feelings, as a dark cloud over the sun casts a gloom over the whole face of nature, we look round and begin to say, "Where is there any real religion--any vital godliness--any blessed communion with the Lord, any of that spirituality of mind in which, and in which alone, there is life and peace. Where and what am I, and where and what are others?"

We remember, perhaps, with Job, "the days of our youth, when the secret of God was upon our tabernacle," and say, "O that I were as in months past, when the candle of God shined upon my head, and by his light I walked through darkness." "O that the Lord would once more appear--would remove these dark clouds, and shine into my soul, that I might delight myself in him as all my salvation and all my desire."

When the believing soul is thus brought low, made to confess its sins, and look wholly and solely to the Lord, a sweet and blessed change often takes place. There is a breaking in of divine light and life--a revival of faith, and hope and love--a renewed sense of the Lord's goodness and mercy--an enjoyment of his presence and smile--a liberty, an enlargement, a coming forth in prayer and praise--a fresh view of the King in his beauty--a discovery of his grace and glory, of his love, blood, and righteousness, of his sweetness and suitability--with a pressing forward towards communion with a Lord so gracious and yet so glorious--with a Savior so exalted and yet so compassionate, with a High Priest, once on earth a bleeding sacrifice, and now in heaven such an all-prevailing Advocate and Intercessor.

"Will you not revive us again," cried the church of old, "that your people may rejoice in you?" (Ps. 85:6.) This gracious revival is the answer to that longing cry, to that earnest petition, breathed out of the heart sensible of its coldness and deadness, but unable to revive itself; for as no man ever quickened, so no man keeps alive his own soul. When, then, he who gave his gracious promise, fulfills that promise, "Because I live, you shall live also," and sends down renewed blessings, for having ascended on high, "he

has received gifts for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them," (Ps. 68:18,) then it is with the soul a returning to the days of its youth, (Job. 33:25,) and these words are again sweetly realized, "The winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in our land." (Solomon's Song 2:11, 12.)

Can the soul not but rise when the Lord thus lifts it up? "You have lifted me up, and cast me down." (Ps. 102:10.) He is her Head, her Husband, her All. If he frowns, must she not sink? If he withdraws, must she not mourn? If he smiles, must she not rejoice? What is religion, if there be no union with Christ? If there be union with Christ there will be the fruits as well as the feelings of that bond of spiritual communion; and though absence does not break the marriage tie--as presence does not create it--either in nature or in grace, yet the espoused soul, like the fond wife, who lives and loves, is grieved at the departure--and rejoices at the return of its wedded Lord.

Simultaneously with this personal revival of the soul after a long scene of darkness or a painful season of temptation and trial, or instrumental as a means of producing it--there may arise from without circumstances which, like a favorable breeze, speed the soul onward when she has expanded her sails to the wind. One whom we have long known and loved in the Lord is removed by death, but makes a blessed end; or some signal display of grace appears in someone near and dear to us by earthly ties; a son, a daughter, a sister-in-law becomes most unexpectedly and almost unhopedly manifested as a vessel of mercy--and the heart, is filled with wonder and admiration. Under these displays of sovereign grace, the stony heart relents, and is melted into contrition and love--tears of holy joy flow down the cheek, and blessings and praises ascend out of the heart to the God of all our mercies for this fresh display of the lengths and breadths, depths and heights of redeeming love.

If engaged in the work of the ministry, the Lord perhaps sets his hand once more in a most conspicuous manner to the work, revives preacher and people, gives testimony to the word of his grace in sending a marked deliverance to a soul under deep distress; clothes the word with power to quicken the dead and comfort the living, and makes it fall like the dew, and distill like the rain upon the souls of the people, so that there is a flowing together of heart to heart amid the family of God.

We have particularized at some length the various causes of sinking and rising as experienced in the soul of a saint of God, to show the changes that take place within, and the ebbings and flowings, the lights and shadows of the divine life. Men dead in a profession, with hearts of adamant, and brows of brass--hardened by pride and worldliness--under a mask of religion--may ridicule these changes, and taunt us with "setting up frames and feelings, nursing doubts and fears, gloating over our corruptions, living beneath our privileges, poring over our miserable selves, dishonoring God by our unbelief, idolizing self, and making a Christ of our experience."

Swelling words of this kind, and a whole vocabulary of similar set terms, are as easily shot off from a hundred pulpits, and with about as much real execution as the guns at Portsmouth salute the Queen when she is going to Osborne. The very men who load and fire these pulpit guns, with all their noise and smoke, know no more of the experience of a saint of God than the artillery-men at Portsmouth of what the Queen is debating in the palace with her ministers; but they fire as they have been taught with the ammunition already made for them, and lying packed and handy at their feet. We are not setting up doubts and fears, or canonizing corruption--we are not raking a ash-heap for pearls to set in Jesus' crown--or putting the mutability of the creature in the place of, or side by side with, the immutability of the Son of God and his finished work.

But we say of and to all, in the pulpit or out of it, who, through ignorance or enmity, oppose an experimental religion, "Because they have no changes they fear not God." And if they fear not God, they have not the beginning, much less the end of wisdom; they are not even in the lowest grade of Christ's school, much less teachers or masters. But ignorance will prate, and enmity will revile. It is our wisdom and mercy to heed neither, but "with well-doing put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." Who that knows the true grounds of Dissent does not smile when a young Puseyite clergyman lets off his university arguments against "the perilous sin of schism," when Popery is stamped upon every thread of his buttoned-up cassock-waistcoat, and upon every wrinkle of his long coat? Who that knows the firm foundation of the doctrines of grace does not smile when a smug youth, hot from the Academy, thinks he is demolishing in one sermon the rock on which the church is built, and scattering election to the four winds of heaven? And may we, in a similar manner, not smile, or rather sigh, when men ignorant of the life of God, destitute of all divine teaching and gracious influence, hurl their invectives or deal out their miserable, common--place arguments against the experience of the saints? But it is a miserable warfare to be engaged in. He who touches the saints touches the apple of God's eye. Rather let our tongue never more name the name of God, rather let the pen fall forever from our paralyzed fingers than our tongue or finger knowingly speak or write a word against the work of God in the soul of a saint.

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