

HISTORY'S MOST POWERFUL REVIVALS

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Chapter One

What is Revival?

WALES, 1904-5.

"REVIVAL IS a community saturated with God," said Duncan Campbell. And so it was in Wales. Reports speak of "an overwhelming sense of God's presence and holiness at homes, at work, in shops," even in the pubs!

Powerful conviction of sin follows. "Many lay flat on the ground in an agony of conviction." Some people "fell in a heap and cried out pitifully and loudly for mercy."

Conviction triggers off intense prayer and repentance towards God, but also confession and restitution towards man: "The most remarkable confessions of sin, confessions that must be costly," church members and officers publicly confessing hidden sin in their hearts. This results in long-standing debts being paid, stolen goods returned, church and family feuds healed and enemies reconciled.

Once sin has been dealt with, the presence of God releases "an overwhelming outburst of praise." A meeting "continued for eight hours with scenes of wild jubilation."

Worship, praise, prayer, Bible reading, witnessing - these become the Christian's whole life. Meetings couldn't be closed and went on all night. Men came in their work clothes with their next day's lunch packed. Prayer meetings were held in mines, trams and businesses. Shops sold out of Bibles.

Great numbers of people accept Christ: "70,000 in two months, 85,000 in five, and more than 100,000 in half a year." By the end of the Revival, 90 per cent of the people of Wales were attending church.

So the nation is changed. Its values become Christian. In some Welsh districts drunkenness halved, pubs went bankrupt, police had nothing to do, magistrates had no cases to try.

And because "righteousness exalteth a nation," prosperity often follows, not least because of honesty in business and work done "as unto the Lord." Strikes were settled. In one, the now-converted trouble-maker asked if he could go back to work. Managers reported their men both better workers and more regular attenders. Working people took their aged

parents home from the workhouse.

But do Revivals last? Dr. Edwin Orr says the Welsh Revival was maintained until 1914 and its converts were "The choicest segment of church life, even in the 1930s."

Who wouldn't want this for New Zealand? A tenth of the population newly converted and still going strong 25 years on! Churches crammed to capacity! Crime greatly diminished! Social problems solved! What Christian would dare to criticise such a wonderful work of God?

Many! A feature of all Revivals is strong criticism from leading Christians. We will see its effect in our next study.

Chapter Two

Can Christians Stop a Revival?

THE PROBLEM with Revivals is that, like the Lord, they are so supernatural! For instance, "at that moment the power of God swept in upon half the congregation, and one half slumped on top of each other. On the other side men and women fell back in a trance throwing their arms up and remaining in that position for fully two hours."

Does that seem "decently in order"?

So, many a leader has tried to "correct" God's methods. When Revival broke out in India's Ramabai Mukti Mission not only were the girls "stricken by conviction of sin, followed by confession," but "noteworthy were all the emotional accompaniments, the physical phenomena, the sensation of burning, simultaneous prayer, and speaking with tongues, and (later) women praying with loud crying."

What was Pandita Ramabai, "this well-educated Indian lady of the highest caste, influenced in her ideas of propriety by the Anglo-Catholics," to do? She tried to impose rules.

"But I soon found that I stopped the work of the Holy Spirit by interfering with it. I wanted to be proper and conduct meetings in our old civilised ways. But God would have none of it. He laid His hand upon me, put me low in the dust, and told me to take my proper place, that of a worm. He said, 'My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways.'

"I humbled myself under this severe rebuke and took my hand off the work. The Holy Spirit has full liberty."

The result was the conversion of hundreds of young women.

Dr. Nicol MacNicol wrote: "Those whose religion in 1907 seemed too emotional to endure long, 20 years later were bearing their witness steadfastly."

Revivals can even be stamped out completely: "I have been pastor of a church where Revival broke out among a little group in the congregation. I was jealous and I stamped it out," Dr. Alan Redpath told a Ngaruawahia convention.

"I know of many a church (or) college where a group of people have felt hungry for God

and sought His face ... They too have been stamped out at faculty (leadership) level - 'too emotional'."

Every Revival has been branded "too emotional." Yet it is the maker of man's emotions who stirs emotions in a Revival, sometimes contrary to the intentions of the leader. David Brainerd states "a Divine influence caused the persons to cry out in anguish of soul, although I spoke not a word of terror, but on the contrary, of Christ's willingness to save."

Charles Finney, often accused of stirring up the people, found that "a few words of conversation would create a distress that seemed unendurable ... in as gentle a manner as I could ... I pointed them to Christ ... I said, 'Now please go home ... Try to keep silent, and do not break out into any boisterous manifestation of feeling' .. they went out sobbing and sighing" until at home one "fell on the floor and burst into a loud wailing, in view of his awful condition."

That is the key: The view of their awful condition.

We naturally feel afraid at moments of great danger. And in Revival, the Holy Spirit makes sinners vividly aware that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die!" Naturally, when those sins are washed away, people are, "So full of joy they could hardly contain themselves."

However, fallible human beings can overreact. In the Welsh Revival: "Excesses were in evidence, as in every period of awakening in the history of the Church." Some Christians, seeing only those excesses, ignoring the incredibly massive blessings, criticised.

Chapter Three

Can Christians Ruin Revival?

WALES, 1904-5.

A POPULAR criticism of the Welsh Revival was that four Churches gained 80,000 in the Revival and lost 20,000 afterwards. Why did converts leave these "mainline" Churches? They were frozen out.

Said Dr. Eifion Evans: "The ecstasy of the new wine was all too soon curbed by the frigidity of the old bottles." Some ministers even objected to the converts' assurance of salvation!

Like the Methodists over a hundred years before, against their leaders' wishes Revival converts reluctantly formed new churches. The Pentecostal-Apostolic Churches began.

In the Revival itself, great criticism was made against its apparent leader, Evan Roberts. He was called "the young lunatic." A respected minister published a letter against "the Evan Roberts Revival" calling it "a sham Revival, a mockery, a blasphemous travesty of the real thing," an "exhibition," "froth," "false fire" and "utterly sacrilegious."

The effect on the young lay-preacher Roberts was dramatic. Though he seemed not to notice the criticisms, within days his doctor diagnosed a nervous disorder. Five months later, he went into seclusion, almost never to minister in public again for the rest of his long life.

The effect on the Revival was terrible. Before the published criticism, conversions were 35,000 a month. In the month of the criticism and the two months following, conversions dropped to 5000 a month, recovering a little once the controversy had died down.

But the mud stuck. "For many years the 1904 Revival was looked upon as 'much a do about nothing' because of its emotionalism." Many more years were to pass before an historical perspective could restore its name as a wonderful and lasting work of God.

How slow we are to learn our lessons! Because less than fifty years before, exactly the same thing had happened in Wales! Of the 1859 Welsh Revival a leading Christian wrote: "It is a man-made Revival; the chief instruments in it are not persons of any weight or character ... it is mere excitement and enthusiasm, and although many persons of disreputable conduct seem to be for the present changed, yet, when the excitement

ceases, they will return to their former habits, and their end will be worse than their beginning ... the noise - the confusion - the loud and long prayers - and singing, with various excesses of feeling, and extravagance of language - these are most offensive ... The 'converts' will ere long be 'perverts.' They will go back, betray religion and bring disgrace upon the whole movement."

And what was the true situation? "About 110,000 were converted and added to the churches ... one estimate, cited in 1897, is that 19 out of every 20 (95 per cent) maintained their profession and were fruitful in godly duties."

104,500 still going strong for God 38 years later! Oh, for more "man-made Revivals!"

We have seen that Christians can ruin or stop a Revival. Can Christians also cause a Revival to happen?

Chapter Four

Can Christians Make a Real Revival Happen?

THE HEBRIDES, 1949.

"REVIVAL CAN alone be given by the Holy Spirit of God when the conditions are fulfilled," said Evan Roberts. It is widely held that 2 Chronicles 7:14 states God's conditions for Revival. What happened when the people of the Hebrides Islands, off the west coast of Scotland, fulfilled those conditions?

If my people ... humble themselves

A minister and elders on the Island of Lewis were deeply concerned. Their parish people were neglecting Christian things. Very few young people went to church, preferring dances, movies and drinking. The minister admitted the "lack of spiritual power" in Gospel preaching. What could be done?

They decided to publicly confess, in the local newspaper "the low state of vital religion," "the lack of spiritual power from Gospel Ordinance," admitting "that these things plainly indicate that the Most High has a controversy with the nation." They listed some obvious sins of their people: "carelessness towards public worship, the light regard of solemn vows and obligations." They pleaded with their people to ask seriously "what must be the end should there be no repentance," suggesting they "examine their own lives that we may be visited with the spirit of repentance and may turn again to the Lord whom we have so grieved with our iniquities."

(Those final "we" passages remind one of Daniel 9 and Nehemiah I, the godly identifying with the sins of the nation.)

How humiliating for a highly respected church! But as Duncan Campbell said of the Revival: "It began in a desperate sense of need, and in an overwhelming conviction that God alone could deal with the situation."

If my people ... pray

The first response was prayer, both public and private. Praying intensified at the weekly prayer meeting. Two elderly sisters were mighty in intercession. They asked their minister to call his elders and deacons together for special times of waiting on God.

If my people ... seek my face

At the first meeting seven office bearers and the two sisters took the incredible risk of making a vow to God that they would take no rest "and give him no rest ... until he make (their) Jerusalem a praise in the earth." (Isa. 62:6 - 7) In [[[unreadable]]] mid-week

prayer meeting, they would meet in a barn a further three nights a week to pray, if need be, into the early hours of the morning, or even all night.

The sisters in their cottage four miles from the barn, "kept them company" in spirit, often waiting before the Lord throughout the night.

If my people ... turn from their wicked ways

Week after week went by ... months passed ... Nothing happened.

Then one night in the barn a young deacon stood and read Psalm 24: "Who shall ascend to the hill of the Lord, or who shall stand in His holy place? He that has clean hands and a pure heart." He then spoke to his companions: "It seems to me just so much humbug to be waiting as we are waiting, praying as we are praying, unless we ourselves are rightly related to God." Then he prayed: "Lord, are my hands clean? Is my heart pure?"

Immediately the young deacon and two of the others fell to the floor under the power of God in a trance. Said Duncan Campbell: "... they found themselves in the searching power of the presence of God, and discovered things about themselves that they had never suspected. But the blood of Calvary heals and cleanses."

Repenting of their sins, this small group has now fulfilled the four conditions.

Would God now do his promised part and send Revival?

Chapter Five

Can a Revival Come Through United Prayer?

AMERICA, 1857.

WHO HAS despised the day of small things? asks Zechariah. Who indeed, when we see that this marvelous Revival, beginning with just one man and his failure of a prayer-meeting, had two million people come to Christ!

The man? Jeremiah Lanphier, 49-year-old home missionary of the North Dutch Church, New York. He advertised a Wednesday noon-to-one prayer meeting to give "businessmen an opportunity to stop and call upon God."

At noon on September 23, he opened the door and waited. No one came. Twenty, 30 minutes passed. At last one person appeared. Then another. Finally six were present to pray.

Next Wednesday 22 people came. But the following Wednesday coincided with the greatest financial crash in the nation's history. Banks closed, suddenly men were out of work, families went hungry. Soon the meeting was overflowing and within six months 10,000 businessmen were praying daily in the churches of New York.

Reporters sent to cover the meetings noted that it was entirely a laymen's movement with no preaching and five minutes per person per prayer! A five-minute exhortation was permitted, sometimes creating dramatic scenes. One on the need for repentance made a would-be murderer and suicide cry out: "What shall I do to be saved?"

Following New York's example, right across America theatres, churches, halls were opened for prayer and thousands came. One man reported traveling from Omaha to Boston and finding "a continuous prayer meeting all the way - a prayer meeting about two thousand miles in extent.

Conversions began to take place, often in the meetings themselves. Here is a scene from a united interdenominational prayer meeting in Michigan: "A praying wife requests prayers for her unconverted husband.' Immediately a large man arose and said, 'I am that man! I have a praying wife.' Another five convicted husbands then rose requesting prayer for their conversion and the power of God came upon the meeting."

Soon the number of reported conversions reached 7000 a day and over two years the

churches averaged 10,000 new members each week.

Britain followed suit. Interdenominational prayer meetings multiplied. Within a year another million had been converted.

In Matthew 18 Jesus made tremendously powerful promises to those who would pray together. If only two Christians could "symphonise" together, *anything that they ask for shall be done for them*.

We should not be surprised, then, at two million people being brought to Christ as the result of one man calling a prayer meeting to which, at first, only six people came.

Chapter Six

Does God Keep His Promises?

THE HEBRIDES, 1949.

LAST chapter we saw how a small group of Christians in the Hebrides fulfilled the four conditions of 2 Chron 7:14. They had publicly *humbled themselves, prayed*, intensified their prayer into *seeking God's face*, and finally, *turned from the sin in their lives*. Did God then fulfill His three promises?

Then will I hear from heaven

At the same moment, 6km away, one sister received a vision of the churches crowded "and the Lamb in the midst of the throne with the keys of Heaven in his hand." Revival was coming! She even saw the one preaching in those crowded churches: Duncan Campbell.

By a miracle, and against the planning of men, God arranged for Duncan Campbell to be on that island a short time later to take a series of meetings. Some 18 months before, he had gone through deep dealings with God - "a baptism from God," he called it - which included a vision of thousands of highlanders and islanders drifting into the agonies of hell. A voice had cried, "Go to them!" and Duncan had obeyed, leaving his settled parish ministry of 23 years to go out as an itinerant evangelist at age 50.

His first meeting on the island, though tense and crowded, saw no breakthrough until after the service. While people were leaving, a young man, burdened in intercession cried out as he fell in a trance to the floor. "But Heaven had heard, and the congregation, moved by a power they could not resist, came back into the church."

And will forgive their sin

Let Duncan Campbell tell it: "I gave out my text and began to preach, but within 10 minutes my voice could not be heard with the cries of the penitent as men and women all over the church cried to God for mercy ... I picture just now a farmer kneeling down quite near to the pulpit and crying, 'O God, I feel that hell itself is too good for me!' Many found forgiveness in Christ that night."

AS the movement spread, people were convicted of sin in their lonely cottages or on hillsides before coming near any meeting. Along the sides of the road people could be

seen kneeling, seeking God for forgiveness of sin.

One of hundreds of examples: A shepherd on the hillside said: "every stone and blade of grass seemed to cry: 'Flee to God for mercy!' " He did so.

And heal their land

"For three years the public hall on that island has not been opened because the young people who frequented the pictures and concert and dance are now found at the weekly prayer meeting. Today the drinking house is closed ..."

And the minister who published that humbling confession could now write that in his church alone were over 100 new Christians. "God is maintaining them all; not one has gone back.

God cannot lie

So many of God's promises are conditional: He promises to do something only if we do something first. He doesn't lie. He has committed himself in writing! So if we fulfill the conditions he is bound by his own true character to keep his word.

Does God, then, answer prayer? Jesus promised that if Christians agreed together - *harmonised* - "anything that they ask shall be done for them."

Can God use this power of united prayer to bring about Revival?

Chapter Seven

Can One Man's Prayers Bring Revival?

AMERICA, 1745.

Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees.

BUT DOES something as important as Revival come only through the prayers of many Christians?

David Brainerd went to Yale University to train for the ministry. Disaster struck. Through an unwise remark, he was expelled. Only 23 years old, his career seemed in ruins, but his attitude was beautiful: "I felt thankfulness to God for they have been the means of making me more humble. I felt pleased to be little, to be nothing, and to lie in the dust."

He gave himself to prayer and fasting and soon felt God still wanted to use him: "Though I have been so depressed respecting my hopes of future serviceableness, yet now I had much encouragement. I was assisted to intercede for poor souls, and for special grace for myself to fit me for special services."

These "special services" soon became clear: "I set apart this day for fasting and prayer, to give me divine aid and direction, and in his own time to send me into his harvest. I felt a power of intercession for immortal souls and even joy in the thoughts suffering hardship and even death itself, in the promotion of it, pleading for the conversion of the poor heathen. God enabled me so to agonise in prayer that I was quite wet with sweat. I gasped for multitudes of souls."

The poor heathen were, of course, the Indians. Granted a licence to preach to them, "I rode to Kaunaumek, and there lodged on a heap of straw."

There commenced a terrible battle with loneliness ("I live in the most melancholy desert"), lack of fellowship ("no fellow-Christian to whom I might open my spiritual sorrows"), culture-shock ("but one single person that can speak English") poor food ("bread baked in the ashes"), poor housing ("a log room without any floor"), poor bedding ("a little heap of straw laid upon some boards"), and tough physical labour ("hard and difficult; I travel on foot").

But worst of all was the sense of terrible unworthiness and black depression that

frequently came over him: "Still in distress. In the afternoon preached to my people, but was more discouraged with them than before; feared that nothing would ever be done for them to any happy effect. I poured out my soul to God for mercy, but without any relief."

If we don't walk out on His will, God will change our conditions, or us! Nine months later: "I love to live alone in my own little cottage, where I can spend much time in prayer. Oh a barn, stable, hedge or any other place is truly desirable if God is there!"

Returning briefly to civilization, he was ordained a minister and called to two churches, one large and wealthy and the other near his friends. But Brainerd knew where God's burden for him lay. Turning both churches down, he returned to his Indians.

In doing so he knew what he was in for: "To an eye of reason everything that respects the conversion of the heathen is as dark as midnight, and yet I cannot but hope in God for the accomplishment of something glorious among them."

How illogical! How foolish! Throwing away his life on a wild dream when he might have had many years respectable ministry among his own people!

How God viewed such unreasonable recklessness will be seen next week.

Chapter Eight

Does God Answer the Prayers of Imperfect People?

AMERICA, 1745.

THE EFFECTIVE, fervent prayers of a *RIGHTEOUS* man availeth much, says James. But David Brainerd had twin besetting spiritual sins: Self-pity and despair, both symptoms of deeply doubting God's goodness.

Does God answer the fervent prayers of imperfect Christians?

Back among the Indians, Brainerd writes again and again of "praying incessantly, every moment, with sweet fervency," of going to the woods for prayer where "I was in such anguish and pleaded with such earnestness that when I rose from my knees I could scarcely walk straight," and how that "I cared not where or how I lived, or what hardships I went through so that I could gain souls for Christ. While I was asleep I dreamed of these things, and when I woke, the first thing I thought of was this great work of pleading for God against Satan."

Illness struck. Very often he felt too weak to fast and pray. The moment he was better, however, "I set apart this day for prayer and fasting. When interceding I enjoyed freedom from wandering and distracting thoughts." However, three days later, "I could not keep my thoughts fixed on prayer for one minute. My soul was in anguish. I was so overborne by discouragement that I despaired of doing any good."

He began to think seriously of giving up his mission: "God seemed to frown upon their saving conversion by withholding His blessed spirit." Over the next few months his despair deepened: "It was my duty to make some attempts for their conversion to God, though I cannot say I had any hope of success."

Still, he stayed on and prayed on. A break-through had to come. "Enabled to speak with plainness and warmth, the power of God attended the Word, so that persons were brought under great concern for their souls, to shed tears, and wish for Christ to save them."

Now, when he spoke "a few words about the concerns of their souls," former indifference had become "tears, sobs, and groans."

Finally on August 8, 1745, the long prayed for, wept for, suffered for, agonised for

outpouring took place. In the intercessor's own words: "The power of God seemed to descend upon the assembly 'like a mighty rushing wind,' and with astonishing energy bore down all before it. I stood amazed at the influence, which seized the audience almost universally. They were praying and crying for mercy."

Those quickly assured of sins forgiven went to those under conviction "telling them of the goodness of Christ, and the comfort that is to be enjoyed in Him; and thence invited them to come and give up their hearts to Him."

Day after day the meetings went on, tears and cries of conviction gradually becoming the peace of sins forgiven.

Brainerd prayed, preached and laboured on. He now looked out beyond his Indians: "Here am I, Lord, send me; send me to the ends of the earth; send me to the rough, the savage pagans of the wilderness; send me even to death itself, if it be but in thy service and to promote thy Kingdom."

But his years of intercession had taken a terrible toll. Soon he was coughing up blood. Two years after the Revival, he was dead - a testimony to the lengths he was prepared to go to see men won for Christ. A testimony also to the power through prayer of one man, who, though *subject to like passions as we are* proved that *everyone who asks and keeps on asking receives*.

Chapter Nine

What Happens if Christians Stop Praying?

KOREA, 1906.

What happens? Nothing. *Ye have not because ye ask not.* Have prayer meetings begun for Revival, then fizzled out? Yes. For instance, there was a businessman's prayer meeting at North Dutch Church before Lanphier's. But it stopped. And there was no Revival.

As we saw last week, Satan uses the weapon of discouragement to make Christians quit. His argument to Brainerd seemed both righteous and reasonable: "I was ready to look upon myself as a burden to the honourable society that employed me, it being unjust to spend money consecrated to religious uses only to civilise the Indians." Can you hear the accuser's voice behind these words? Satan came so close to winning: "I began to entertain serious thoughts of giving up my mission ... at the conclusion of the present year." What if he had given up before the Revival came? Nothing. Just another missionary failure.

Daniel 10 reveals what happens when we pray. Our request is heard the first time we pray and an angel dispatched with the answer. Though Satanic angels oppose him, the answer will get through, if we continue to pray on. Too often we give up too soon.

In Korea, in 1906, missionaries heard reports of an overseas Revival so began daily noon-to-one Revival prayer meetings. Soon a "a brother proposed that we stop the prayer meeting, saying, 'We have been praying now for a month, and nothing unusual has come of it. We are spending a lot of time. I don't think we are justified. Let us go on with our work as usual, and each pray at home as he finds it convenient.' The proposal seemed plausible."

We can imagine Satan's delight at this point. He had worked hard to have that missionary take a "reasonable" attitude to all this prayer business. Wasn't it a waste of time? What did they have to show for it? Instead they could have been out spreading the gospel. Wasn't that what they had come to Korea for, anyway? After all, prayer could take up those little unfilled leftover moments rather than an important part of the day!

We can imagine all Heaven waiting breathlessly at this moment. Which way would these Christians decide - for what *they* could do, or for what only *God* could do?

"The majority of us decided that instead of discontinuing the prayer meeting we would give more time to prayer, not less. We changed the hour from noon to four o'clock; we were then free to pray till supper time if we wished. We kept to it until, after months of

waiting, the answer came."

And what an answer! That Revival has never really ceased from that day to this, and has been responsible for multiplied thousands of converts.

How seemingly sensible "to go on with our work as usual!" How seemingly fanatical to respond like Brainerd, or foolish, as these missionaries! Yet the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of men.

Will all Christians learn to apply the power of persevering prayer?

Chapter Ten

What Can Keep us Praying?

ARGENTINA, 1949.

WHY DID the seven in the Hebrides, David Brainerd, the missionaries in Korea keep seeking God, month after month, squandering precious time that could have been spent doing so many visibly worthwhile things? What kept them going?

The answer: True humility. That is the key to Revival. Prayer alone is not enough. 2 Chron. 7:14 puts first priority on the attitude with which we go to prayer. *Humble ourselves*, then pray.

If at heart we are fairly content with our lives and what we are accomplishing for God, we will soon stop the time-expensive exercise of seeking God. But if we are truly desperate for God to act, nothing can stop us seeking him. This is true humility: When man gives up his own small schemes and throws everything upon the answer that must come from God alone.

For Edward Miller, American missionary to Argentina, that point came after a disastrous evangelistic campaign. Not one person came to his 10 days of meetings. He decided "there was only one place for me: Home selling cars, or something! Missionaries said: 'You must be patient. We're sowing the seed. One day we'll have a crop.' But I wasn't getting patient. Where was the God I had seen as a child move into cities and sweep through them, where they had to close down the movies, dances and saloons because there was nobody to go to them?" But he reasoned that such Revivals were for special saintly people. "I didn't have anything special. As a preacher's kid you're either an angel or a devil, and I didn't choose to be angel!"

While deciding to quit, he felt challenged by God to fast and pray eight hours a day for a week, for Revival. "Alright, God, I will. Then I'll go home in peace!

"I finished my fast and nothing happened except one thing, and it was frightening. I had laid everything down, now, that I knew. I had no other recourse left. I met God or, suddenly I realised, for me there was no God. I had come down to the final analysis of my life and suddenly I realised I couldn't get out of there in seven days or I'd go out an atheist."

His fast over, he continued to seek God "every day, eight hours, ten hours, sometimes all night." Some disapproved, questioning his sanity, saying that no one should receive a

missionary's salary who spent so much time praying and not in normal missionary activities.

"Doubts, questions and fears marked the passing of the long hours. Where was God?

"Two months passed. Then the enemy brought an almost successful attempt to halt the search. 'Set God a date. Surely by now you know you are mistaken!' A date was set. 'God, if you don't manifest yourself then I will know I am mistaken; I will go out with tracts, returning to the conventional missionary routine.'

"The hour arrived and still God had done nothing. With unutterable bitterness of soul, with tears of frustration and defeat, I filled my pockets with tracts and slowly walked down the hall. God had not answered."

But...

Chapter Eleven

Is Obedience Essential?

ARGENTINA, 1949.

EDWARD MILLER had just quit seeking God for revival. God had not answered after months of prayer and Edward was on his way to distribute tracts, when there was a knock at the door. It was a fellow pastor. Hours passed as Edward listened to his troubles. He had brought his unconverted son. A few words from Edward brought the boy under deep conviction and soon he accepted Christ. As the pastor went on his way rejoicing, an inner voice seemed to say, "You see, son, when I wish, I can bring them, in. Now return to prayer until I tell you it's time to leave."

So back he went to wait on God. Some 10 days later, "suddenly God was there. I met God. He spoke to me. He set me into praying for another six weeks."

Then he felt God told him to call his people to special prayer meetings from 8 pm until midnight. "If they are not prepared to stay the entire four hours, they must not come at all." Could that be from God? Just before, a very sensible hour had been chosen for a prayer meeting and no one had come. Who then, would come to these? Yet when he announced it, three said they would.

The prayer meeting was a disaster. "All three of them kneeled down, buried their heads in their arms, and that's the last I saw of them! We just waited it out." At midnight he asked if God had spoken to them. They all said no, but one lady finally admitted she felt maybe God wanted her to hit the table. "Why don't you do it?" "Oh, no!" Like Naaman before the Jordan pride was preventing simple obedience.

Amazingly, all three came back the next night. "We had another great prayer meeting! Four hours of silence! I asked them the same questions." Again Isobel felt she should hit the table, but it was too stupid, too foolish, she said, and she wouldn't do it.

After two more nights of the usual silence, he called them to the table. Everyone was to walk around the table and hit it. All did - except Isobel! So round and round they marched until finally she reached out and very gently tapped the table.

"Immediately a rushing wind swept into the room from the south-east corner. In that act of obedience, the Spirit of God fell." All three were filled with the Spirit and spoke in tongues. By the end of the week all church members except one had been filled with the Spirit. "In weeks the little church doubled and redoubled its membership. The people

formed into little bands and went out to witness for the Lord. People were saved and healed."

The revival quickly spread to other churches and towns. In one meeting "for hours great crying and groaning ascended. In terrible conviction some wrestled for pardon; others shouted in mighty victory the praise of Zion and the Lamb." Thus the Revival spread through Argentina.

So much had depended on such a tiny act of obedience! No wonder Edwin Miller was now determined "to walk the road of implicit obedience to what I felt was the word of the Lord."

Chapter Twelve

But Aren't Revivals Sovereign Acts of God?

CONGO, 1936.

"YOUNG MAN, sit down! When God chooses to convert the heathen, he will do it without your help or mine!" We smile now at Dr. Ryland's retort to future missionary, William Carey.

Yet many of us are practically "Dr. Rylands" over Revival. We know the importance of Revival and wish we had it. But often we don't DO much until a sovereign God uses his omnipotence to cause us to seek him. And in Revival history God's sovereignty is most evident in the way he amazingly arranges circumstances by which ordinary Christians are suddenly caused to desperately pray.

The great financial crash of 1857 in America, young Brainerd's expulsion from Yale, the total failure of an evangelistic campaign in Argentina seem at first glance to have nothing but calamity in common. With hindsight now, we greatly bless God for them. Because of them people responded like King Jehoshaphat: *We have no might ... neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee!* And to that response, God responded with Revival.

Of the 1936 Congo Revival, Eva Stuart Watt wrote in a few brief words what could be the outline of so many Revivals: "Desperate circumstances were allowed of God to force desperate praying. They prayed till they could not be denied. Then Revival came. The whole countryside knew it. God had visited."

For the missionaries in the Congo, God's sovereign action came with the Government-enforced closing of their mission station. They were to hand it over to natives who were not spiritually able to run it. They could have despaired and sulkily done nothing, blaming God for letting it happen. They could have been sensible and hand-picked leaders, committing all their time to an intensive leadership training programme. Or they could have kept on the normal programme and hoped for the best. But these missionaries saw spirituality - relationship with God - as the real need of the Babudus. The only alternative to the work crumbling was "a Holy Ghost Revival." They threw all upon God.

"In their desperate need they rose each morning at any early hour to seek the face of God. Their prayers were the cries of broken hearts. 'Lord, give us a Revival at any price,' one of them was overheard to pray - 'any price to death itself; but I can't live any longer without it.'

"All ordinary work was given up for the main business of intercession. God showed us also that we were just to yield, never taking a single step without His voice!" said one.

At the meeting "all the messages were on one theme, all the praying for the one goal - a Holy Ghost Revival." The two missionaries, Lily and Ivy Roberts, "spent all day alone with God, apart from the meetings. Ordinary meals were forgotten being substituted by a cup of milk and a biscuit at odd intervals."

What a magnificent, whole-hearted response to God's challenge! Revivals are a beautiful balance between God's sovereignty and our responsibility. God is always the initiator. He is always challenging us. But what is our response? And what was the outcome of the total response of these missionaries?

Chapter Thirteen

Can we Pray Too Much?

CONGO, 1936.

FANATICISM! That must be avoided at all cost! Today Christians are so sane, sensible and submitted, the world hardly knows we are here. "All ordinary work was given up for the main business of intercession." Surely that is no way to work for God, even if your mission station is about to close! "Lord, give us a Revival at any price - any price to death itself; but I can't live any longer without it!" Extreme and "super-spiritual" as that may seem, to these Congo missionaries there was no alternative but Revival.

Often they had taught the importance of prayer and Bible reading - of a close relationship with God. The natives hadn't changed. Until now. Now they saw the missionaries reading their Bibles and praying all day. They began to do the same.

Often missionaries had heard the Babudu pray to filled with the Holy Spirit. "They knew all about it mentally. The quickening came only when they got down to desperate prayer about it."

The Bible "began to bristle with new life and power. The sale of Scriptures went up about twelve times the usual rate."

A message on Isaiah 58 saw the final breakthrough. In preparing it, Lily said: "The Lord brought me personally very low through those words *If thou wilt draw out thy soul to the hungry*; that is, if I would feel their hunger ... We wept before him for hours. He alone could meet all their need. There was real heartbreak in the preparation of their messages. Tears there were certainly; but there was a heart-agony that was deeper than tears."

The meeting started at 6:30 pm and went on to near midnight. "As soon as it was left open for prayer, one after another cried to God with tears to break the bands of wickedness that were binding them." The Holy Spirit met them. "A whole host of men and women left that meeting and went to their huts clothed with the Son of God and great joy filled the camp. The Lord fulfilled every word of his promises."

Soon the people became deeply burdened for the lost. They prayed "as if they could not be denied. This resulted in conversions at almost every meeting; sometimes twenty, thirty or forty. Those who had been prayed for would turn up almost against their wills, hating themselves for coming, yet coming, because they could not help coming, and returning converted. The news went round, so that many were afraid to come and afraid to be

mentioned in prayer."

So they went to the lost: "Christians formed themselves into teams of about 12 and went out evangelizing. Some who had been naturally timid and retiring became flaming messengers of the Cross." People came from long distances wanting "the overflowing joy." "The joy of the Lord was the hallmark of this Revival, and came from a continual consciousness of the nearness of Christ."

Finally, the day came for the missionaries to leave. When their truck drove off "there were tears of love, not of despair," as re-echoing through the forest from hundreds of voices came the words: "Hallelujah! God reigns!"

These missionaries were right! They had thrown their all upon God and He couldn't let them down.

How desperately this sick world needs a plague of "fanaticism" like theirs!

Chapter Fourteen

What is the Key to Revival?

WALES, INDIA, KOREA, CHINA, 1905-8.

GOD SOVEREIGNLY uses both the "stick" and the "carrot" to stir up prayer for Revival! In Argentina, Edward Miller had the "stick" of a terrible failure, but also the "carrot" of a remembered boyhood Revival.

The Lord often challenges Christians through news of Revivals elsewhere. If we respond to God's sovereign initiative a wonderful chain reaction can follow.

For a year a Khasi church in Assam, India had held a weekly prayer meeting for Revival. Nothing had happened. But on hearing news of the Welsh Revival there was an immediate heart-felt hunger. Many set themselves to pray each night for Revival. By February, 1905, some were "praying and weeping in the houses the whole time." Prayer meetings mushroomed.

The first outpouring of the Spirit came in March, when, at the end of a service, Christians spontaneously began to pray aloud. The theme was: "O God, pour out your Spirit upon us NOW! While you are blessing the people of Wales so richly, don't let us go away empty-handed!" The congregation began to weep, many praying, some crying out for mercy, some fainted, others were praising God.

This movement spread across the mission field because the leaders were willing to follow the Spirit's lead, even though screams for pardon, public confession of sin, prostrations, dancing, jumping, and wild excitement would have been previously repugnant to them.

In one part of this field the church grew from 32 in 1904 to 103,000 fifty years later.

When news of the Khasi Revival reached Korea, the missionaries in Pyongyang decided to pray every day for Revival. As seen in a previous study, though tempted to quit, they kept praying. God gave them an additional incentive to prayer. Through government action the mission was suddenly at odds with the Korean people. A "carrot" in front and a "stick" behind! "They had no recourse but to prayer," writes Rene Monod.

The prayer meetings grew until there were over 1000 attending. At the end of a special service the leader called for public prayer. Unexpectedly many, then all prayed aloud simultaneously. Soon one Christian after another rose, confessed sin and fell to the floor weeping for forgiveness. A great tide of conviction spread over the gathering and even

missionaries and church leaders felt bound to confess publicly. Though fearing for the people's sanity, the leaders dared not interrupt for fear of quenching the Holy Spirit. "Every sin a man can commit was publicly confessed that first night."

Those present soon felt the call to spread the Revival throughout Korea. Raising the money themselves, teams went into places unreached by missionaries with the Gospel.

When missionary leader Jonathan Goforth spoke of the Korean Revival throughout China, missionaries got together and resolved that they would pray each day at four for Revival "until a movement similar to that in Korea has swept over China."

Before long, China was indeed being swept in by a Revival greater, if anything, than its parent in Korea.

From the facts in this study, what is the key to Revival?

Chapter Fifteen

Is there a Key to Revival?

U.S, ENGLAND, IRELAND, SCOTLAND, WALES, 1857-59; VIETNAM, 1971.

IN THE LAST chapter we read of Christians who, hearing of Revival elsewhere, set themselves to pray for their own Revival. But for every group that determined to seek God for Revival there were hundreds of thousands who, reading the news with interest, did nothing. Those who asked and kept on asking received. Those who asked not, had not!

The attitude God blessed was that of Charles Spurgeon on hearing news of the American Revival: "The Spirit of God is saving multitudes now in the United States. Since God is no respecter of persons (he doesn't show favouritism) we will pray until he sends similar showers of blessing upon our land." All over ENGLAND Revival prayer meetings multiplied as many took the same attitude. Within two years 400,000 converts had been added to the English churches.

IN IRELAND, reports of the American Revival reached James McQuilkin who had been reading the testimony of George Müller, the great man of prayer. "Why may we not have such a blessed work here, seeing that God did such things for Mr. Müller simply in answer to prayer?" With three friends he turned their ordinary prayer meeting into a Revival prayer meeting. Many more Revival prayer meetings were formed as news of the American Revival spread. Within two years 100,000 converts had been added to the Irish churches.

In SCOTLAND "the news of the Revival in the United States provoked much interest and not a few united prayer meetings, as in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen." The United Presbyterian Church alone had over 40,000 attending its prayer meetings. In the Revival that followed "at least 300,000 converts were won in Scotland."

News of the American Revival stirred WALES. An assembly resolved, "Let us apply in diligent prayer to seek it." Many churches did. Returning to Wales after campaigns in America, Welsh evangelist Humphrey Jones wanted Revival for Wales. After attending Jones' meetings, minister David Morgan agreed: "We can do no mischief by holding prayer meetings, though there should be no more than MAN in it all." Jones replied: "You do that and I will guarantee that GOD will be with you very soon. He was! 100,000 came to Christ in the Revival that followed.

Can a study of PAST Revivals, lead, through prayer, to Revival? Certainly. In

VIETNAM in 1971, a missionary lecturer at a Bible School began a series of Revival lectures. After teaching the Scriptural basis for Revival, "I assigned each student a research project on the various Revivals for which I had material. These included the 1970 Asbury Seminary Revival and John Sung's 1938 Vietnam Revivals. Stirred, the students began a Revival prayer meeting each morning at 5 a.m.

The final break came when a student gave a thorough report on the INDONESIAN Revival of 1965. He appealed for prayer for Revival right then. "For about ten minutes the praying was normal, but then at noon a student began to weep and pray and to confess specific sins. Suddenly the room was alive with spontaneous, simultaneous prayer. The presence of the Lord had fallen."

Unknown to them, at the same time an all-night cottage prayer meeting was going on in London. That night the country prayed for was Vietnam.

Is prayer the real key to Revival?

Chapter Sixteen

Is Prayer the Real Key?

IN THE 1930s Edwin Orr travelled the world stirring up prayer for Revival. Years later he wrote: "It has often been said that the first requirement of Revival is prayer. Yet prayer for an awakening has been going on for many years without result. There is a prior requirement." Can you detect it in these examples of successful pre-Revival praying:

EVAN ROBERTS (1904): "If I had not prayed I would have burst. I fell on my knees with my arms over the seat in front of me, my face was bathed in perspiration and the tears flowed in streams, so that I thought it must be blood gushing forth ... The fearful bending of the judgment day came to my mind, and I was filled with compassion for those who must bend at the judgment, and I wept."

HEBRIDES 1949: "Suddenly a cry pierced the silence; a young man burdened in agony for his fellow men was pouring out his desire in prayer. He was so overcome that he fell into a trance." The two sisters: "We struggled through the hours of the night, refusing to take a denial."

FINNEY (1825): "I found myself so borne down with the weight of immortal souls, that I was constrained to pray without ceasing. Some of my experiences alarmed me. I would say to God he had made me a promise to answer prayer and I could not and would not be denied."

"Brother Finney, I think my wife will die. She is so exercised in her mind that she cannot rest day or night, but is given up entirely to prayer. She has been all morning in her room, groaning and struggling in prayer."

FRANK BARTLEMAN (1905): "My life at this time was literally swallowed up in prayer. I was praying day and night. We prayed for a spirit of Revival upon Pasadena until the burden became wellnigh unbearable. I cried like a woman in birth pangs. The neighbours hearing me groan in prayer thought I must be sick and inquired. But it was only soul burden."

HUMPHREY JONES (1858): "... fervent prayer in secret, several times a day, wrestling with God; each time as though it were the last."

WHITEFIELD (c 1730): "Sometimes whole nights were spent in prayer."

HEBRIDES (1949): "... spending three nights in prayer that God would visit their parish."

BRAINERD (1743): "God enabled me to agonise in prayer that I was quite wet with sweat. I gasped for multitudes of souls. The Lord visited me marvellously in prayer; I think my soul never was in such agony before."

EDWARD MILLER (1949): "Weeping, waiting, meditating, searching the Word, walking, kneeling, standing and again prostrate on the floor."

CHINA (1908): "Her heart seemed agonised. It was scarcely possible to catch her words through her sobs. 'O Father, is it a sacrifice that you are waiting for? If it is, then let me be the victim. I am willing that you should blot my name right out of the Book of Life, if through my sacrifice the hearts of the people might be opened to Thee.'"

There is something that precedes and, indeed, supersedes words: *Groanings that cannot be uttered*, says the Bible, "a heart agony," Lily Roberts called it, "a desperate sense of need," said Duncan Campbell, "I could not and would not be denied," said Charles Finney.

"Every outpouring of the Spirit is preceded by earnest, agonising intercession." writes Dr James Stewart. "Deep spiritual awakenings begin with desperate people. God only answers prayers of desperate Christians."

The real key to Revival is DESPERATION. If we can live without Revival, we won't get it. But when we can't live any longer without it, Revival will come.

Chapter Seventeen

Why Should we Get Desperate in Prayer?

CHRISTIANS shouldn't need to ask! Here are the terrible facts: Some 5.1 percent of the World's 4.8 billion people are committed Christians. That means 94.9 percent of everyone alive at this moment, by not being born again, according to Christ *cannot enter the Kingdom of God*. The 23.7 percent of the world's population who are nominal Christians are no better off, according to Jesus: *Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father*.

What then is their eternal destiny? *But the fearful and unbelieving ... and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire...*

Why are we Christians so unconcerned when 94 out of every 100 people on this Earth are destined for the fires of hell?

"It's the crime of the century," wrote missionary leader, Fred Jarvis. "The murder by neglect of the world's millions; but it is not the murder of lives - much worse - it is the murder of men's souls. We missionaries find it hard to understand how people at home can sit carefree, contented and comfortable, while millions without Christ sink into an endless, hopeless, Christ-less eternity, not because they couldn't be saved, but because we don't care much. How often we, on the battle lines of the world, giving in sweat and tears, fasting, sacrificing, praying, weep over the callous indifference of unmoved, unstirred, unsundered, unconcerned, unresponsive souls in the soft, stable home country. It's the crime of the century and it's caused by your guilt, your neglect, and your failure.

"Resist the charge if you will. Get mad if you must. It is better to have some emotion than none. You will be conscience-stricken in Heaven if you aren't soul-stricken now.

"While the world is growing more heathen at the rate of millions annually, while more are being born each day than reborn, while at least half the world's population remains unreached, while God's Book remains undelivered, we must tremble at the terrible truth that we are hardly attempting the task.

"The logic is inexorable; the guilt is clear and piling up against us. The selfish withholding of Christ from the nations is nothing less than the grossest form of cruelty and wrong. You still have time to join us in sowing and weeping, praying and repenting - if you want to. But to ask for Revival and blessing without repenting of this monstrous sin is an insult.

"God give us men and women - brave, heroic, self-sacrificing, with a new sense of their solemn, neglected task - who will put everything aside and run to the rescue. If we can't go in person, we can still prevail in prayer."

Why are we Christians still unmoved at the plight of the unsaved? Even this atheist had a greater sense of reality - and compassion: "Did I believe, as millions say they do, that the knowledge and practice of religion in this life influences destiny in another, religion would mean to me everything. I would cast away earthly enjoyments as dross, earthly cares as follies, and earthly thoughts and feelings as vanity. I should labour in religion's cause alone. I would esteem one soul gained for heaven worth a lifetime's suffering."

Finney wrote: "Look into hell and hear them groan; then look into heaven and see the saints there and ask yourself, 'Is it possible that I should prevail with God to elevate the sinner there?' Look at the world, look at your children and your neighbours, and see their condition while they remain in sin. Do this, and you will soon have as much of the spirit of prayer as your body can sustain."

Chapter Eighteen

Are There Any Other Keys?

NEW ZEALAND, 1902, 1936.

TO REVIVAL historian Edwin Orr, the prior requirement to prayer is for Christians "to search their individual and national consciences and confess their shortcomings." And public confession of sin has created the breakthrough in very many Revivals. For instance, in the Vietnam Revival praying was normal until one student "began to weep and pray and confess specific sins." The Holy Spirit fell.

New Zealand has had many touches of Revival. Here are two where public confession of sin played a prominent part:

At the 1936 Ngaruawahia Easter Convention "the meetings proceeded in orderly fashion through the Friday," but that night "several of the men who had been revived in soul before camp gathered for prayer." Edwin Orr, the main speaker, visited them and "it was not long before before other tents were being visited" and "a meeting was in full swing in the big marquee. A real breaking down commenced among the young men. Tears flowed, sins were confessed and reconciliations made." This meeting was closed at 1:30 a.m, the camp leader insisting the people needed sleep. Did this quench a wider Revival? Even so, the next night "many unconverted were won to Christ."

In *The Story of the Reason Why*, Robert Laidlaw writes of the Torrey-Alexander Crusade in Dunedin in 1902: "Never before nor since has any city in New Zealand been visited with such a spiritual Revival." However, at first, though the meetings were packed, very few responded to the appeal. Dr Torrey said: "Christian friends, there is something wrong. I fear you have been counting on the great blessing we had in Melbourne to guarantee similar results here. But we need a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit in every city we visit. I call upon you to a half-night of prayer." So many came to this prayer meeting, hundreds couldn't get in.

As prayer began, one man rose and said: "I believe God is just as anxious and willing to bless us here in Dunedin as in Melbourne. The fault lies within us, not with God. I used to be a keen soul-winner, but for some years now I have not spoken to a single man. Confessing my sins now, I pledge God to start afresh on Monday morning."

Another followed: "For many years I had daily reading of God's word and prayer with my family, but gave it up some years ago. I too, confessing my sins will start afresh tomorrow morning." Other men and women publicly confessed their sins, then prayer

went on till midnight.

"In the weeks that followed the nearest thing to a real spiritual Revival I have known swept through the town. A great many shops closed voluntarily for the midday meeting so that their employees could attend." The city council stopped trams running on Sunday afternoon so that drivers and conductors could go. "If one boarded the trams after 6 p.m. the whole carfull would start singing hymns." By the time the mission was over, more than 1000 people had made a commitment to Christ - more than two per cent of Dunedin's population.

"Confess your sins to each other," says James, making not a suggestion but a Scriptural command. When this happens Revival can follow.

Chapter Nineteen

How Crucial is Leadership?

CHINA, 1908.

THOUGH NOT impossible, it is extremely difficult for Revival to come if Christian leaders are either hostile, reluctant, or even passive.

In the Chinese Revivals of 1908, wrote Jonathan Goforth, the key to Revival was confession of sin. Here is an eye witness account of one meeting: "The place was crowded, the singing vibrant. The people knelt for prayer, silent at first, but soon voices blended into a great wave of united supplication till it was almost a roar, and died down to an undertone of weeping. The floor was wet with pools of tears. Then above the sobbing a man began to make public confession. The awe and terror and pity of these confessions! Men, forced to their feet and in spite of their struggles, impelled to lay bare their hearts. Hour after hour it went on."

During the Revival in another town "while the people were praying and a profound spiritual atmosphere seemed to fill the church," the ex-pastor, dismissed for illegal business deals, came in. From that moment "all sense of God's presence seemed to depart. The very devil seemed to take control of the meeting." When he went out, "immediately men and women everywhere began to break down under conviction of sin and the sense of God's nearness returned. I quote this," writes Goforth, "as a striking instance of the power of hindrance of an unrepentant leader."

In another town, Goforth's mission began disastrously. For several days, when he opened the meeting for prayer, no one prayed. All, including pastor, elders and deacons remained passively silent. Mrs Goforth even threatened to go home: "This is getting on my nerves!" Then news came in that the leaders had stopped being passive and had started an extra prayer meeting, concerned at last that Revival had not broken out. "From then on, our one difficulty was to get the meetings closed." Even after three or four hours people were "pleading with me to give them a chance to confess." Those who publicly confessed sin included the pastor, elders and deacons who "all besought God to forgive them for the coldness and laxity of their Christian service."

Though invited to take a mission at a large mission centre, Goforth found the missionaries were just not interested. Even the leader had the welfare of his dogs and pigeons more at heart than that God should pour out His Spirit in saving power upon his people. When the mission ended, though some Chinese had been blessed, it certainly was

not Revival. Later, Goforth found that a report had gone around the mission field that he had "lost his power." "In this way the missionaries of that station succeeded in clearing themselves. But sometimes I wonder if it ever occurred to them that they might in any way be to blame."

There was a worse mission. Missionaries, widely-known for their quarrelling, refused to confess or forgive. "when I left, the devil remained in full control. No missionary lives there now."

Contrast this leadership: "O God," cried a preacher, "when I came I determined that, come what would, I would keep my sins covered up. If I confessed my sins, it would bring disgrace upon myself, my family and my church. But I can't keep it hidden any longer." And following this honest confession "he continued to pray with glowing intensity until the whole audience was swept as by fire."

Right leadership can produce Revival!

Chapter Twenty

What Leaders Should Know

How do you deal with public confession of sin? What guidelines should you give?

Jonathan Goforth comments: "Secret sin, sin known only to the individual and God," should be confessed to God alone. However, "we have known of many ministers and Church leaders of one sort or another for whom secret acknowledgement of sin has not been sufficient. Their agonised public confessions have shown that there was only one way of relief." For sins against others: "It is vain for us to pray. Let us first make amends to the injured one. Revival would break out in most churches if this were done." Public sins - sins known to others "can only be swept away by public confession. It is the price we must pay."

Revival breaks out and someone begins doing something obviously not of God - what do you do?

It is very evident that public correction can quench a Revival. Wisdom is needed. Goforth again: "Although I disliked intensely to interfere, I was afraid that, if I left him alone, he would soon have imitators. I went down and gave him a sharp slap on the side, saying, 'Get up and pray decently.' He stopped on the instant and shamefacedly slunk to his seat." However, Frank Bartleman wrote: "The Spirit allows little human interference in the meetings, generally passing mistakes by unnoticed, or moving them out of the way himself. Things that ordinarily we would feel must be corrected are often passed over, and a worse calamity averted thereby. Draw attention to them (and) the saints stop seeking. The Spirit is hindered from working."

How do you counsel those under conviction?

May our experience be as Charles Finney's: "I have found myself surrounded with anxious sinners, some overcome with emotion and lying on the floor, some applying camphor to prevent fainting, others shrieking out as if they were going to hell." In his *Revival Lectures* (a book all should have) Finney says these strong feelings prove they have not yet submitted to God. The moment they truly give their lives to Christ, turning from their sin and putting all their trust in him, peace will flood in. It is because sinners are inwardly fighting God that he, in mercy, keeps up the emotional pressure in hopes that they will yet repent and be saved. Christians can do the devil's work by sympathising with and comforting them. No doubt millions and millions are now in hell because there were those around that gave them false comfort."

Instead, "see what points the Spirit of God is pressing upon his conscience and press the same things. If their thoughts are directed to Christ at the moment, the first exercise will be faith; if sin, repentance (which is the love of God and forsaking of sin); if their future, the service of God; if divine government, submission. Whatever point between God and the sinner, when the sinner YIELDS that, he is converted."

What about criticism?

Ignore it. Never retaliate. In words so needed in the Welsh Revival, Finney writes: "When the old school write letters in the newspapers against Revivals or Revival men, and the new school write letters back again in an angry and contentious spirit, Revivals will cease. Let them KEEP about their work and neither talk about the opposition, nor preach about it, nor rush into print about it. None of the slander will stop the Revival."

However, when Church leaders criticise a work of God, it grieves the Holy Spirit away.

Chapter Twenty One

Does God Intend Us to Have Revival?

"God's Revival may be had when we will and where we will," wrote Jonathan Goforth.

What! Christians dictate when and where Revival will take place? Impossible! What about God's sovereignty?

And many Christians reject the Bible's clear teaching by hiding behind a twisted view of the sovereignty of God: *"If God chooses to send Revival then we will pray." If God, then us.* But God says: *"If my people ... then I will"* (2 Chron 7:14). *God is waiting for us to act! While we wait for God to send Revival, God waits for us to take His Word seriously and fulfil the conditions by which He promises to send Revival!* God in His sovereignty has already acted by making rock-solid promises in His Word. *If we fulfil His conditions then He will keep His Word.*

What Jonathan Goforth says is what the Bible says. **If Christians humble themselves, and pray, and turn from their wicked ways then God will hear their prayer, forgive their sin, and heal their land** (their district, town, city, country). When will this happen? When **we** decide to fulfil God's conditions! Wherever **we** carry out those conditions.

Could we fulfil those four conditions yet still see our land unhealed? Only if God tells lies! As we know that God doesn't lie we must also see that Revival is inevitable *if* we fulfil his conditions. God doesn't break promises!

Asked "What is the secret of Revival?" Evan Roberts replied: "There is no secret: Ask and ye shall receive." Charles Finney said that Revivals were simply the "right use of the constituted means." God had constituted Bible promises that if fulfilled would result in Revival. To quote yet a fourth person used by God to lead Revival, Duncan Campbell: "Obey the law of the Spirit and the Spirit of God will obey you." In other words, fulfil any Bible promise's conditions, and God will give what He promised. Campbell quotes one who prayed: "'You made a promise, and I want to remind You that we believe You are a covenant-keeping God. Your honour is at stake.'"

Yes, *God's honour is at stake! If we* do what He asks us, *then He* can be relied upon to keep His Word.

And what if we don't fulfil the conditions? Then Revival can't happen. God is still bound

by His Word.

Edwin Orr: "the non-fulfilment of the conditions would mean: 'I will not hear from heaven; I will not forgive their sin I will not heal their land ... Spiritual awakening is far away; sin is rampant inside and outside the Church.'"

This means **Christian, the health, the history, the fate of your country is in your (praying) hands!** God has put the responsibility for the spiritual health of your nation in the hands of *His people, who are called by His Name (2 Chron 7:14)*. Think of it! Governments, Prime Ministers, don't have the power - you do! By your relationship with the One who has all power in Heaven and Earth, who can turn the mightiest king into a grass-eating maniac (Dan 4), and by the fact that He has committed Himself to you in writing with promises that cannot be broken, **you, by your action or inaction, by your fulfilment or non-fulfilment of His conditions, decide the fate of your country.**

Think of Wales before the Revival, full of little prayer groups of "twos and threes" until "300 extra prayer groups were formed...until Wales became like one great prayer meeting" "pleading for Revival." Ordinary Christians using the extraordinary weapon of prayer to change their nation's history. **Why not us also?**

The question is not *does God intend us to have Revival*, but *do we?*

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