

A Demonstrative Church

by Seth Rees

Seth Rees emphasizes the importance of a demonstrative church that openly expresses faith and allows the Holy Spirit to work freely among its members.

Scripture: Joel 2:28, John 3:8, Acts 2:13, Ephesians 4:30, 1 Thessalonians 5:19

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Revival Movement"

Description

Seth Rees preaches about the world's admiration for enthusiasm in various aspects of life but its suspicion towards healthy religious fervor, leading to many being silenced by criticism. He emphasizes the need for churches to embrace the manifestations of the Holy Spirit, even if they may seem unconventional, as seen in the early days of Quakerism and Primitive Methodism. Rees highlights the importance of not quenching the Spirit and allowing Him to move freely without restraint, drawing a parallel to the necessity of a 'freshet' or overflow of the Spirit for effective ministry and soul-winning.

Transcript

"These men are filled with new wine." "It was noised abroad" and the people "were all amazed." The world admires and commends enthusiasm in everything but in religion. This country is a perfect hive of human industry. We hear the hum and roar and buzz of a million ceaseless activities. The very atmosphere is charged with commercial, political, social and intellectual enthusiasm. Indolence and sloth can hardly be tolerated. And yet with all this anything like healthy religious feeling is looked upon with suspicion, and the intoxication of the Spirit is branded as fanaticism. Thus thousands of people are silenced by adverse criticism.

Hundreds of churches are dying from propriety. We are not told specifically what the church at Pentecost did, but it is very evident that they conducted themselves in such a manner as to cause the public to think that they were all drunken. We also know that when Christians receive the Holy Spirit now, one will weep, another will shout, still another will jump, while a fourth will be still as death with a holy hush in his soul. But a spiritual church, from Pentecost to the present, has always been a noisy church. Pentecostal enduements are always "noised abroad." No one would suspicion the ordinary congregation of today as being intoxicated unless it should be thought that they were in the advanced stages, drowsiness for example.

Hosts of people have lost the light and joy from their souls simply because they have failed, refused or neglected to give expression to the movings of the Spirit within. Many have confessed that they have felt

again and again that they ought to say "Amen!" or "Praise the Lord!" or "Hallelujah!" in the public congregation of the people, but they refrained and in a short time had nothing to say "Hallelujah!" about.

In the early days of Quakerism, ministers often preached to acres and acres of people in open fields and, at such times, often hundreds would fall and lie on the ground under the slaying power of the Holy Spirit. Primitive Methodism not only had roomy "Amen-corners" filled with ringing "Amens" but shouting was general throughout the congregation. When Jonathan Edwards in the Congregational Church at Northampton preached "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" men grasped the pillars of the house, the backs of the pews, seeing, as they firmly believed, their feet slipping over the brink into a bottomless hell! Sobbing, weeping and wailing went up as from the damned themselves. It was estimated that five hundred souls were converted as a result of that sermon. The writer himself has seen six hundred people seeking God at one time.

During a camp meeting held at Portsmouth, Rhode Island, at the close of a sermon by one of our fire-crowned Holiness evangelists, sixty-five persons fell on their faces in the straw, without even the conventionality of an "invitation." At another time at the same camp a saintly brother was preaching when the power so fell upon the people that before the sermon was finished they began to come forward and prostrate themselves at the altar. Strong men would start toward the front and fall before they could reach the altar. This was continued until forty-two souls were on their faces crying unto God. And yet no one had hinted at having an altar service.

In January, 1894, the Holy Ghost fell upon a congregation of staid, conservative Quakers in Western Indiana. No one was asked to come to an altar; no effort was made to create any demonstration. One sister arose, came to the altar, and began to weep. One person after another followed until the large altar was completely filled. Then convicted souls began to go down in the body of the congregation. Away back by the door people knelt in prayer. All in a few moments, holy fire had fallen from the upper skies, swept over that large audience, and leveled hearts to the ground. Many were praying vocally at the same time (a thing quite out of order in a Quaker meeting). Sobbing and laughing, shouting and weeping, waving handkerchiefs and shaking hands, were seen in all parts of the house.

We are not encouraging thunder out of an empty cloud. We would not be understood as commending the rattle of an empty wagon. But that freedom from excitement which is so complimented by the world, and which is so common in nearly all Protestant churches will never bring a harvest of souls.

The inexhaustible fertility of the soil in the Delta of the Nile is owing to the annual overflow of the river. Many a preacher, orthodox, upright, respectable, a strong reasoner, and a delightful speaker, never does much good because he is so excessively proper that he never enjoys a freshet. This preacher may challenge the admiration of the community with his eloquence; the people may listen with enrapt attention; they may express freely their approbation; and yet no one is saved from sin, no heart turned back from hell. Polished, refined, rhetorical, yet this preacher is powerless to turn men to God. What does it mean? He needs a freshet to fill his soul from bank to brae.

We are as much commanded not to quench the Spirit as we are commanded not to steal. The Holy Ghost will not remain in our hearts unless he can reign without a rival. He must not be grieved, repressed, insulted, or even questioned as to the propriety of the course He takes with us.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/seth-rees/a-demonstrative-church/>

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