

THE GREAT REVIVAL

NO. 185

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 28, 1858
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AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS

*“The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations;
and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.”*
Isaiah 52:10

WHEN the heroes of old prepared for the fight, they put on their armor. But when God prepares for battle, He makes bare His arm. Man has to look two ways—to his own defense, as well as to the offense of his enemy. God has but one direction in which to cast His eye—the overthrow of His foeman—and He disregards all measures of defense and scorns all armor. He *makes bare* His arm in the sight of all the people.

When men would do their work in earnest, too, they sometimes strip themselves, like that warrior of old who, when he went to battle with the Turks, would never fight them except with the bare arm. “Such things as they,” said he, “I need not fear. They have more reason to fear my bare arm than I their scimitar.”

Men feel that they are prepared for a work when they have cast away their cumbrous garments. And so the prophet represents the Lord as laying aside for awhile the garments of His dignity and making bare His arm, that He may do His work in earnest and accomplish His purpose for the establishment of His church.

Now, leaving the figure, which is a very great one, I would remind you that its meaning is fully carried out whenever God is pleased to send a great revival of religion. My heart is glad within me this day, for I am the bearer of good tidings. My soul has been made exceedingly full of happiness by the tidings of a great revival of religion throughout the United States.

Some hundred years, or more, ago, it pleased the Lord to send one of the most marvellous religious awakenings that was ever known. The whole of the United States seemed shaken from end to end with enthusiasm for hearing the Word of God. And now, after the lapse of a century, the like has occurred again.

The monetary pressure has at length departed, but it has left behind it the wreck of many mighty fortunes. Many men who were once princes, have now become beggars, and in America, more than in England, men have learned the instability of all human things. The minds of men, thus weaned from the earth by terrible and unexpected panic, seem prepared to receive tidings from a better land and to turn their exertions in a heavenly direction.

You will be told by anyone who is conversant with the present state of America that wherever you go there are the most remarkable signs that religion is progressing with majestic strides. The Great Revival, as it is now called, has become the common market talk of merchants. It is the theme of every newspaper. Even the secular press remark of it, for it has become so astonishing that all ranks and classes of men seem to have been affected by it.

Apparently without any cause whatever, fear has taken hold of the hearts of men. A thrill seems to be shot through every breast at once, and it is affirmed by men of good repute that there are, at this time, towns in New England where you could not, even if you searched, find one solitary unconverted person. So marvelous—I had almost said, so miraculous—has been the sudden and instantaneous spread of religion throughout the great empire, that it is scarcely possible for us to believe the half of it, even though it should be told us.

Now, as you are aware, I have at all times been peculiarly jealous and suspicious of revivals. Whenever I see a man who is called a revivalist, I always set him down for a cipher. I would scorn the taking of such a title as that to myself. If God pleases to make use of a man for the promoting of a revival, well and good. But for any man to assume the title and office of a revivalist and go about the country believing that wherever *he* goes, he is the vessel of mercy appointed to convey a revival of religion, is, I think, an assumption far too arrogant for any man who has the slightest degree of modesty.

And again, there are a large number of revivals which occur every now and then in our towns and sometimes in our city, which I believe to be spurious and worthless. I have heard of the people crowding in the morning, the afternoon, and the evening to hear some noted revivalist, and under his preaching some have screamed, have shrieked, have fallen down on the floor, have rolled themselves in convulsions, and afterwards, when he has set a form for penitents, employing one or two decoy ducks to run out from the rest and make a confession of sin, hundreds have come forward, impressed by that one sermon and declared that they were, there and then, turned from the error of their ways.

And it was only last week I saw a record of a certain place in our own country, giving an account, that on such a day, under the preaching of the Rev. Mr. So and so, seventeen persons were thoroughly sanctified, twenty-eight were convinced of sin, and twenty-nine received the blessing of justification. Then comes the next day, so many more. The following day, so many more. And afterwards they are all cast up together, making a grand total of some hundreds who have been blessed during three services, under the ministry of Mr. So and so.

All that I call a farce! There may be something very good in it. But the outside looks to me to be so rotten that I should scarcely trust myself to think that the good within comes to any very great amount. When people go to work to calculate so exactly by arithmetic, it always strikes me they have mistaken what they are at.

We may easily say that so many were added to the church on a certain occasion, but to take a separate census of the convinced, the justified, and the sanctified is absurd. You will, therefore, be surprised at finding me speaking of revival. But you will, perhaps, be not quite so surprised when I endeavor to explain what I mean by an earnest and intense desire, which I feel in my heart, that God would be pleased to send throughout this country a revival like that which has just commenced in America, and which, we trust, will long continue there.

I endeavor to mark, in the first place, *the cause of every revival of true religion*. Secondly, *the consequences of such revival*. Then, thirdly, I shall *give a caution or two* that we make no mistakes in this matter and conceive *that* to be God's work which is only man's. And then I shall conclude by making *an exhortation* to all my brethren in the faith of Christ to labor and pray for a revival of religion in the midst of our churches.

I. First, then, THE CAUSE OF A TRUE REVIVAL.

The mere worldly man does not understand a revival. He cannot make it out. Why is it that a sudden fit of godliness, as he would call it—a kind of sacred epidemic—should seize upon a mass of people all at once? What can be the cause of it? It frequently occurs in the absence of all great evangelists. It cannot be traced to any particular means. There have been no special agencies used in order to bring it about—no machinery supplied, no societies established.

And yet it has come, just like a heavenly hurricane, sweeping everything before it. It has rushed across the land, and of it men have said, “The wind bloweth where it listeth. We hear the sound thereof, but we cannot tell from whence it cometh or whither it goeth.” What is, then, the cause? Our answer is, if a revival be true and real, it is caused by the Holy Spirit and by Him alone.

When Peter stood up on the day of Pentecost and preached that memorable sermon by which three thousand persons were converted, can we attribute the remarkable success of his ministry to anything else but the ministry of the Holy Spirit? I read the notes of Peter's discourse. It was certainly very simple. It was a plain narration of facts. It was certainly very bold, very cutting, and pointed, and

personal, for he did not blush to tell them that *they* had put to death the Lord of life and glory, and were guilty of His blood.

But on the mere surface of the thing, I should be apt to say that I had read many a sermon far more likely to be effective than Peter's. And I believe there have been many preachers who have lived, whose sermons when read would have been far more notable and far more regarded, at least by the critic, than the sermon of Peter. It seems to have been exceedingly simple and suitable, and extremely earnest, but none of these things are so eminently remarkable as to be the cause of such extraordinary success.

What then, was the reason? And we reply, once more, the same word which the Holy Spirit blesses to the conversion of one, He might, if He pleased, bless to the conversion of a thousand. And I am persuaded that the meanest preacher in Christendom might come into this pulpit this morning and preach the most simple sermon, in the most uneducated style, and the Holy Spirit—if He so willed it—might bless that sermon to the conversion of every man, woman and child, within this place.

His arm is not shortened. His power is not straitened, and as long as He is Omnipotent, it is ours to believe that He can do whatsoever seems Him good. Do not imagine, when you hear of a sermon being made useful, that it was the sermon itself that did the work. Conceive not, because a certain preacher may have been greatly blessed in the conversion of souls, that there is anything in the preacher. God forbid that any preacher should claim such a thing to himself.

Any other preacher, blessed in the same manner, would be as useful, and any other sermon, provided it is truthful and earnest, might be as much blessed as that particular sermon which has become notable by reason of the multitudes who by it have been brought to Christ. The Spirit of God, when He pleases, blows upon the sons of men.

He finds a people hard and careless. He casts a desire into their minds—He sows it broadcast in their spirits—a thought towards the house of the Lord, and straightway, they know not why, they flock in multitudes to hear the Word preached. He casts the seed, the same seed, into the preacher's mind, and he knows not how, but he feels more earnest than he did before.

When he goes to his pulpit, he goes to it as to a solemn sacrifice, and there he preaches, believing that great things will be the effect of his ministry. The time of prayer comes round. Christians are found meeting together in large numbers. They cannot tell what it is that influences them, but they feel they must go up to the house of the Lord to pray.

There are earnest prayers lifted up. There are earnest sermons preached, and there are earnest hearers. Then God the Almighty One is pleased to soften hard hearts, and subdue the stout-hearted, and bring them to know the truth. The only real cause is, His Spirit working in the minds of men.

But while this is the only actual cause, yet there are instrumental causes. And the main instrumental cause of a great revival must be the bold, faithful, fearless preaching of the truth as it is in Jesus. Why, brethren, we want every now and then to have a reformation. One reformation will never serve the church. She needs to continually be wound up and set a-going afresh, for her works run down and she does not act as she used to do.

The bold, bald doctrines that Luther brought out, began to be a little modified, until layer after layer is deposited upon them, and at last the old rocky truth was covered up. And then there grows upon the superficial subsoil an abundance of green and flowery errors, that looked fair and beautiful, but are in no way whatever related to the truth, except as they are the products of its decay.

Then there came bold men who bring the truth out again and said, "Clear away this rubbish. Let the blast light upon these deceitful beauties. We want them not—bring out the old truth once more!" And it came out. But the tendency of the church perpetually is to be covering up its own naked simplicity, forgetting that the truth is never so beautiful as when it stands in its own unadorned, God-given glory.

And now, at this time, we want to have the old truths restored to their places. The subtleties and the refinements of the preacher must be laid aside. We must give up the grand distinctions of the schoolmen and all the lettered technicalities of men who have studied theology as a system, but have not felt the power of it in their hearts.

And when the good old truth is once more preached by men whose lips are touched as with a live coal from off the altar, this shall be the instrument, in the hand of the Spirit, for bringing about a great and thorough revival of religion in the land.

But added to this, there must be the earnest prayers of the church. All in vain the most indefatigable ministry, unless the church waters the seed sown with her abundant tears. Every revival has been commenced and attended by a large amount of prayer. In the city of New York at the present moment, there is not, I believe, one single hour of the day wherein Christians are not gathered together for prayer.

One church opens its doors from five o'clock till six for prayer. Another church opens from six to seven and summons its praying men to offer the sacrifice of supplication. Six o'clock is past and men are gone to their labor. Another class find it then convenient—such as those, perhaps, who go to business at eight or nine—and from seven to eight there is another prayer meeting.

From eight to nine there is another, in another part of the city, and what is most marvelous, at high noon, from twelve to one, in the midst of the city of New York, there is held a prayer meeting in a large room, which is crammed to the doors every day, with hundreds standing outside. This prayer meeting is made up of merchants of the city, who can spare a quarter of an hour to go in and say a word of prayer and then leave again.

And then a fresh company comes in to fill up the ranks, so that it is supposed that many hundreds assemble in that one place for prayer during the appointed hour. This is the explanation of the revival.

If this were done in London—if we for once would outvie old Rome, who kept her monks in her sanctuaries, always at prayer, both by night and by day—if we together could keep up one golden chain of prayer, link after link of holy brotherhood being joined together in supplication—then might we expect an abundant outpouring of the divine Spirit from the Lord our God.

The Holy Spirit as the actual Agent—the Word preached, and the prayers of the people as the instruments—and we have thus explained the cause of a true revival of religion.

II. But now, what are THE CONSEQUENCES OF A REVIVAL OF RELIGION?

Why, the consequences are everything that our hearts could desire for the church's good. When the revival of religion comes into a nation, the minister begins to be warmed. It is said that in America the most sleepy preachers have begun to wake up. They have warmed themselves at the general fire, and men who could not preach without notes, and could not preach with them to any purpose at all, have found it in their hearts to speak right out, and speak with all their might to the people.

When there comes a revival, the minister all of a sudden finds that the usual forms and conventionalities of the pulpit are not exactly suitable to the times. He breaks through one hedge. Then he finds himself in an awkward position and he has to break through another. He finds himself perhaps on a Sunday morning, though a Doctor of Divinity, actually telling an anecdote—lowering the dignity of the pulpit by actually using a simile or metaphor—sometimes perhaps accidentally making his people smile, and what is also a great sin in these solid theologians, now and then dropping a tear.

He does not exactly know how it is, but the people catch up his words. "I must have something good for them," he says. He just burns that old lot of sermons. Or he puts them under the bed, and gets some new ones, or gets none at all, but just gets his text and begins to cry, "Men and brethren, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved."

The old deacons say, "What is the matter with our minister?" The old ladies, who have heard him for many years, and slept in the front of the gallery so regularly, begin to rouse and say, "I wonder what has happened to him, how can it be? Why, he preaches like a man on fire. The tear run over at his eye. His soul is full of love for souls."

They cannot make it out. They have often said he was dull and dreary and drowsy. How is it all this is changed? Why, it is the revival. The revival has touched the minister. The sun, shining so brightly, has melted some of the snow on the mountaintop and it is running down in fertilizing streams to bless the valleys. And the people down below are refreshed by the ministrations of the man of God who has

awakened himself up from his sleep and finds himself, like another Elijah, made strong for forty days of labor.

Well, then, directly after that the revival begins to touch the people at large. The congregation was once numbered by the empty seats, rather than by the full ones. But on a sudden—the minister does not understand it—he finds the people coming to hear him. He never was popular, never hoped to be. All at once he wakes up and finds himself famous, as far as a large congregation can make him so.

There are the people and how they listen! They are all awake, all in earnest. They lean their heads forward, they put their hands to their ears. His voice is feeble. They try to help him. They are doing anything so that they may hear the Word of Life. And then the members of the church open their eyes and see the chapel full, and they say, “How has this come about? We ought to pray.”

A prayer meeting is summoned. There had been five or six in the vestry—now there are five or six hundred and they turn into the chapel. And oh! how they pray! That old stager, who used to pray for twenty minutes, finds it now convenient to confine himself to five. And that good old man who always used to repeat the same form of prayer when he stood up, and talked about the horse that rushed into the battle, and the oil from vessel to vessel, and all that, leaves all these things at home and just prays, “O Lord, save sinners for Jesus Christ’s sake.”

And there are sobs and groans heard at the prayer meetings. It is evident that not one, but all, are praying. The whole mass seems moved to supplication. How is this again? Why, it is just the effect of the revival, for when the revival truly comes, the minister and the congregation and the church will receive good by it.

But it does not end here. The members of the church grow more solemn, more serious. Family duties are better attended to. The home circle is brought under better culture. Those who could not spare time for family prayer, find they can do so now—those who had no opportunity for teaching their children, now dare not go a day without doing it—for they hear that there are children converted in the Sunday school.

There are twice as many in the Sunday school now as there used to be, and what is wonderful, the little children meet together to pray. Their little hearts are touched and many of them show signs of a work of grace begun. And fathers and mothers think they must try what they can do for their families—if God is blessing little children, why should He not bless theirs?

And then, when you see the members of the church going up to the house of God, you mark with what a steady and sober air they go. Perhaps they talk on the way, but they talk of Jesus. And if they whisper together at the gates of the sanctuary, it is no longer idle gossip. It is no remark about, “How do you like the preacher? What did you think of him? Did you notice So and so?”

Oh, no! “I pray the Lord that He might bless the word of His servant—that He might send an unction from on high—that the dying flame may be kindled and that where there is life, it may be promoted and strengthened, and receive fresh vigor.” This is their whole conversation.

And then comes the great result. There is an inquirers’ meeting held. The good brother who presides over it is astonished. He never saw so many coming in his life before. “Why,” says he, “there is a hundred, at least, come to confess what the Lord has done for their souls! Here are fifty come all at once to say that under such a sermon they were brought to the knowledge of the truth. Who has begotten me these? How has it come about? How can it be? Is not the Lord a great God that has worked such a work as this?”

And then the converts who are thus brought into the church, if the revival continues, are very earnest ones. You never saw such a people. The outsiders call them fanatics. It is a blessed fanaticism. Others say, they are nothing but enthusiasts. It is a heavenly enthusiasm. Everything that is done is done with such spirit.

If they sing, it is like the crashing thunder. If they pray, it is like the swift, sharp dash of lightning, lighting up the darkness of the cold hearted and making them for a moment feel that there is something in prayer. When the minister preaches, he preaches like a Boanerges, and when the church is gathered

together, it is with a hearty good will. When they give, they give with enlarged liberality. When they visit the sick, they do it with gentleness, meekness, and love. Everything is done with a single eye to God's glory—not of men, but by the power of God. Oh, that we might see such a revival as this!

But blessed be God, it does not end here. The revival of the church then touches the rest of society. Men, who do not come forward and profess religion, are more punctual in attending the means of grace. Men that used to swear, give it up. They find it is not suitable for the times. Men that profaned the Sabbath, and despised God, find it will not do. They give it all up.

Times get changed. Morality prevails. The lower ranks are affected. They buy a sermon where they used to buy some penny tract of nonsense. The higher orders are also touched. They too are brought to hear the Word. Her ladyship, in her carriage, who never would have thought of going to so mean a place as a conventicle, does not now care where she goes so long as she is blessed. She wants to hear the truth and a drayman pulls his horses up by the side of her ladyship's pair of grays, and they both go in and bend together before the throne of sovereign grace.

All classes are affected. Even the senate feels it. The statesman himself is surprised at it and wonders what all these things mean. Even the monarch on the throne feels she has become the monarch of a people better than she knew before and that God is doing something in her realms past all her thought—that a great King is swaying a better sceptre and exerting a better influence than even her excellent example.

Nor does it even end there. Heaven is filled. One by one the converts die and it gets fuller. The harps of heaven are louder, the songs of angels are inspired with new melody, for they rejoice to see the sons of men prostrate before the throne. The universe is made glad. It is God's own summer. It is the universal spring. The time of the singing of birds is come. The voice of the turtle is heard in our land. Oh! that God might send us such a revival of religion as this!

I thank God, that we, as a people, have had great cause to thank Him that we have had a measure of revival of this kind, but nothing compared with what we desire. I have heard of revivals where twenties, and thirties, and forties, and fifties, were gathered in. But tell it to the honor of our God, there is never a month passes, but our baptismal pool is opened, and never a communion Sabbath, but we receive many into the fold of the Lord. As many as three hundred in one year have we added to the church and still the cry is, "They come! They come!"

And were but our new sanctuary built, I am persuaded, that in six months from its erection, instead of having twelve hundred members, I should be the pastor of at least two thousand. For I believe there are many of you who attend this hall in the morning, who find it quite impossible to crowd into the chapel in the evening, and are only waiting and anxious that you may tell to me and to the brethren what God has done for your souls.

This I know, the Lord has been very gracious to us and to Him be the honor of it. But we want more. Our souls are greedy—covetous for God. Oh! that we might be all converted!

*"We long to see the churches full,
That all the chosen race,
May with one voice, and heart, and tongue,
Sing His redeeming grace."*

And we have to thank God, too, that it has not ended there. For we had last Sabbath evening, Exeter Hall full, Westminster Abbey full, and this place full too. And though we may not altogether agree in sentiment with all that is preached, yet God bless them all! So long as Christ is preached, I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

And I would to God that every large building in London were crowded too, and that every man who preached the Word were followed by tens of thousands who would hear the truth. May that day soon

come! And there is one heart which will rejoice in such a day more than any of you—a heart that shall always beat the highest when it sees God glorified—though our own honor should decrease.

III. Now, we shall have to turn to the third point, which was A CAUTION.

When Christmas Evans preached in Wales during a time of revival, he used to make the people dance. The congregations were so excited under his ministry that they positively danced. Now, I do not believe that dancing was the work of the Spirit. Their being stirred in their hearts might be the Holy Spirit's work, but the Holy Spirit does not care to make people dance under sermons—no good comes of it.

Now and then among our Methodist friends there is a great break out, and we hear of a young woman in the middle of a sermon getting on the top of a form, and turning round and round in ecstasy, till she falls down in a fainting fit and they cry, "Glory be to God." Now, we do not believe that that is the work of the Spirit. We believe it is ridiculous nonsense and nothing more.

In the old revivals in America a hundred years ago, commonly called, "The Great Awakening," there were many strange things, such as continual shrieks and screams, and knockings, and twitchings, under the services. We cannot call that the work of the Spirit. Even the great Whitefield's revival at Cambuslang, one of the greatest and most remarkable revivals that were ever known, was attended by some things that we cannot but regard as superstitious wonders. People were so excited that they did not know what they did.

Now, if in any revival you see any of these strange contortions of the body—always distinguish between things that differ. The Holy Spirit's work is with the mind, not with the body in that way. It is not the will of God that such things should disgrace the proceedings. I believe that such things are the result of Satanic malice—the devil sees that there is a great deal of good doing. "Now," says he, "I'll spoil it all. I'll put my hoof in there and do a world of mischief. There are souls being converted. I will let them get so excited that they will do ludicrous things and then it will all be brought into contempt."

Now, if you see any of these strange things arising, look out. There is that old Apollyon busy, trying to mar the work. Put such outlandish actions down as soon as you can, for where the Spirit works, He never works against His own precept, and His precept is, "Let all things be done decently and in order." It is neither decent nor orderly for people to dance under the sermon, nor howl, nor scream, while the Gospel is being preached to them, and therefore, it is not the Spirit's work at all, but mere human excitement.

And again, remember that you must always distinguish between man and man in the work of revival. While, during a revival of religion, a very large number of people will be really converted, there will be a very considerable portion who will be merely excited with animal excitement, and whose conversion will not be genuine.

Always expect that and do not be surprised if you see it. It is but a law of the mind that men should imitate one another and it seems but reasonable that when one person is truly converted, there should be a kind of desire to imitate it in another, who yet is not a possessor of true and sovereign grace. Be not discouraged, then, if you should meet with this in the midst of a revival. It is no proof that it is not a true revival—it is only a proof that it is not true in that particular case.

I must say, once more, that if God should send us a great revival of religion, it will be our duty not to relax the bonds of discipline. Some churches, when they increase very largely, are apt to take people into their number by wholesale, without due and proper examination. We ought to be just as strict in the eruptions of a revival as in the cooler times of a gradual increase.

And if the Lord sends His Spirit like a hurricane, it is ours to deal with skill with the sails, lest the hurricane should wreck us by driving us upon some fell rock that may do us serious injury. Take care, you that are officers in the church, when you see the people stirred up, that you exercise still a holy caution, lest the church become lowered in its standard of piety by the admission of persons not truly saved.

IV. With these words of caution, I shall now gather up my strength, and with all my might labor to stir you up to seek of God a great revival of religion throughout the length and breadth of this land.

Men, brethren, and fathers, the Lord God has sent us a blessing. One blessing is the earnest of many. Drops precede the April showers. The mercies which He has already bestowed upon us are but the forerunners and the preludes of something greater and better yet to come. He has given us the former, let us seek of Him the latter rain, that His grace may be multiplied among us, and His glory may be increased.

There are some of you to whom I address myself this morning who stand in the way of any revival of religion. I would affectionately admonish you and beseech you not to impede the Lord's own work. There are some of you, perhaps, here today who are not consistent in your living. And yet you are professors of religion. You take the sacramental cup into your hand and drink its sacred wine, but still you live as worldlings live and are as carnal and as covetous as they.

Oh, my brother, you are a serious drawback to the church's increase. God will never bless an unholy people, and in proportion to our unholiness, He will withhold the blessing from us. Tell me of a church that is inconsistent—you shall tell me of a church that is unblest. God will first sweep the house before He will come to dwell in it. He will have His church pure before He will bless it with all the blessings of His grace. Remember that, you inconsistent ones, and turn unto God and ask to be rendered holy.

There are others of you who are so cold-hearted that you stand in the way of all progress. You are a skid upon the wheels of the church. It cannot move for you. If we would be earnest, you put your cold hand on everything that is bold and daring. You are not prudent and zealous. If you were so, we would bless God for giving you that prudence, which is a jewel for which we ought ever to thank God, if we have a prudent man among us.

But there are some of you to whom I allude, who are prudent, but you are cold. You have no earnestness, you do not labor for Christ, you do not serve Him with all your strength. And there are others of you who are imprudent enough to push others on, but never go forward yourselves. O you Laodiceans, you that are neither hot nor cold, remember what the Lord has said of you—"So then, because you are neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth." And so will He do with you. Take heed, take heed, you are not only hurting yourselves but you are injuring the church.

And then there are others of you who are such sticklers for order, so given to everything that has been, that you do not care for any revival for fear we should hurt you. You would not have the church repaired, lest we should touch one piece of the venerable moss that coats it. You would not cleanse your own garment, because there is ancient dirt upon it. You think that because a thing is ancient, therefore it must be venerable.

You are lovers of the antique. You would not have a road mended, because your grandfather drove his wagon along the rut that is there. "Let it always be there," you say. "Let it always be knee deep." Did not your grandfather go through it when it was knee deep with mud and why should you not do the same? It was good enough for him and it is good enough for you.

You always have taken an easy seat in the chapel. You never saw a revival. You do not want to see it. You believe it is all nonsense and that it is not to be desired. You look back. You find no precedent for it. Doctor So and so did not talk about it. Your venerable minister who is dead did not talk so, you say—therefore it is not needed.

We need not tell you it is Scriptural—that you do not care for. It is not orderly, you say. We need not tell you the thing is right. You care more about the thing being ancient than being good. Ah, you will have to get out of the way now, it isn't any good. You may try to stop us, but we will run over you if you do not get out of the way.

With a little warning we shall have to run over your prejudices and incur your anger. But your prejudices must not, cannot, restrain us. The chain may be never so rusty with age, and never so stamped with authority, the prisoner is always happy to break it, and however your fetters may shackle us, we will dash them in pieces if they stand in the way of the progress of the kingdom of Christ.

Having thus spoken to those who hinder, I want to speak to you who love Jesus with all your hearts and want to promote it. Dear friends, I beseech you remember that men are dying around you by thousands. Will you let your eye follow them into the world of shades? Myriads of them die without God, without Christ, without hope.

My brother, does not their fearful fate awake your sympathy? You believe, from Scriptural warrant, that those who die without faith go to that place where “their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched.” Believing this, is not your soul stirred within you in pity for their fate?

Look around you today. You see a vast host gathered together, professedly for the service of God. You know also how many there are here who fear Him not, but are strangers to themselves and strangers to the cross. What! Do you know yourself what a solemn thing it is to be under the curse, and will you not pray and labor for those around you that are under the curse today?

Remember your Master’s cross. He died for sinners. Will not you weep for them?

*“Did Christ o’er sinners weep;
And shall your cheek be dry?”*

Did He give His whole life for them and will not you stir up your life to wrestle with God that His purposes may be accomplished on their behalf? You have unconverted children—do you not want them saved? You have brothers, husbands, wives, fathers, that are this day in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity. Do you not want a revival, even if it were only for their sakes?

Behold, how much of robbery, of murder, of crime, stains this poor land. Do you not want a revival of religion, if it were merely for quenching the flames of crime? See how God’s name every day is blasphemed. Mark how, this day, trades are carried on, as if it were man’s day and not God’s. Mark how multitudes are going the downward course, merry on their way to destruction.

Do you not feel for them? Are your hearts hard and stolid? Has your soul become steeled? Has it become frozen like an iceberg? O sun of righteousness arise, and melt the icy heart, and make us all feel how fearful it is for immortal souls to perish—for men to be hurried into eternity without God and without hope.

Oh, my hearers, will you not now, from this time forth, begin to pray that God may send forth His Word and save them, that His own name may be glorified?

As for you that fear not God, see how much ado we are making about you. Your souls are worth more than you think for. O that you would believe in Christ to the salvation of your souls!

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.