

# *The Revival God Gives*

New Creation Publications Inc.



Geoffrey Bingham

# *The Revival God Gives*

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

*The Baptism in the Holy Spirit*  
*Christ's Cross over Man's Abyss*  
*The Day of the Spirit*  
*Dry Bones Dancing!*  
*Reviving the Humble*  
*Spirit-Baptism: Spirit-Living*  
*The Spirit's Harvest*  
*The Word and the Words of the Cross*  
*The Wrath of His Love*

Geoffrey Bingham

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<b>1. THE REVIVAL WE NEED</b>	<b>1</b>
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBJECT	1
A PRECIS OF <i>DRY BONES DANCING</i> <sup>1</sup>	2
The Meaning of the Word 'Revival' in the Bible	2
THE MEANING OF REVIVAL IN HISTORY	5
THE REVIVAL OF MAN PROPHESED IN HISTORY	6
THE REVIVAL WE NEED	10
ISRAEL IN CONSTANT NEED OF REVIVAL	11
THE NEED FOR REVIVAL IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST	14
Reformation and Revival	15
Israel of Old and the Church Today	16
A CONCLUSION REGARDING REVIVAL AND REVIVALS	17
<b>2. GOD'S JUDGMENTS AND THE REVIVAL WE NEED</b>	<b>20</b>
JUDGMENT AND REVIVAL IN THE SCRIPTURES	20
Judgments and Revival in the Old Testament	20
Judgments in the New Testament	22
HISTORY, JUDGMENTS AND REVIVAL	26
PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AND VIEWS OF REVIVAL	29
Personal Views on What Has Happened	33
<b>3. THE WORD OF GOD AND THE REVIVAL OF THE CHURCH</b>	<b>35</b>
THE WORD OF GOD AND REVIVAL	35
Preaching and Its Consequences	36
NEW TESTAMENT PREACHERS AND PREACHING	37
The Pauline Enunciation of the <i>Kerigma</i>	39
The Petrine Enunciation of the <i>Kerugma</i>	40
The Johannine Enunciation of the <i>Kerugma</i>	41
THE PRACTICAL EFFECTS OF THE GOSPEL ON THOSE WHO HEAR	41

PROCLAMATION WHICH POWERFULLY EFFECTS A RESPONSE AND A TRANSFORMATION IN THE HEARER	43
PROCLAMATION IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT	44
THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL AND THE POWER OF REVIVAL	45
The History of Revivals	45
GOD'S PLAN AND REVIVALS OF HIS PEOPLE	46
A PERSONAL QUESTION: AM I A MAN OR WOMAN OF THE SPIRIT AND THE WORD?	47
CONCLUSION TO OUR STUDY	48

## STUDY ONE

## The Revival We Need

### **AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBJECT**

There are many views regarding revival, but two main approaches to it. There are those who say that whilst the word 'revival' may be found in the Old Testament and that Israel had something of a revival from time to time, yet the word is not a New Testament word in the sense that we use it today. In other words, a doctrine of revival—as such—is not to be found within the pages of the New Testament. What is found within these pages is the command to preach the gospel and found churches, pastoring and building them up. If the gospel is preached, men and women saved, and the church led into truth, then its life will be maintained. To speak of revival as a doctrine is to talk of something that is unnecessary and uncalled for.

The other approach is that history tells us that the church for many reasons may, from time to time, become indolent and moribund, with heresy and wrong practice making inroads into it. Just as in Israel God brought judgments, and even exiled the nation, so too the church is in similar danger. God promised Israel that He would restore her, even though she was deeply judged and punished. He would revive her into the fullness of her true being so that she would live in covenant relationship with Him, and be whole. She would fulfil the plan He had for the nation—to be His chosen people, and to witness to Him. If Israel needed to be revived from time to time then so may the church.

There may not be a great difference between the two views when they are fully analysed. The first is saying the preaching of the gospel is the power of God and, that being so, the church will be strong in the word of the Cross, and will flourish as it should. The second is saying that some sovereign act of God needs to judge and renew the church when it gets into areas of not fully preaching, not living in holiness and the whole counsel of God. Even so, it is the view of each which determines the ways in which its proponents go about their life in the church.

Leaving the matter here—unresolved—we will return to some conclusion later. Meanwhile we will look at the thesis of the book *Dry Bones Dancing!*<sup>1</sup>

### A PRECIS OF DRY BONES DANCING!

The Meaning of the Word 'Revival' in the Bible.

The book commences (pp. 1–4) with an examination of the word 'revival' in both Testaments. The Hebrew verb 'to revive' (*chayya*) has the meanings of 'to live', 'to live well', 'to bring to life'. 'to preserve life'. This 'enlifying' can be from states of inertia, dispiritedness and death. Following are examples:

I [God] kill and I *make alive* (Deut. 32:39).

The LORD kills and *brings to life* (I Sam. 2:6).

But when they told him all the words of Joseph ... the spirit of their father Jacob *revived* (Gen. 45:27).

... and shall I [Samson] die of thirst ... and when he drank, *his spirit returned, and he revived* (Judg. 15:18, 19).

... the soul of the child came into him again and he *revived* ... See, your son lives (1 Kings 17:22, 23).

. and as soon as the man touched the bones of Elisha, he *revived*, and stood on his feet (2 Kings 13:21).

Will they *revive* the stones out of the heaps of rubbish, and burned ones at that? (Neh. 4:2).

After two days he will *revive* us: on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him (Hosea 6:2).

... they shall *revive* as the corn (Hosea 14:7, AV).

I [God] dwell in the high and holy place ... to *revive* the spirit of the humble, and to *revive* the heart of the contrite (Isa. 57:15).

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou dost preserve my life [i.e. you *revive*, or *keep alive*, my life] (Ps. 138:7).

Virtually the same meaning is found in the New Testament. The verb *coo* is used in Romans 14:9, 'lived again' (*ezesen*) of Christ's resurrection; and in Revelation 20:4 of the rest of the dead—in contrast to the martyrs—who did not 'live again' until the millennium was finished; but generally the verb is used for living, having life, subsisting. The verb *anazo* is used in Romans 7:9 of the revival of sin through the law. In Luke 15:24 it is used of the 'prodigal son': 'My son was dead, and is alive again' (*anezesan*, i.e. 'lived again').

When we look at these Old Testament and New Testament uses of the word we have to be honest and say there is no doctrine, as such, of revival in the Bible. That is, however, far from saying that God does not carry out an action of reviving what is dead or moribund or degenerated. Take for example the statement of Ezra 9:8–9:

But now for a brief moment favour has been shown by the LORD our God to leave us a remnant, and to give us a secure hold within his holy place. that our God may brighten our eyes and grant us a little reviving in our bondage. For we are bondmen; yet our God has not forsaken us in our bondage, but has extended to us his steadfast love before the kings of Persia, to grant us some reviving to set up the house of our God, to repair its ruins, and to give us protection in Judea and Jerusalem.

<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey Bingham, *Dry Bones Dancing!* NCPI, Blackwood, 2003.

This is an important passage for it tells us that the *restoration* which God had always promised to His people once they were punished for breaking the covenant, is indeed a revival. This principle is brought out in Psalm 30:3, 'O LORD, thou hast brought my soul up from Sheol, restored me to life from those gone down to the Pit'.

Habakkuk 3:2 is a most important verse since in this the prophet virtually says to God, 'Do it again. Lord!'

O LORD, I have heard the report of thee,  
and thy work, O LORD, do I fear.  
In the midst of the years renew it;  
in the midst of the years make it known;  
in wrath remember mercy.

God had spoken to Habakkuk telling him Israel was to be judged, and the prophet had protested, but he then saw the necessity for judgment, and that it would bring revival of the land and its people. Here, indeed, is a kind of doctrine—no revival without judgment, and true judgment will issue in revival. This is a theme pursued by the prophets (e.g. Amos 2:4–16; 4:1 – 9:15; and Jer. 46:1 – 51:64). In many of these 'oracles' or 'burdens' the nations are brought under judgment and then renewed.<sup>2</sup>

We conclude, then, that the meaning of revival is to take out of a state of death, turpitude, fallenness and lostness and to restore or renew into fullness of life. It is an act about which God informs His people prophetically, and He executes it Himself. When knowledge of the principle of 2 Chronicles 7:13–15 is understood then—as in Habakkuk—Israel can accept the judgments but implore mercy in them in the light of Exodus 34:6–7.

<sup>2</sup> A close study of the oracles reveals the fact that God has His eye continually on the nations. The reasons for His judgments on them are given and, in the case of many of them, their being as separate and discrete nations is disclosed. These nations will continue to exist once judged, and so, revived.

### THE MEANING OF REVIVAL IN HISTORY

The meaning of revival in history has to do first with the death of Man at the time of the Fall. When conflated, Genesis 1, Romans 1:18–32, and 5:12–21 tell us that Man died to God through the Fall. The death was first relational and then a death of the body—'your bodies are dead [doomed to death] because of sin' (Rom. 8:10). Man died in his original sin, and is dead in his sins and trespasses and will die and go to 'the second death' (Rev. 20:6, 14), the ultimate of eternal punishment, though he will never be obliterated as a creature.<sup>3</sup>

'For as in Adam all die,<sup>4</sup> so also in Christ shall all be made alive.' In accordance with the Old Testament use of *chayya*, this is revival. The Johannine teaching of coming out of death into life can also—in one sense—be called 'revival'. It is not resuscitation. It is the receiving of eternal life from God, through Christ and the Holy Spirit. It is all 'against perishing', that is, going on into eternal death.<sup>5</sup> If we believe that all are dead to God in Adam, how do we account for those called 'the people of faith' in Hebrews 11, and those called 'the children of God' in 1 John 3:10ff.? They surely cannot be accounted as dead. Of course they are not dead: they have been brought to life. This is the act of God's electing grace. Abel is spoken of as offering up his sacrifice to God by *faith* (Heb. 11:4), and of its being acceptable. While 1 John 3:10–12 speaks of Abel as one of the children of God, we have no reason to believe people of faith—the children of God—are dead *relationally* to God although their bodies 'are doomed to death because of sin'. We speak, then, of these as being 'regenerated to life'. They were in death even though created. Now they have been

<sup>3</sup> This raises the matter of the doctrine of annihilation, or the doctrine of universalism. but it is not our purpose to enter into these here.

<sup>4</sup> Again, we will not enter into the significance of 'all' except to say that at the end *all* in Adam will die, and *all* in Christ will be made alive, i.e. revived.

<sup>5</sup> See John 3:16; 5:24; 11:25; 17:3; 1 John 2:24–25; 3:14; 4:7–9; 5:11, 12, 20.

recreated by the grace of God. In this sense they had been revived out of death into life (cf. John 5:24; 1 John 3:14).

### THE REVIVAL OF MAN PROPHESED IN HISTORY

One Peter 1:10–12 is relevant to our enquiry regarding the revival of Man:

The prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired about this salvation; they inquired what person or time was indicated by the Spirit of Christ within them when predicting the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things which have now been announced to you by those who preached the good news to you through the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

The Spirit of Christ was in the prophets concerning the coming Incarnation and the work of the Cross and Resurrection that Jesus was to accomplish. This is amply verified by Christ himself (Luke 24:25–27, 44–47) and the statement that ‘the testimony of Jesus is the spirit [Spirit] of prophecy’ (Rev. 19:10; cf. Acts 26:22–23) certifies that all prophecy was linked with Jesus. What we have to note is that Jesus said ‘all the scriptures’ were linked with him. Sometimes we are inclined to think that many of the prophecies given within Israel were only for Israel.

This is borne out by reading Acts 1:1–11. The apostles rightly interpreted Jesus’ linking of the coming of the Kingdom and the outpouring (baptism) of the Spirit to the restoration of Israel. Whilst Jesus did not deny this, he indicated that the coming of the Kingdom related to Samaria and the Gentiles as well as Israel. This, then, is an important clue regarding Scriptures—especially prophecies—which relate to the restoration or revival of Israel, such as those below:

Behold, I am doing a new thing;  
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?  
I will make a way in the wilderness

and rivers in the desert.  
The wild beasts will honor me.  
the jackals and the ostriches;  
for I give water in the wilderness,  
rivers in the desert,  
to give drink to my chosen people.  
the people whom I formed for myself  
that they might declare my praise (Isa. 43:19–21).

For I will pour water on the thirsty land,  
and streams on the dry ground;  
I will pour my Spirit upon your descendants,  
and my blessing on your offspring.  
They shall spring up like grass amid waters,  
like willows by flowing streams (Isa. 44:3–4).

When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none,  
and their tongue is parched with thirst,  
I the LORD will answer them,  
I the God of Israel will not forsake them,  
I will open rivers on the bare heights,  
and fountains in the midst of the valleys;  
I will make the wilderness a pool of water,  
and the dry land springs of water.  
I will put in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia,  
the myrtle. and the olive:  
I will set in the desert the cypress,  
the plane and the pine together;  
that men may see and know,  
may consider and understand together,  
that the hand of the LORD has done this,  
the Holy One of Israel has created it (Isa. 41:17–20).

Three other prophecies which relate to Israel do not stop at the nation but go beyond to all who will be part of the New Covenant. The first is Jeremiah 31:31–34:

Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke,

though I was their husband, says the LORD. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

The second is a prophecy of regeneration, that is, bringing life to the heart where true life had been lost in the rebellion and idolatry of Israel:

For I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. You shall dwell in the land which I gave to your fathers; and you shall be my people, and I will be your God (Ezek. 36:24–28).

The third prophecy concerns us closely because it is the prediction of Pentecost:

The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley; it was full of bones. And he led me round among them; and behold, there were very many upon the valley; and lo, they were very dry. And he said to me, 'Son of man, can these bones live?' And I answered, 'O Lord GOD, thou knowest.' Again he said to me, 'Prophesy to these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh—to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD.'

So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold, a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to its bone. And as I looked, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them.

Then he said to me, 'Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds. O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great host.

Then he said to me, 'Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off." Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves, and raise you from your graves. O my people; and I will bring you home into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken, and I have done it, says the LORD' (Ezek. 37:1–14).

We are claiming that these prophecies of the outpouring of the Spirit and the regeneration of the nation of Israel—the covenant people—are not confined to Israel but go beyond to the whole world which God so loved (John 3:16). The promise of the nations being given to 'Shiloh' of Genesis 49:10 and 'the Son' of Psalm 2:6–9 is fulfilled in Christ's Person and Work. He and the Father now pour out the Spirit—the promise of the Father—at Pentecost (Acts 2:33).<sup>6</sup> Pentecost accords with Ezekiel 37:1–14, bringing about the regeneration of new birth (John 1:11–13; 3:3–15) spoken of in Ezekiel 36:24–28. At the same time the New Covenant is brought to the new people of faith at the time of Pentecost (cf. Matt. 26:28; Acts 2:23–24, 38; cf. Gal. 3:1–3, 13, 14).

Our conclusion, then, is that revival of the human race which was dead—the bringing back into life of God's created people—is effected in the Cross–Resurrection–Pentecost complex, which is really the one saving event, the one renewing event. Thus Paul's statement of Titus 3:3–7 links the work of the Cross and the Spirit:

<sup>6</sup> In Ezekiel 37:9–10 and Acts 2:2–4 the wind comes in the desert and comes at Pentecost; cf. John 3:5–8 where the wind blows to bring new birth, the very regeneration spoken of in Ezekiel 36:25–27.

For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by men and hating one another; but when the goodness and loving kindness, of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life.

Humanity, then, has but one true revival in and by the Cross, the Resurrection and the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost.<sup>7</sup> This being so, there is no basis for speaking about a second order of revival. Revival comes to those dead in trespasses and sins when they hear the word of the gospel, repent, believe and receive the gift of salvation.

### THE REVIVAL WE NEED

It would, then, seem quite out of place with what we have said above to insist that at times there is a need for revival in the church of which Christ is the Lord. It is obvious that when we speak of 'revival' it must be in another sense than we have used it above. For example: if we take the matter of God's covenant with Israel we would assume that this covenant regenerated the people so that they could be children of faith,<sup>8</sup> and children of the Covenant—Father. David's plea to God, 'Restore to me the joy of thy salvation', must have meant he knew that salvation prior to his terrible sin. The God of covenant acted according to His own revelation of Himself:

The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious: slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for

<sup>7</sup> Many, of course, disagree with this thesis of mine. I have tried to set it out more fully in my two books, *Spirit-Baptism: Spirit-Living* (NCPI, Blackwood, 1990) and *The Day of the Spirit* (NCPI, Blackwood, 1985).

<sup>8</sup> See Paul's statement about men of faith being the sons of Abraham (Gal. 3:7-9, 29).

thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation (Exod. 34:6-7).

The Old Testament is filled with this kind of thought. The Psalms reveal the intimate nature of Israel's relationship with God and its worship of Him. They also reveal the reality of the regenerate heart:

Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward being:  
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

Purge me with hyssop,  
and I shall be clean;

wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow ..

Create in me a clean heart. O God,

and put a new and right spirit within me

(Ps. 51:6-7, 10).

### ISRAEL IN CONSTANT NEED OF REVIVAL

Given that Israel was a redeemed people, that in covenant-relationship with God it did not dwell in spiritual death, we are yet faced with the fact that it was an incredibly sinful nation. Isaiah 1:2-6, amongst many passages, shows this fact:

Hear, O heavens, and give ear. O earth;

for the LORD has spoken:

'Sons have I reared and brought up.

but they have rebelled against me.

The ox knows its owner,

and the ass its master's crib;

but Israel does not know,

my people does not understand.

Ah, sinful nation,

a people laden with iniquity,

offspring of evildoers.

sons who deal corruptly!

They have forsaken the LORD,

they have despised the Holy One of Israel,

they are utterly estranged.  
 Why will you still be smitten.  
 that you continue to rebel?  
 The whole head is sick,  
 the whole heart faint.  
 From the sole of the foot even to the head.  
 there is no soundness in it.  
 but bruises and sores and bleeding wounds.

Reading the history of Israel tells us that the nation constantly departed into idolatry and rebellion against its Covenant–Father, Yahweh. Stephen’s sermon in Acts 7 confirms this reality. At the same time we read of revivals within Israel, using the word, of course, in its secondary sense–renewal out of spiritual deadness into a new vitality and holiness of life. There are the revivals of certain tribes under their judges, and under the ministry of Samuel as he tried in a prophetic, priestly and kingly way–as a judge–to bring the people to holiness, in accordance with the mandate given in Exodus 19:5–6:

Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.

At the dedication of the temple (see 2 Chron. 5:1–7:22) the reality of God’s dwelling within His temple was stated. First we have Solomon’s prayer (6:36–42):

If they sin against thee—for there is no man who does not sin—and thou art angry with them, and dost give them to an enemy, so that they are carried away captive to a land far or near; yet if they lay it to heart in the land to which they have been carried captive, and repent, and make supplication to thee in the land of their captivity, saying, ‘We have sinned, and have acted perversely and wickedly’; if they repent with all their mind and with all their heart in the land of their captivity, to which they were carried captive, and pray toward their land, which thou gavest to their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy

name, then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place their prayer and their supplications. and maintain their cause and forgive thy people who have sinned against thee. Now, O my God. let thy eyes be open and thy ears attentive to a prayer of this place.

And now arise, O LORD God, and go to thy resting place,  
 thou and the ark of thy might.

Let thy priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation,  
 and let thy saints rejoice in thy goodness.

O LORD God, do not turn away the face of thy anointed one! Remember thy steadfast love for David thy servant.

God’s answer to Solomon’s prayer is found in 7:12–22:

Then the LORD appeared to Solomon in the night and said to him: ‘I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for myself as a house of sacrifice. When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people, if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place. For now I have chosen and consecrated this house that my name may be there for–ever; my eyes and my heart will be there for all time. And as for you, if you walk before me, as David your father walked, doing according to all that I have commanded you and keeping my statutes and my ordinances, then I will establish your royal throne, as I covenanted with David your father, saying, “There shall not fail you a man to rule Israel.”

But if you turn aside and forsake my statutes and my commandments which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will pluck you up from the land which I have given you; and this house, which I have consecrated for my name, I will cast out of my sight. and will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples. And at this house, which is exalted, every one passing by will be astonished, and say. “Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?” Then they will say, “Because they forsook the LORD the God of their fathers who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshipped them and served them; therefore he has brought all this evil upon them.” ‘

Solomon’s prayer and God’s answer gives us the reason for the need for revival and the way of revival. Verses 13–15 (above)

give us the way of revival. Indeed, these verses have almost become a formula for many, and books have been written about them. They really mean that when Israel falls into a sinful state then humility, prayer, seeking God, and turning from wickedness will bring the renewal of covenant blessing. We know that Israel at times came to this place of renewal. There were revivals of a kind in the reigns of Josiah and Hezekiah. We can possibly speak of a revival of piety and holiness when the people returned from exile in Babylon. On the other hand we see Israel often in spiritual dryness and barrenness because it refused to come to the principle of 2 Chronicles 7:13–15. Hence the promises of great blessing which we have quoted above seem not only to be necessary to Israel, but also to refer universally to the time when God will pour out His Spirit on all flesh, and when the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. So much for Israel: what then of the present church?

#### **THE NEED FOR REVIVAL IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST**

We have as historical fact the decline and the fall of the church in many of its ages, and the remarkable times of revival that brought it up again out of its state of sin, inertia, and spiritual powerlessness. Whilst it can rightly be claimed that there was always ‘a holy remnant’ which did not go into desuetude, it is also true that vast renewal was often needed. A vast church in North Africa was decimated by the Islamic uprising. Some branches of the church have been in heresy regarding the Triune Godhead.<sup>9</sup> Often the contemporary mores in philosophy and human thinking –to say nothing of phases of worldliness and immorality–have

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<sup>9</sup> The church has always been assailed by heresy, the word ‘heresy’ not only meaning wrong doctrine, but also over-emphasis of one aspect of the truth to the exclusion of the whole, the well-rounded truth (see Titus 1:5–12; 3:9–11; Jude 3–16; 2 John 9–11: etc.).

so influenced the church that it has needed the chastisement of God. Today there are those in places of power in the churches who set their sails to the prevailing winds in the interests of personal ambition, ecclesiastical ambition and desire for pro-motion, or simply because they do not want to be ‘out of fashion with the world’ (cf. 1 Cor. 7:31; 1 John 2:15–17; 2 Tim. 4:10). Revelation chapters 2 and 3 contain seven letters written to early churches by Christ, and only two receive whole-hearted commendation. There can be no question that five of them needed reviving in one way or another. The number 7 may indicate the entire church down through the ages, so that where in the entire church there is spiritual default Christ may even blot out that part-taking away its candlestick. The church at Sardis was almost extinct even though it thought itself very much alive. It badly needed reviving!

#### **Reformation and Revival**

The time of the Reformation may well be called a time of revival. It was certainly a renewal through the word of God and the Spirit of God. It certainly fits the pattern of 2 Chronicles 7:13–15. First it was a revival of the word of God, and this brought a reformation of doctrine, as well as of the life of faith in its practice. It has given rise to the often-stated principle, ‘No revival without reformation’. In the days of Israel it sometimes happened that when the word of God was recovered, there was revival and renewal amongst the people. Certainly revival in the secondary sense in which we use the term is always linked to the proclamation of the word, the living truth of it. The word makes the church aware of its declension and its need for renewal. It is out of the truth of the word that remarkable events take place, so that even nations are changed by the new spiritual charge of power.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> A fine volume to study is *Historical Collections of Accounts of Revival* by John Gillies (Banner of Truth, 1754, enlarged 1845, reprinted 1981). In the bibliography of *Dry Bones Dancing!* there is a long list of writers linked with the subject of revival.

The different natures and forms of revival must be noted. The various rationales of revival ought also to be seen. That such revivals have been needed from time to time cannot be in doubt. That some have had many aberrations, bizarre happenings, and have often seemed to bring harm, cannot be denied. Even so, despite the excesses and dangers which arise in times of revival, it can be argued strongly that those revivals have been greatly needed and powerfully effective.

### Israel of Old and the Church Today

For those who think that in ‘the dispensation of righteousness’ there is a splendour which exceeds that of ‘the dispensation of condemnation’, there may be the tendency to idealise the church as proof against the covenant-breaking, rebellion and apostasy which often obtained in Israel—‘the dispensation of condemnation’. Refusal to see any need for judgments upon the church, and restorative revival of the community of Christ may arise out of the idea that simply proclaiming the truth is all that is needed.<sup>11</sup> That of course is needed: indeed it is primary, but all intercessory prayer carries with it identification with the wrongdoing of the whole people of God. This can be seen in Daniel’s prayers, especially in Daniel 9:3–19, which in turn accords with the principles we saw in 2 Chronicles chapter 7.

There are many strong warnings in the New Testament based upon the experiences of Israel in Canaan. In 1 Corinthians 10 Paul speaks of what happened to Israel in the wilderness—that despite Christ the Rock being with them ‘they were overthrown in the wilderness’. He cites other cases of judgment, and then says, ‘Now these things happened to them as a warning, but they were written down for our instruction, upon whom the end of the ages

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<sup>11</sup> It would appear in Revelation 2:1–7 that the church at Ephesus was correct in its ministry since it was wholly orthodox in its doctrine and practice, but then it lacked love, and thus was in danger of extinction. What if this primary criterion of love were to be applied to churches today?

has come’. That is, we are warned that if we do the same things that Israel did, we too shall be judged. The writer of Hebrews is constantly warning his readers against apostasy, and in 3:7–13 he warns against the very situation that Paul speaks of in 1 Corinthians 10, related to Psalm 95:7–11. In one sense the principles of Israel in Egypt, release from it, the journey through the wilderness, and the dangers of idolatry there and in Canaan still confront the church. The judgments on Israel will be no less than judgments upon the church. Peter makes this clear in 1 Peter 4:17:

For the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

So, then, the church needs revival and renewal constantly, if we mean by revival the restoration of the body of Christ to its true functional operation in proclamation of the gospel, the life of holiness, and living in faith, hope and love.

### A CONCLUSION REGARDING REVIVAL AND REVIVALS

We must first make the point that true revival of God’s people must always be the action of God. If revival really means ‘revival’, then it is to bring to fresh life that which has become stale and dead. The proper life of the church is life—His life. There should never be need for revival. The church, when it lives properly, lives in ‘vival’, that is, in *life*. It proclaims the word. It offers Christ to the nations. It calls for ‘repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ’. It proclaims ‘the gospel of the grace of God’. It preaches the gospel of the Kingdom’, and it gives forth ‘the whole counsel of God’.<sup>12</sup> In this is its life and being. It has no subsidiary doctrine of revival. At the same time it must be alert,

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<sup>12</sup> See Acts 20:18–27 where these terms are all related to the proclamation of the gospel.

gird up its loins, be watchful and sober against all things which may subvert and damage its life and action and, when evil makes inroads, to accept the judgments and corrections of the Lord of the church.

I have desisted from opening up this study to an examination of the history and nature of the revivals which have taken place in the church, preferring to show that Israel and the church are very similar in their experiences of the battle with Satan and his forces which seek to deceive, seduce and threaten the people of God. Even so, I am convinced that what we call 'the norm of Christian living' is often not the biblical norm. The gospel can easily be reduced to a stating of the elements of the *kerugma*-dynamic and animated as that stating may be—and lack the power of the Holy Spirit and the confirmatory and supportive signs and wonders that follow the proclamation of the word in the New Testament.<sup>13</sup> It is clear that in times of vital preaching and what may be termed revival there is an undeniable clarity of the word, an extraordinary reception of it, as well as a violent opposition to it. There are unusual elements which attend this work of the Spirit and it would seem that in such conditions the word of God is indelibly imprinted upon listeners, and the effects of revival are strong and lasting within those who receive and obey the word.

Finally, let us not debate the matter along the lines of formulae. That is, let us not say that revival is a way of enlivening the church, and let us not say simple preaching of the gospel will do that anyway. We create an unnatural dichotomy—a division between the word and revival. There is none such in Scripture. Christ's man-date given to us is to 'preach the word, in season and out of sea-son', in times of spiritual alertness as well as times of spiritual decadence, being neither hot nor cold, and seeing that seasons of worldliness, heresy and idolatry call for repentance on the part of

God's people, seeking His face for the reviving of the church *where it is needed!* Where there is fire in our belly and our bones, God will work His will and way. Where we seek to make a formula of proclamation or of revival we will be hindering the Spirit who blows where he wills.

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<sup>13</sup> See my *God and Man in Signs and Wonders* (NCPI, Blackwood, 1988) which seeks to deal with the obsession some have with signs and wonders (1 Cor. 1:22–24), and the rejection others have for them as though they were peculiar only to the apostolic days. See Paul in Romans 15:18–21; 2 Corinthians 12:12.

## STUDY TWO

## God's Judgments and the Revival We Need

### JUDGMENT AND REVIVAL IN THE SCRIPTURES

#### Judgments and Revival in the Old Testament

There are many passages in the history of Israel which speak about God's judgments and the revival of the nation. Two classical ones are 2 Chronicles 7:11–18 and Habakkuk 3. Often folk take 2 Chronicles 7:14 as a formula for getting God to give revival. However 7:13 says, 'When I shut up the heavens so there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people', showing that judgment has come to the nation, and the nation, seeing this judgment has come, then follows the prescription of verse 14, if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and forgive their sins and heal their land'. That is, judgment follows disobedience, and this alerts the nation to its need for repentance. Likewise in Habakkuk 3:2 we have:

O LORD, I have heard the report of thee,  
and thy work, O LORD, do I fear.  
In the midst of the years renew it;  
in the midst of the years make it known;  
in wrath remember mercy.

The context of this passage is that Habakkuk has been told that God will judge and punish Israel with an invasion by the fierce and bitter nation of the Chaldeans. The prophet has come to the point where he accepts the fact of judgment, but he prays beyond the judgment, asking that just as God did great things in the past, so He will do similar deeds now and liberate Israel. He is not asking for a remission of judgment but for a revival of God's work, so that in His judging wrath He may 'remember mercy'—that is, judge but not destroy—but then also bring a revival of His redemptive work. On the basis of this prayer to the known covenantal nature of God (cf. Exod. 34:6–7) the prophet rests his case and is at peace. He trusts God for what is to come.

The passages in 2 Chronicles and Habakkuk are not new and novel ideas. The Book of Deuteronomy spends much time on the judgments God will bring personally upon Israelites and corporately upon the nation where there is failure to live by the covenant. Generally speaking,<sup>1</sup> Israel will always be judged (*shaphat*) when it departs from *mishpat* (justice) and righteousness (*tsedeq*) which in essence are the keeping of the covenant and its law, but are linked with God's lovingkindness, faithfulness, righteousness and mercy (Ps. 36:5ff.; 99:4; Hosea 2:19), and consequently that kind of *mishpat* is evident in the community. When justice and righteousness are absent then the community comes under judgment (*shaphat*) which returns it to *mishpat* and *tsedeq*. This return is virtually 'revival' of the covenant community. Whilst judgment always carries elements of punishment, it is also chastising with a view to bringing to repentance and renewal, that is, back to justice–righteousness. Isaiah 30:15–26 is a passage which shows that Israel will look for deserved judgment in order to be renewed to justice, and in this verse 18 is central:

<sup>1</sup> We say 'generally speaking' because the subject is quite intricate and involves understanding the words used in the OT for 'righteousness' (*tsedeq*), 'justice' (*tsedeq*), the verb 'to judge' (*shaphat*, but also *din* and others, *shaphat* being the main verb), and 'judgment' (*mishpat*). There is an excellent treatment of these in *The Biblical Doctrine of Judgment* by Leon Morris (Tyndale Press, London, 1970).

Therefore the LORD waits to be gracious to you; therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you. For the LORD is a God of justice: blessed are all those who wait for him.

We need to know this principle of covenant–living, covenant–breaking, coming under judgment, being judged and being revived that is germane to Israel, because the same principle obtains in the New Testament with the New Covenant people of God. Before we look at the New Testament we need to keep in mind that God is ‘King over all the earth’, and as Creator is over all the nations. Whilst Israel is His chosen priest–nation, He is no less concerned with all–with each–of the nations. So in Jeremiah 46:1 – 51:64 the judgments are pronounced upon various nations. Many of these judgments speak of decimation of certain nations, without any promise of renewing or ‘reviving’ them, but then some are promised restoration, such as Moab (48:47), Ammon (49:6) and Elam (49:39), and it may be that other nations will be restored. What concerns us is that for at least some nations judgments will be restorative. At the same time we must never miss the punitive and retributive elements of God’s judgments. The finally impenitent will be subject wholly to these. For such national judgments see also Ezekiel chapters 25 – 32, and Amos 1:3 – 3:15.

### Judgments in the New Testament

Scriptures that indicate believers in the New Testament are without condemnation (John 5:24; Rom. 8:1–2) must be seen alongside other Scriptures which warn that those ‘who do such things’—such as, the works of the flesh—will not enter the Kingdom of God (cf. 1 Cor. 6:9f.; Gal. 5:19–21; 6:7–8; Eph. 5:5–6; cf. Matt. 7:21ff.). Mere assent to the gospel does not mean one will not come into final judgment, but however that may be, true believers are also judged where there is sin. There is, for such, present judgment. It is seen in its most drastic form in the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5. It is to be noted that following their judgments the church was increasingly powerful:

Now many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon’s Porch. None of the rest dared join them, but the people had them in high honour. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women (Acts 5:12–14).

We saw in our last study that a number of warnings are given in the New Testament not to be like some were in Israel when in the wilderness. So 1 Corinthians 10:1–13 is didactic on this score. Verse 11 says, ‘Now these things happened to them as a warning, but they were written down for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come’. Likewise in Hebrews 3:7 – 4:13 there is a similar warning. Admittedly it is spoken to Hebrews who might draw back from the gospel to the old covenant, but it is nevertheless apt for the church.

In I Corinthians 11:27–32 a strong warning is given against drinking the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner. Indeed, some have been doing this and that is why ‘many of you are weak and ill, and some have died’. Paul said that ‘if we judged [or discerned, *diekrinomen*] ourselves truly, we should not be judged’. This must surely mean that the Christian has always to judge or discern himself so that he may not come under the judgments of God. Paul adds, ‘But when we are judged by the Lord, we are chastened so that we may not be condemned along with the world’. He is surely saying that God’s judgments are good—whether we be sick or die—as they prevent us from being judged as those are who are outside Christ. This is an important principle. It is virtually the same as God’s judgments within Israel when it sinned.<sup>2</sup>

One Peter 4:17 and context speak of a judgment which is coming ‘to begin with the household of God’. The word ‘with’ in the RSV and NRSV is translated ‘from’ (*apo*) by some scholars. This

<sup>2</sup> Geerhardus Vos in his *The Pauline Eschatology* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1952, p. 270) comments on this passage, ‘this happens not to the detriment of their final salvation, rather to the furtherance of it’.

‘with’ and ‘from’ might be reconciled by seeing the judgment begins with the house of God and flows *from* it to others. In any case it is clear that the time for judgment had come, and that the judgment was firstly to do with the household of God. Obviously this judgment has firstly to do with the house of God, and 5:9 speaks of that ‘experience of suffering’ which the whole brotherhood throughout the world will know. It may well be that 2 Thessalonians 1:4–5 is linked with this, for there are ‘persecutions and . . . afflictions’ which the Thessalonians are enduring. Paul adds, ‘This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be made worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering’. It seems impossible to avoid concluding that whereas on the one hand persecution is coming to them from others, yet at the same time God is using these sufferings as a form of judgment for those who are enduring the persecutions. If this is so, then we have a very valuable insight, namely that all suffering can be used by God as a means of judging us.

In the case of 1 Peter 4:17 there is the matter of ‘the household of God’, and Peter has shown in 2:4–10 that this household is a spiritual priesthood, paralleling the priestly nation of Israel as set forth in Exodus 19:5–6. As in the former household, so now in the latter. As Ezekiel 9:1–11 declared, there was to be a cleansing and it was to begin at my sanctuary’ (v. 6), and as in Malachi 3:1–6, 17–18, and 4:1 there was to be cleansing of the temple, so in the new temple. Thus in 1 Corinthians 3:16–17 Paul said:

Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? If any one destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. For God’s temple is holy, and that temple you are.

When we look at Isaiah 56:6–8 we realise that this new temple—the church of God—is ‘a house of prayer for all peoples’, hence it is not to be defiled. God’s judgment will be against those who do defile it.

Of course if we who are within the church needed no judgment whatever, then the suffering would be purely a maturing agent for us. If, however, there is an action of God that is always judging us

when sin comes into our lives then that is a healing judgment, a judgment of mercy, a judgment keeping us where we should be: when we are judged by the Lord, we are chastened so that we might not be condemned along with the world’. Surely this is the meaning of the passage of Hebrews 12:4–11 where, it would seem, God is ever chastening His children, that out of that discipline might come ‘the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it’, that is, by painful discipline. In 12:14 we are enjoined, ‘Strive for peace with all men, and for the holiness with-out which no one shall see the Lord’.

All the time God is judging, and in one sense it is impossible not to do so. If the wrath of God comes upon the elements of ‘fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry’ (Col. 3:5–6) then He will be judging wherever believers begin to be involved in them. The Book of the Revelation contains the seven letters, sent by Christ and the Spirit to the churches, and in five of these are strong rebukes,<sup>3</sup> and even the threat of taking away the candlestick of at least one church. Again, in the text of Revelation, believers are warned against taking on the mark of the beast.

So, then, for us to say that ‘as long as we preach the gospel all will be well, and we will need no reviving or renewing’ is indeed simplistic. In one sense we cannot authentically preach the gospel unless we are living in it. To preach the Cross we must live as those crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20; 5:24; 6:14) and as those who are always carrying about in their body the ‘dying of Jesus’ (2 Cor. 4:10). We cannot preach with power apart from the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:4; 1 Thess. 1:5; 1 Pet. 1:12) so that we must always be ‘aglow with the Spirit’ (Rom. 12:11), always being ‘filled with the

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<sup>3</sup> In Revelation 3:1 Jesus addresses the church at Sardis. ‘I know your works; you have the name of being alive and are dead’. It would seem this was the most living of churches but it needed ‘re-vival’. So also for that matter, four other churches. and no less the one at Laodicea which was lukewarm—neither hot nor cold.

Spirit' (Eph. 5:18) and always 'walk by the Spirit' (Gal. 5:16, 18. 25–26). We can be tempted to love the world, and some fall into that temptation. We can love in *eros* love and be deceived into calling it agape love. This is one of the most dreadful of all deceits.

### HISTORY, JUDGMENTS AND REVIVAL

Certainly the history of the church over 2,000 years tells of its many triumphs, successes, spiritual advances and the taking of many nations for Christ. At the same time we see, sadly, the decline of the church in matters of faith and practice. We see in some cases that the church has been little more than a servant of the State and that it has increased in worldliness, participation in political power, and departure from the apostolic truth and practice. Sometimes governments have become the servants of a church that has accumulated wealth and political power beyond that of those governments.

There are other forms of worldliness into which the church has come other than the political one. Each age has its particular attractions for the church, to tempt it out of its apostolic stance of truth and practice. Often the church has set its sails to the prevailing winds of intellectual thinking, hoping to get the ear of the world, and to bring numbers into its ranks. In so doing it has often departed from its essential power—the 'word of the Cross' which is the power of God and the wisdom of God'. Yet a true reading of its history will show that time and again—as in Israel, so with the church—God has revived it from its lethargy and worldliness by powerful revivals. It is indeed a special and great age when the church can claim it is alive and well, has no need of awakening judgments, and is empowered by a holy fire that is taking bastion after bastion of the world for Christ its King.

Three fine works on this are:

- *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (Banner of Truth, Edinburgh, 1974, reprint of the original edition of 1834).

- *Historical Collections of Accounts of Revivals* by John Gillies (first published in 1754, revised by Horatius Bonar in 1845. and reprinted by Banner of Truth Trust, London, in 1981).
- *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* by W. B. Sprague (first published in 1832, and reprinted in 1958 and 1978 by Banner of Truth Trust, London).

These three works are invaluable in understanding the nature of revival as a subject and as a happening of the church in history. Horatius Bonar, who wrote the preface to the 1845 revised edition of Gillies's book on revivals, had this to say:

The volume before us contains not the history of the sleeping many but of the waking few. Its object is to trace out their story and record it for a memorial to all generations. The world has written at large the history of its sleeping multitudes, it becomes the Church of Christ to record the simpler, briefer annals of its awakened ones . . .

Their story is as full of interest as it is of importance. The waking up of each soul would be matter enough for a history, its various shakings and startings up, ere it was fully aroused; the word or the stroke that effected the work; the time, the way in which it became awake for eternity and for God, as well as its new course of light after it awoke,—all these are fraught with an interest to which nothing of time or earth can ever once be compared. And then, when the voice of God awakes not one, but thou—sands. it may be in a day; when whole villages and districts seem as if arising and putting on new life,—how intensely, how unutterably interesting! At such a crisis it seems as if the world itself were actually beginning to awake,—as if the shock that had broken the slumbers of so many were about to shake the whole world . . .

The history of the Church is full” of these awakenings, some on a larger and some on a smaller scale. Indeed, such narratives as those with which this work abounds form the true history of the Church, if we are to take our ideas from the inspired Church—history given to us in the Acts of the Apostles.

Bonar then goes on to describe the men whom God used in the apostolic days:

1. They were earnest about the great work of the ministry on which they had entered.
2. They were bent upon success.
3. They were men of faith.
4. They were men of labour.
5. They were men of patience.
6. They were men of boldness and determination.
7. They were men of prayer.
8. They were men whose doctrines were of the most decided kind, both as respects law and gospel.
9. They were men of solemn deportment and deep spirituality of soul.<sup>4</sup>

One cannot read Bonar's Preface without being deeply moved. The mention of men such as Stoddard, Shepard, Mather, Edwards, Tennent, Whitefield and the Scottish preachers under whom such rich revivals happened, is enough to set one's heart and spirit on fire. Gillies's book itself moves one as he traces the cavalcade of saints down through the early centuries to the sixteenth century and the Reformers, with whom he deals powerfully. The seventeenth century has a plethora of names which many of us have never known, though they were men of such fire. Enormous detail is given. The incidents and happenings of revival through these men we generally call 'Puritans' were of such a nature as to make us ashamed of our comparatively mediocre and lacklustre ministries. The eighteenth century saw the rising of men such as the Wesleys and Whitefield, and others named above at the head of this paragraph.

Whilst the history ends at the eighteenth century and deals mainly with Great Britain and North America, yet an Appendix and a Supplement—both written by Gillies—were added to show something of the movement of revival in Holland and in the Colonies of North America.

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<sup>4</sup> Gillies. *Historical Collections of Accounts of Revivals*. pp. v–xvi.

Sprague's book on revivals is a series of lectures concerning the nature of revival, and it also contains a series of letters written in the late nineteenth century, which describe revivals that have happened, and the principles observed regarding them. Of course, Edwards greatly discoursed on the awakenings in the New England, and the blessings and problems of such revivals drove him to write his famous *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*, a book of immense value to those who observe revivals.

We are so close to the late nineteenth century revivals and those of the twentieth century that it is difficult for us to assess their values and shortcomings. There is no lack of descriptions of them. It is here that the Bibliography of my book *Dry Bones Dancing!*<sup>5</sup> should prove helpful. Most helpful, also, is R. O. Roberts's *A Preliminary Bibliography of Published Books and Pamphlets on Revival with Annotations and Historical Notices*.<sup>6</sup> Certainly in this book we cannot cover the nineteenth and twentieth century revivals but they have been many, and across many countries in the world.

### **PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AND VIEWS OF REVIVAL**

I now undertake a difficult task of discussing my own experiences of revival. Even here I hesitate to enter into descriptions and analyses of the events I have shared. In some cases I am not sure whether what I saw and shared really comes under the term 'revival'. What I am sure of is that my own life was vitally revived and has, generally speaking, gone on in that vein. The great reality of the work of the Cross and the Resurrection has always taken primacy in my life and ministry. In the mid-sixties when I was Rector of the Garrison Church (Holy Trinity) at Millers Point,

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<sup>5</sup> I would think that some readers will find the section entitled 'The Spirit and Revival' in my book *The Day of the Spirit* (NCPI, Blackwood, 1985), pp. 218–52, useful. It is not an account of revivals, but it could be read profitably along with *Dry Bones Dancing!*

<sup>6</sup> R. O. Roberts Publishers, Wheaton, 1982.

Sydney. I experienced a dramatic spiritual quickening in my life, and my wife Laurel did also. We saw first a rapid decline in the size of the congregation and then not only a vast growth in the congregation, but also a demand for ministry from many outside the parish church and my own Anglican denomination, as well as within it. We saw remarkable things happening at 'Guest Services'—a new thing in those days—as also in the whole life of the church—and many of the folk effected went into Bible, and Theological Colleges and Deaconess House, some of them going overseas as missionaries. We would often see pools of tears on the floor, and folk crowded into meetings, services and Bible studies wherever I was invited. I was called to take a number of missions, and generally we went with a team of folk from the church. Many clergy and others found themselves greatly enriched. Each month some of us—clergy and laity—met together for a full day's retreat, and we had regular all-night prayer meetings where we prayed often with tears and prostration on the floor—for revival to come to our churches. I found myself with a great hunger for the Scriptures and prayer and would spend most of the night for weeks on end, reading and praying. Quite unsolicited many came for prayer for healing, something I had not expected, and of which I had known little.

The next startling event took place at the end of 1957 when we were missionaries in Hyderabad, West Pakistan. Meetings in which I spoke by translation brought about the conversion of some forty or so folk. No event such as this had previously happened in this area over a long period of missionary ministry. Some months later we witnessed what was undoubtedly revival. We had been praying at 5 a.m. each morning in a meeting which started with a handful and grew to something like a hundred in number. When a series of planned meetings began which went for over a week, and which went through the days into the evenings, folk poured in from the countryside and the meetings were packed. Children who were generally noisy sat still and listened. Each night following the meetings all-night prayer proceeded, there being some 150 at midnight and some 50 when day broke. Folk confessed their sins,

prayed with weeping and made reconciliation with others with whom they had held feuds for years. There were visions, dreams, and all to some purpose. One or two remarkable—but quiet healings took place. The outstanding thing was the beautiful singing, the worship in both peace and joy, and the hunger to hear the teaching of God's word. That was perhaps the most outstanding thing. As with all revivals some of the gains were not substantiated: others were, but I was impressed by the fact that those hours of revival seemed to imprint the truth indelibly upon the genuine hearers, more so than years of protracted teaching would seem to have done.

In early 1966 revival suddenly broke out in a series of most unusual events in the Rahim Yar Khan area, but for more than a year previous to it happening, strange—you might say supernatural—events had been appearing from time to time. It was certain that many hungered after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, yet years of teaching by Students and Staff of our Bible College had built up a listening community. For months prior the revival I had seen and witnessed strange things which I do not care to record here. For nearly ten years we had annually visited the area and had taught the great truths of justification, the power of the Cross, the Lordship of Christ, the Kingdom of God, and life lived in the Holy Spirit. In the last year I had more than ever been gripped with the reality of the Fatherhood of God and this teaching brought great blessing. Then the events took place which could be called nothing other than revival. What people call 'the gifts of the Spirit' were often manifested, although glossolalia was absent in the early days.

For years we had tried to convert the older men of the Christian communities—those generally known as 'rice-Christians'—but they had steadfastly refused to respond. Now they responded in wonderful ways. So much weeping, so much confession of sin, so much repenting and coming to Christ and being filled with the Holy Spirit—it would take a book to describe it. Feuding ceased, broken relationships and church divisions were healed. Both Muslims and Hindus were deeply impressed and many of them

deeply affected even to the point of conversion. I can say with confidence that there were genuine signs and wonders, although no one was asking for them, or expecting them. The primary blessing was the love, joy and peace that folk felt, especially as they experienced intimately the Presence of God amongst themselves. Prayer meetings and rich worship were what they loved. In fact the word 'love' may be said to be the primary one to describe all those events.

Of course I could regale eager and interested folk with such stories which accompany revival, but that is scarcely the point. When we returned to Australia and told folk of the happenings, there was a curious lack of desire to hear. Some of the people professed they had prayed for us for years, but they seemed to have a distaste for what had happened. We found this quite strange and sad. I think many thought we had changed the doctrines of grace and the Holy Spirit we had previously been preaching, but this was far from the case. We were called to head up the Adelaide Bible Institute and really relished that ministry for some years. In 1969, I was asked to bring a team of College students and to conduct a teaching mission at Wudinna on the West Coast—on the Eyre Peninsula. This mission went the closest I have seen to revival in Australia—excepting the events at Millers Point in the mid-fifties. Certainly the movement of folk to both hear and respond cannot be put down only to the prior organising of the Mission—fine and foundational as that had been. Many who were converted or brought to a richer understanding of the grace of God in Christ were called to useful ministry, either as those who took ordination or as 'layfolk'. Certainly the fruits of that mission have remained over these last thirty-four years. I think some of the happenings could be said to be beyond logical explanation.

For more than thirty years I have seen many wonderful things happen, many of them in the work of the New Creation Teaching Ministry since 1973, though many were also prior to that time. I could not say these would fit into the conventional view of revival, but yet I believe there has been a wide awakening, even if it has been quiet and gentle for the most part. I have seen so many

respond to teaching, so many ordained and so many having quiet but rich ministry in the body of the church.

### **Personal Views on What Has Happened**

I will make these brief. I think Bonar's description of the leaders of revival in the eighteenth century would fulfil the criteria I believe are requisite to revival. I know of no movement which was not preceded, and which did not arise out of, faithful and true teaching. I think nothing has happened where leading ministers of congregations have not been deeply involved in the Scriptures—in the living out of the truth in consonant practice of life. I believe that in every case, fire has come to be in the bones and bellies of the persons God used to revive His people. Leaders of such movements know that only the sovereign acting of God brought about revival. They also know that when revival occurs, some manifestations are authentic and some are false. Indeed the gift of discernment is necessary if much of the fruit of revival is to be retained and sustained.

In my own case—particularly over these past few years—I have come to experience the correcting and purifying judgments of God in my own person. I know this to be God's love towards me, as I also know that our love and fire wane when so many things can distract us from the essential ministry—that of the word and the Spirit. We can forget the great things that have happened. We can become matter-of-fact in our proclamation of the truth, and we can 'settle down' to a regular ministry without the pain and suffering that is at the heart of all true teaching. Ambition is deadly, desire for comfort enervating, and lack of fire in proclaiming 'the great eternities' can find us desiring revival, but being ourselves lethargic and apathetic and even unbelieving.

We know what God has done in the past—in Creation, in Israel, in Christ, and in all history—but we can slumber in spirit when passion, revived energy, persistent pursuit of the truth and proclamation of the gospel in the power of the Spirit is needed.

Let us then cry with Habakkuk:

O LORD. I have heard the report of thee,  
and thy work, O LORD, do I fear.  
In the midst of the years renew it:  
in the midst of the years make it known:  
in wrath remember mercy (3:2).

Our cry surely is, 'Do it again, Lord!' Does this mean we with-draw from our present ministry, our continuous proclamation of the gospel and our preaching of the gospel? No: it means we will more energetically than ever teach what is the conviction of our hearts, that the word of the Cross is the power of God, and Christ crucified is the wisdom of God and the power of God. But, then, let us expect that Christ will awaken the slumbering multitudes and bring them into salvation, into his community and finally into glory. He will cleanse the church from many of the things which today defile it, and set it afresh to be apostolic in its proclamation, biblical in its teaching, and filled with power and love in its ministry.

## STUDY THREE

## The Word of God and the Revival of the Church

### THE WORD OF GOD AND REVIVAL

In this the third of our studies on revival,<sup>1</sup> we need to resolve the seeming dichotomy between those who assert there is no doctrine of revival, as such, in the Scriptures, and those who assert there is. We have seen that the meaning of the word 'revival' is, roughly speaking, 'bringing back again to life that which had become life-less'. We have histories in the Old Testament and the New, as also from the time of completing the Canon down to the present day, of revivals amongst God's people. We may argue about the term 'revival' and about its modes of happening, and whether such things constitute a *doctrine*, but we ought not to deny the *principle* of revival. In Israel there were national declensions in faith and practice, and the later writings of the New Testament show us that such things happened in the church, that is, in local churches.

Whilst we endlessly discuss *why* and *how* declensions came, and even *how* and *why* revivals occurred, yet at the present moment we are faced with a decline of faith and practice in many

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<sup>1</sup> See also the section in my *The Day of the Spirit* entitled 'The Spirit and Revival' (pp. 218–52).

churches throughout the world. At the same time we can also see great movements of the Spirit of God which are happening, and it would appear that they spring from and are accompanied by the preaching of the Scriptures, the Word of God.

It is the habit of some of us to argue about revival—whether such a thing exists or not, whether we should be praying for it, and how it might come about. We have discussed these ideas in our previous studies, but what we all would—or should—agree on is that the gospel must be preached. The preaching of ‘the whole counsel of God’ is what is needed to bring men and women to Christ, to found churches, and to maintain such churches in true faith and practice. Having this in common, let us look at what we should preach and the way in which we should preach, keeping in mind the consequences of such preaching, and the pastoral ministry which must follow.

Let us note that the history of revivals down through almost 2,000 years has much to offer us in teaching the ways in which God brings revivals, and the principles that obtain prior to, within, and following such times of revival.<sup>2</sup>

### **Preaching and Its Consequences**

Before we look at what we should preach and the way we should preach, let us see that the outcome of true preaching will be the formation of fellowships of believers, that is, churches. This would be especially so where churches have not already been founded. According to the New Testament there will be a structure of ordained elders and deacons; all in the new group will serve one another, and the new church will be that unit which will further proclaim the gospel it has received, and by which it lives. There will be gifts given by the Holy Spirit to ensure the life of the

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<sup>2</sup> See the bibliography in my *Dry Bones Dancing!* which is so comprehensive as to demand much time to cover the materials produced concerning revival. Such materials cannot be dismissed out of hand as being irrelevant. They so emphasise the point that revival comes out of preaching that they must always be relevant to our ministry.

church is functional and kept at true pitch. The Spirit will be the power for all the life and actions of the church.

We have to face the fact that elements such as nominalism, traditionalism, and other factors so affect churches from time to time that the picture and principles we see in New Testament churches are often found to be lacking. Even in the Epistles and in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 we can detect such elements.

### **NEW TESTAMENT PREACHERS AND PREACHING**

Forgetting for the moment the fact of revival, let us look at the nature of preachers and preaching as we see them in the Acts and Epistles. In the Gospels the initial twelve were called in to Christ to be sent out by him. Judas was destroyed, Matthias took his place by the drawing of lots and Paul was later called in to be an apostle. One of the criteria of apostleship was to have seen the Lord. Apostleship was that truth given to the apostles to proclaim—the truth which was the truth (acts) of Christ in the light of the Old Testament, and the Old Testament in the light of the truth (acts) of Christ. A new teaching emerged which was consistent with Christ and the Old Testament truth, but which was now salvific in a way the Old Testament truth had not been conclusively. This apostolic teaching incorporated all of that Old Testament.

This apostolic truth was what was proclaimed in the early church, following Pentecost. Theologically this has been called the ‘announcement’ or ‘the *kerugma*’. The form it took can be adduced from the sermons in Acts and supported, amended and amplified by the teaching found in the Epistles. It was, generally speaking, along the lines we now indicate:

- (a) Messiah has come in conformity with the prophecies of the law and the prophets. This coming, and the events of Christ, constitute a continuity of the new with the old, whilst also constituting a seeming discontinuity—that is, defining

differences regarding salvation, the life of the community –and so on.

- (b) The shameful fact of crucifixion can be attributed primarily to the will of God shown in the prophecies—and secondarily to the wickedness of the Jewish leaders and the Gentiles present at Jerusalem at the time of its act. The crucifixion was no accident, but something determined beforehand by God.
- (c) The primary fact of history on which the gospel was based was the bodily resurrection of Christ. Its significance was obvious—Jesus was shown, by resurrection, to be Lord; Lord over life and death, and hence over sin. One believed in the resurrection of Christ and confessed him as Lord.
- (d) Repentance and converting, with baptism for the remission of sins,<sup>3</sup> would save those who believed in Christ’s resurrection and his Lordship.
- (e) Such repentance, believing and receiving the forgiveness of sins would bring the gift of the Holy Spirit, the gift which had been promised by the prophets and especially the Father.

This was the *kerugma* as found in the early chapter of Acts and, as such, is what we must preach today. The preaching of revival *as a thing in itself* is not found in the New Testament.<sup>4</sup> The ministry of Philip the Evangelist in Acts 8 shows that the gospel was:

- (a) proclaiming Christ (v. 5).
- (b) proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God.
- (c) proclamation of the *name* of Christ.

Belief in these things qualified hearers to be baptised.

<sup>3</sup> Acts 3:19 brings the ‘blotting out’ of sins.

<sup>4</sup> At the same time note Acts 3:19 which speaks of times of refreshing coming from the Lord when hearers believe and have their sins blotted out.

### The Pauline Enunciation of the Kerugma

With the advent of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus other elements become explicit which were previously implicit. *Believing in Christ* brought the *washing away of his sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit*—all in conformity with the simple *kerugma*. His ministry was formulated as proclamation which would turn both Jews and Gentiles ‘from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place [inheritance] among those who are sanctified by faith in me’ (Acts 26:18).

In Acts 13:26–41 Paul delivers faithfully the simple kerugma in its apostolic form to the people at Antioch in Pisidia, but to this he adds the teaching of ‘justification through faith’ (13:39)—a truth brought out powerfully in the Epistle to the Romans—whilst ‘sanctification by faith’ and ‘inheritance’ are also part of ‘the whole counsel of God’, that is, the apostolic truth and gospel, and are also found in Romans as in other Epistles. Romans, of course, emphasises the Resurrection as part of the apostolic truth.

The *centrality of the Cross* may well have been expounded in the kerugma found early in Acts, although it is not explicit as such in the Acts, but Paul made it central in his teaching to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 1:17 – 2:5) when he went there, and we assume it was the case with Paul all the time. Likewise the Epistles of Peter and John show it was central to their teaching.<sup>5</sup> Paul also emphasises the salvific power of the resurrection in this latter section of I Corinthians, especially in chapter 15. In Galatians he enlarges on the power of the Cross (1:4; 2:16–21; 3:1–14; 5:24; 6:14). Colossians emphasises the Cross in destroying the power of the law and evil principalities and powers (2:13–15), and (1:19–22). Many of these elements may be traced in other Epistles he wrote.

<sup>5</sup> We make this point of the centrality of the Cross because some scholars take the view that the Resurrection was the central emphasis. In the light of Romans 4:25 it would seem the Cross–Resurrection complex was of the one piece, and this would be borne out in I Corinthians 15.

In Acts 20 he discusses the nature of the gospel—'the whole counsel of God'—in terms of the following:

- (a) repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ.
- (b) the gospel of the grace of God.
- (c) preaching the kingdom of God.
- (d) the whole counsel of God.

This means that the gospel of the Kingdom' preached by John the Baptist and Jesus has become the gospel of the grace of God' and demands 'repentance to[wards] God and . . . faith in our Lord Jesus Christ' for salvation.

In Acts 16:31, Paul says *to believe in Christ* is to be saved. In the Epistles. Paul does speak of *eternal life*, linking that with salvation, and also Christ's *resurrection*, much as we have seen above in the *kerugma* (see Rom. 5:18, 21; 6:22–23; Titus 1:2; 3:7). If we read all Paul's Epistles then we know that forgiveness, purification from sins, justification by grace and sanctification by faith, along with regeneration and adoption (sonship of the Father), were all linked together in the proclamation of the gospel. Something of immense importance—salvation and transformation of the person in that one's total being—resulted from the proclamation and reception of the gospel. This alone brought the change of coming out of death into life (cf. Eph. 2:1–10; Titus 3:3–7).

### **The Petrine Enunciation of the Kerugma**

We have seen in Acts the *kerugma* that Peter and John preached. In Peter's First Epistle we see the centrality of the Cross and the Resurrection for redemption, forgiveness of sins, purification from sins, and sanctification. These points are covered in study 1, and in 2:22–24, 3:18, and 4:1–6. Again, we

have to understand the dynamic of such proclamation in order to see that today it will have no less effect when it is 'the good news [preached] to you through the Holy Spirit sent from heaven' (1:12).

### **The Johannine Enunciation of the Kerugma**

We know that John's Gospel contains much that formulates the *kerugma* proclaimed after the events of the Gospel. Believing brings freedom from condemnation (5:24) and brings eternal life (3:14–36; cf. 20:30–31). The Cross forms a central part of the Gospel (6:51; 12:31–32; cf. 20:23). John's First Epistle expresses the centrality of the Cross and belief in it and Christ (1:9 L 2:2; 4:9–10; cf. 5:8–12, 20) out of which eternal life comes to those who believe.

### **THE PRACTICAL EFFECTS OF THE GOSPEL ON THOSE WHO HEAR**

What we need to see are the affects and effects of the preached gospel so far as the hearers were—and are—concerned. It is so easy for us to take such words as 'repentance', 'faith', 'conversion', 'forgiveness', 'justification', 'regeneration' and 'sanctification', and think of them noetically and theologically yet miss the deep and powerful working of them and the significance they present to hearers. We know that innumerable listeners turned away from preaching, disliking, opposing and rejecting it. Others were radically transformed by it. For those who work in lands where there are other religions, the offer of salvation, forgiveness of sins, eternal life—linked with resurrection—is often quite unknown, and when the message is heard there is an excitement beyond description.

So it was in apostolic days and the days that followed. In Western countries which have had Christianity, we face a number of problems, such as:

(a) The philosophical history of the West which has gradually reduced the credibility of the Bible as an intelligent canon of truth, and therefore something to be believed as being the very word of God.

(b) The growth of the empirico-scientific system of research, thinking and application which seem to outmode that which is biblical-theological.

(c) The growth of alternatives to the gospel. many of them being secular, religious, ideological and psychological systems, or gospels which are intended to supplant the biblical gospel.

(d) The decline of faith and practice in many churches due to seeking to interpret biblical truth by the use of the empirico-scientific method, and the desire to appear intelligent, modern and credible to those outside the churches as well as many of those within them.

(e) The state and presence of traditionalism which sometimes obscures the purity of the gospel. Also an ecclesiasticism which is not consonant with the Christian gospel, and often grips some whilst it repels others—both elements missing the simplicity and power of the gospel.

ff.) The attempts by the use of apologetics to make the gospel sound reasonable to hearers. The use of an intellectualism which appears to put the gospel on par with other reasoned systems, but which obscures the true gospel.

The presentation on the one hand of the gospel as a commonsense system, and the use of persuasion to give it intellectual assent without presenting 'the scandal of the Cross'. On the other hand there are the uses of a 'supernatural' presentation, along with strong manipulative pressures to bring people to decisions or commitments. Often evangelists use

either 'soft sell' or 'hard sell' methods where, in fact, proclamation is what is required—whether people will be persuaded or not by this realistic 'non-sell', since the gospel is primarily a command from God.

There are many other things, such as the deadly dullness of some churches, a dry way of ethical and church-living, the parochial view of the gospel and life—and so on. All of these tend to dull any expectation of some great action of the Holy Spirit and the word of God effecting anything.

### **PROCLAMATION WHICH POWERFULLY EFFECTS A RESPONSE AND A TRANSFORMATION IN THE HEARER**

We are aware that sects and small groups loyal to their beliefs may have a convincing appearance of life. People living in sects are banded together against the systems outside which oppose them. Certain phenomena are present in all groups which suffer rejection and persecution. Some groups are quite heretical but they display social integration of members, and a strong ability to evangelise or proselytise others. So much so, that they often shame others who proclaim the biblical gospel. Again, so often those who proclaim the gospel, and see results come from their proclamation and form themselves into dynamic congregations, may claim that the simple preaching of the gospel is all that is needed. The fire that burns keeps hearts warm and proclamation alive. Even so, it may happen that 'the whole counsel of God' is not preached. An evangelising congregation is a fine fellowship, but sooner or later the social and relational problems known in the early church—and down through all generations—appear, and pastoral ministry will be needed. Proclamation is continually needed, but proclamation per se is not the whole life of the church. Reductionism of any kind will sooner or later bring certain unfortunate con-sequences.

### **PROCLAMATION IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

One Corinthians 1:17–2:5 ought to be closely studied. Eloquence, brilliant argumentation, the use of emotionalised preaching and the like may hinder rather than help in proclamation. Only the Holy Spirit can bring revelation, and when he does then those things we have nominated above come to life—so to speak. We mean that repentance, faith, conversion, forgiveness, justification, regeneration, and sanctification now become alive to the hearer. Conviction of sin, sensitivity to one's own evil, recognition of God's holiness, and the wonder of salvation—and such—all suddenly seem to grip the hearers. Their repentance, belief, response and their reception of forgiveness, purification and justification are vivid and alive.

Thus repentance—a change of mind, understanding, and attitude—is dynamic. Faith is a living experience. The forgiveness of sins is bewilderingly beautiful and wonderful. The sense of utter purification, and the passing away of guilt through justification by grace, all deeply affect the hearer. The inflow of life assures the believer of resurrection from the dead and that dispels the fear of death (Heb. 2:14–15; 1 Cor. 15:55–57). The flooding in of love by the Holy Spirit, the accession of the fruit of the Spirit, and the continuing presence of the Spirit himself, all go to make for a powerful transformation in the life of the new believer.

Such happenings occur in places where the gospel is constantly and faithfully preached, but where threatening, human persuasion, manipulation, gimmicks, tricks and mavericks are used, this result does not come. Hence the puzzlement that people are 'converted' yet do not remain steady, do not grow and mature and do not have the fire a believer should show. Such are apt to 'fall away' or 'backslide' or become indifferent.

It sometimes happens that the doctrine of new birth is preached, yet without reference to the Cross. Sometimes people seem to come into the Kingdom on the crest of what is called 'a Holy Spirit experience', yet the centrality of the Cross is not presented.

This can result in puzzlement and even a dulling of the person. Likewise some hear 'the word of the Cross', but its presentation is so doctrinaire, and often so 'cultic' that the direct impact of the Cross and Resurrection through the Spirit is not really felt.

All of these things we have spoken of above give us cause for great concern. If the gospel is the power of God unto salvation and 'the word of the Cross' the power for those of us who are being saved, then surely we desire to see it all in action.

### **THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL AND THE POWER OF REVIVAL**

Our first statement must be, 'Whenever, and wherever the gospel is preached according to its apostolic truth and in the power of the Holy Spirit, then that is what is required of those who are "stewards of the mysteries of God"'. Nothing more can be asked. Both the form and substance of the gospel will then be communicated. This does not mean that the gospel will immediately produce results parallel with those known under the preaching of the apostles. If we take into consideration the seven points set out above which militate against the proper preaching and true hearing of the gospel, then we see that these are the things today through which we have to break in order to bring the light of the gospel to hearers. The apostles also had to break through other impediments to the acceptance of the gospel, so we should not despair. The gospel, that is, the word of the Cross, is the power of God to redeem.

### **The History of Revivals**

In our three studies we have avoided referring to revivals that have happened in the Christian church, and here we will not make quotations from the books which give us accounts of revival, but one point we must make. *No revival happened unless there was the true preaching of the word.* In some cases many years were given to doing that. Techniques of threatening, persuading and

manipulating were not used. It seems that the constant plain preaching of the Scriptures ultimately resulted in first the phenomena which precede revival, and then the actions which can properly be known as revival phenomena. That is, the word of grace finally penetrated, made its mark, affected hearers and effected salvation and the things accompanying it such as repentance, faith, the response of surrender to God, conversion, and the gifts of forgiveness, purification, adoption and sanctification—the latter placing believers within the holy people, the church.

Those who think all that has ever happened to the church that can be called ‘worthwhile’ happened only within the canon of Scripture—for example, the Book of the Acts—have failed to see that the church is ever the body of Christ, that he is ever its Lord, and the church moved on in history, led and enabled by that same Lord. This is our history and continues to be thus.

One of the great phenomena of this history is that of revivals. It so happens that when revival takes place it brings a new sensitivity to the Person and Being of God, to the fact and nature of sin, to the truths of the gospel, and so the response is a heightened experience of the elements of repentance, faith, forgiveness, purification, conversion, adoption and sanctification. Suddenly—it would seem—the word of God has power in a way hitherto unknown during the period of patient proclamation. Yet the proclamation is the same as that preached previously, but suddenly impressions are made upon the minds and hearts of hearers that seem beyond any hitherto known. Also hearers seem to learn and then retain the truths that come to them. In a few moments, truth breaks open with such light as to be unforgettable. Response to the gospel in repentance and faith is suddenly quite remarkable.

### **GOD’S PLAN AND REVIVALS OF HIS PEOPLE**

Sadly enough, we sit down and work out from the Scriptures the operative principles we can adduce, and then we try to apply them as is done in the empirico–scientific research that results in

applied science. We can have no argument with that on the horizontal level, but what are we about when we preach the Kingdom of God—the very foundation of our gospel? How dare we think we can induce revival? How dare we think that God’s plan for creation is limited to soteriology, that is, the gospel which we think is simply to save human beings from judgment and hell, and sin and death. It is as much that unto which we are saved as from that which we are saved, which is the gospel. All soteriology is: (i) to do with creation; and (ii) to do with the eschaton and the telos.

Revivals, then, are part of God’s sovereign plan in fulfilling His Kingdom, making it come, and making it come upon the earth in the telos. The revivals that come are not a higher technique than the simple preaching of the gospel. They are sovereign acts in history to do with His Kingdom and the telos. Therefore we must see that God visits His people in reviving power, not to assist them in a difficult situation—although that may well be some of the case—but to go on to fulfil the Lordship of Christ over the nations, and ‘bring in’ the Kingdom.

That should humble us, when we talk for or against revival, and should give us the true perspective of it all. Thus, when we preach, our gospel will be soteriological, creation oriented, eschatological and teleological, that is, be in the perspective of ‘things to come’ and the justification of God in all history, as well as the ultimate glorification of mankind and the creation.

### **A PERSONAL QUESTION: AM I A MAN OR WOMAN OF THE SPIRIT AND THE WORD?**

Discussion of revival, proclamation and our place as pastors, teachers and people in the order of God’s plan in history is an interesting pursuit, but the real question is whether we are men and women of the Spirit and the word of God. We can be evangelists and preachers operating in the energies of our own egos, inspired by *eros* but not *agape*, motivated by self–proving and not primarily by the gospel and the Spirit, perhaps capable of moving

multitudes but not of bringing conviction of God's holiness and Man's sin to our audiences. Some of us may see evangelism as that which 'gets the church going', and which enlarges our congregations. Some may see revival as a 'quick fix' for the church, overcoming the present problems of our churches and society—problems moral and spiritual—but not yet see the great holiness of God, and His sovereignty that deals in judgment in the world, no less in us as believers. Some of us may even feel that we must prompt God into action in our present crisis, urging Him to move, whilst others may see this kind of importuning as failure to believe God will Himself move, yet refusal—on these grounds—to pray and anticipate visitations of God may be the sign of indolence and not faith.

To be men and women of the Spirit and the word demands constant sobriety, constant alertness, constant holiness of life, constantly being filled with the Spirit as a moral exercise (Acts 4:8,31;6:3,5;7:55;9:17; 13:9; Rom. 12:11; Eph. 5:18; Gal. 3:3; 5:16. 18. 25; cf. Phil. 1:19), constant attention to the word (Acts 6:4; 1 Cor. 2:1–5; 1 Thess. 1:5; 1 Pet. 1:12) and constant responsibility (1 Cor. 4:1–2; 2 Cor. 4:1–2) with constant suffering (Acts 5:41; 13:50–52; 2 Cor. 4:7–18; 6:3–10; 11:23–29) and never-ending compassion.

We are, then, not dealing in polemics of speculation but in realities. To be men and women of God demands constant vigilance and rejection of personal ambition. The gifts and the fruit of the Spirit are ours—if we will.

### **CONCLUSION TO OUR STUDY**

Why, then, should we not covet revival, not pray for it to happen, not long for it to break forth? This does not mean denigration of any true preaching, but rather revival—as we contemplate it, and pray for it—seems to promise a richer outcome than what we have hitherto known. At the same time we must not idealise revival, nor make a fetish of it. We should not seek it to the exclusion of

faithful preaching, nor put down in our thinking the authentic gospel—preaching which is presently happening. Any substitution for preaching for some hoped-for revival in the future would be disastrous. We must preach the word 'in season and out of season', that is, always. We must not be dismayed by the states of society which seem so far away from true godly living. We must not abandon society to its own sins and evils. In no way must we give up hope. Nor must we withdraw from the world in order to have our own little spiritual ghetto, and be domestic in sharing the gospel with our own.

What we must pray and look for is a sovereign work of God's Holy Spirit as He may choose to visit us with reviving power. Israel knew such seasons, the church has known such seasons, and there is no reason why we should not know such seasons, as in sovereign grace He visits and revives His people and gives even further power and effects than we know at this present time.