

Re-Digging The Wells of Revival

I. WHAT IS REVIVAL

- A. Recently the need for a general awakening in the West, particularly in Great Britain, the Pacific and North America, has become critical. Yet with so much past material available for study and so much obvious desire across the nation for revival, there is an appalling lack of understanding on the subject. **Winkie Pratney makes this observation:** For instance, if you get a chance to speak to a larger group of Christians, try this little survey:
- B. **How many of you know we need a revival?** Almost everyone raises his hand here. The knowledge of this fact hardly takes scholarship or devotion. **How many of you want a revival?** Again, a majority opinion in church groups. According to George Gallup, Jr., in the eighties, around 80 percent of the country wanted a revival. Even the lost know we need one! **How many of you know what a revival is?** The number drops off alarmingly now. Here is something we all want and we all need, but we don't have a clue as to what it is!
- C. **How many of you have ever experienced a real revival?** And here, very few, if any, ever respond. "And there arose another generation after them: which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel" (Judges 2:10 KJV). Bevan Jones once said, "Never let a generation grow up without that knowledge of Divine things which may contain the germ of national revival in years to come."

II. OLD TESTAMENT DEFINITIONS OF REVIVAL

- A. The closest biblical word to "revival" is "revive" or "reviving," from the Hebrew word *chayah* (khaw-yaw)--a primitive root meaning to live (figurative or literal). This word (Strong's Concordance, 2421) is also translated: ***To make alive, nourish up, preserve alive, quicken, recover, repair, restore, or be whole, keep alive, preserve, save, save alive, and make whole.*** The first four times, this word is translated "revived", all deal with four increasing levels of death:

(1) **Jacob:** Old Man with a Lost Dream. "And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived" (Genesis 45:27).

(2) **Samson:** Young Man with a Near-death Vision. "But God crave an hollow place that [was] in the jaw, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived: wherefore he called the name thereof Enhakkore, which [is] in Lehi unto this day" (Judges 15:19).

(3) **Elijah:** Restoration of a Woman's Newly-dead Child. "And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived" (I Kings 17:22).

(4) Elisha's Bones: A Group of Servants Burying a Corpse. "And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band [of men]; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet" (II Kings 13:21).

- B. **All these groups of people are listed as the recipients of revival in the prophecy of Joel 2:28-29:** "Your sons and daughters (children) shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit" (KJV).
- C. ***The prophet Habakkuk uses this Hebrew word in his heartbroken cry,*** "Oh Lord, revive thy work; in the midst of the years. . .remember mercy!" (Habakkuk 3:2 KJV). Yet revival is not magic. As the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament states: "In contrast to the ancient near East where men sought to link themselves with forces of life ... by magical recitations... by appropriate magical ritual, in the Old Testament life is decided by a right relationship to the righteous standards of the Word of God" (page 280). ***That is why Charles Finney could succinctly define revival as "nothing more or less than a new beginning of obedience to the Word of God."***
- D. **Revival is not arbitrary.** It is not mystical. It is, as far as men are concerned, a heartfelt return to love and faith in the living and written Word. **Dr. Wilbur Smith notes seven "outstanding revivals" in the Old Testament in addition to the one under Jonah.** They are the one in Jacob's household (Genesis 35:1-15); under Asa (II Chronicles 15:1-15); Jehoshaphat (II Kings 11, 12; II Chronicles 23, 24); Hezekiah (II Kings 18:4-7; II Chronicles 29:31); and Josiah (II Kings 22, 23; II Chronicles 34,35). There are two revivals after the Exile under Zerubbabel (Ezra 5,6), in which Haggai and Zechariah play a prominent part, and, finally, a revival in Nehemiah's time in which Ezra was the outstanding figure (Nehemiah 9; also 12:44-47).
- E. **Smith summarizes nine outstanding characteristics of these major revivals:**
1. They occurred in a day of deep moral darkness and national depression.
 2. They began in the heart of one consecrated servant of God who became the energizing power behind them; the agent used of God to quicken and lead the nation back to faith in and obedience to Him.
 3. Each revival rested on the Word of God, and most were the result of preaching and proclaiming God's law with power.
 4. All resulted in a return to the worship of Jehovah.
 5. Each witnessed the destruction of idols where they existed.
 6. In each revival there was a recorded separation from sin.
 7. In every revival they returned to offering blood sacrifices.
 8. Almost all recorded revivals show a restoration of great joy and gladness.
 9. Each revival was followed by a period of great national prosperity (Fischer, Reviving Revivals, pp. 63-64).

III. NEW TESTAMENT DEFINITIONS OF REVIVAL

- A. The Greek equivalent of the Old Testament word for "revive" is only used five times in the New Testament. Why is it not more of a New Testament word? ***For the simple reason that New Testament Christianity is revival.*** This Greek word *anazao* is not only used for the restoration of the prodigal son (Luke 15:24, 32), the resurrection of Christ (Romans 14:9), and the physical resurrection of the dead in the last days (Revelation 20:5), but also for the deadly effect of sin (Romans 7:9). Evil as well as righteousness can have a revival; there can be an unholy uprising as well as a holy outpouring.
- C. **Another equivalent New Testament word is used by Paul in II Timothy 1:6** "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee...." ***This is the Greek word *anazopureo*, (Strong's Concordance, 329) to "fan into flame, to revive."*** Some prefer the term "spiritual awakening" to "revival," like the promise fulfilled in Acts 2:17. This may refer to individual quickening, but revival, as we shall use and define it, both includes and transcends this.
- C. **Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines the word "revive" as a:**
1. **"Return, recall or recovery to life from death or apparent death,** as the revival of a drowned person." Revival brings back to life something once living that is either now dead or seemingly dead.
 2. **"Return or recall to activity from a state of languor, as the revival of spirits."** Revival brings a holy shock to apathy and carelessness. Isaiah calls for God to show His power: "Oh that you would rend the heavens! That You would come down! That the mountains might shake at Your presence. . . . to make Your name known to Your adversaries, that the nations may tremble at your Presence! When You did awesome things for which we did not look, You came down" (Isaiah. 64:1-3; 63:10-15 NKJV).
 3. **"Recall, return or recovery from a state of neglect, oblivion, obscurity or depression,** as the revival of letters or learning." Revival restores truth and recalls to obedience that which has been forgotten. Invariably as either its cause or result, it is associated with reformation of doctrine and preaching.
 4. **"Renewed and more active attention to religion; an awakening of men to their spiritual concerns."** Revival accomplishes what our best spiritual efforts cannot. "Revival is necessary to counteract spiritual decline and to create spiritual momentum... in revival, the church dormant becomes the church militant."
 5. **"To renew in the mind or memory, to recall; to recover from a state of neglect or depression."**
 6. **"To comfort; to quicken; to refresh with joy or hope"** ("Wilt Thou not Thyself revive us again?" Psalm 85:6). Revival means to reanimate, renew, awaken, re-energize, restore, to make the church whole and happy in God again.
- D. Revival is more than big meetings, religious excitement, a quickening of the saints, being filled with the Holy Spirit, or great harvests of souls. One or all of these may exist without revival.

IV. HISTORICAL EXAMPLES OF REVIVAL

- A. **Vance Havner defined revival as "a work of God's Spirit among His own people ... what we call revival is simply New Testament Christianity, the saints getting back to normal"** (Hearts Afire, pp. 103-104).
- B. **Some think that revival is only a supernatural show of unusual events, terrifying manifestations in special times and seasons.** Others view it as a steady, continuous work of God from a genuine, Spirit-anointed Church functioning as it is supposed to. Both models are valid, but often the first is needed to produce a genuine example of the second.
- C. **Martyn Lloyd-Jones said,** "The essence of revival is that the Holy Spirit comes down upon a number of people together; upon a whole church, a number of churches, districts or perhaps a whole country. It is a visitation or outpouring of the Holy Spirit -God has come down among them" (Revival, p. 100).
- D. ***True revival is marked by powerful and often widespread outpourings of the Spirit. Many times preaching has to cease because the hearers are prostrate or because the voice of the preacher is drowned by cries for mercy. "The Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the Word" (Acts 10:44). Jonathan Edward's son-in-law, David Brainerd, who prayed in the snow until it melted around him and was stained by his blood as he coughed away his life with T.B., prevailed in prayer for revival among the American Indians. Before he died he described in his journal how it finally began in 1745:***
- The power of God seemed to descend on the assembly like a rushing mighty wind and with an astonishing energy bore all down before it. I stood amazed at the influence that seized the audience almost universally and could compare it to nothing more aptly than the irresistible force of a mighty torrent... Almost all persons of all ages were bowed down with concern together and scarce one was able to withstand the shock of the astonishing operation* (Edwards, The Life and Diary of David Brainerd, pp. 142-143).
- E. **Brian Edward's states: "Someone has described revival as 'the top blowing off' and that is very true.** But the top does not blow off before the bottom has fallen out" (Revival. A People Saturated With God, p. 130).
- F. Arthur Wallis, in his classic study *In the Day of Thy Power*, points out the word is determined by its usage. It had historical consistency of meaning up until recent years, where (especially in America) it began to take on a lesser, more limited sense. Nevertheless, he says: "Numerous writings on the subject preserved confirm that revival is Divine intervention in the normal course of spiritual things. ***It is God revealing Himself to man in awful holiness and irresistible power. It is such a manifest working of God that human personalities are overshadowed and human programs abandoned. It is man retiring into the background because God has taken the field. It is the Lord... working in extraordinary power on saint and sinner"*** (p. 20).

- G. J. Edwin Orr, a prolific writer and eminent authority of both scholarship and experience in the subject, defined a spiritual awakening as "a movement of the Holy Spirit bringing about a revival of New Testament Christianity in the Church of Christ and its related community. It may significantly change an individual, a group of believers, a congregation, a city, a country or even eventually the world but it accomplishes the reviving of the Church, the awakening of the masses and the movement of uninstructed peoples towards the Christian faith; the revived church by many or few is moved to engage in evangelism, teaching and social action" (The Eager Feet, p. vii).
- H. *A.W. Tozer defined revival as that which "changes the moral climate of a community."* Revival is essentially a manifestation of God; it has a stamp of deity on it that even the unregenerate and uninitiated are quick to recognize. *Duncan Campbell described it as a "community saturated with God."* Revival must of necessity make an impact on the community, and this is one means by which we may distinguish it from the more usual operations of the Holy Spirit" (Wallis, In the Day of Thy Power, p. 23).
- I. John Dawson points out, however, that the "community" of the twentieth century is different from that of previous ages; modern communities are "linked vocational villages of communication," not necessarily communities linked geographically. A revival in the eighteenth century affected your neighbor who probably did live next door; a revival that affects your neighbor in the twentieth century may touch "neighbors" who live hundreds or even thousands of miles away and are linked not by geographic location but by common vocation and communication.
- J. *Revival is what the church first experiences; evangelism is what she then engages in. Revival is periodic; evangelism is continuous. Revival cannot last; evangelism must not stop.* Do we want a revival? Do we really? James Burns, writing in *Revival, Their Laws and Leaders*, said in 1909:

To the church, a revival means humiliation, a bitter knowledge of unworthiness and an open and humiliating confession of sin on the part of her ministers and people. It is not the easy and glorious thing that many think it to be, who imagine it fills pews and reinstates the church in power and authority.
- K. *It comes to scorch before it heals; it comes to condemn ministers and people for their unfaithful witness, for their selfish living, for their neglect of the cross, and to call them to daily renunciation, to an evangelical poverty and to a deep and daily consecration.* That is why a revival has ever been unpopular with large numbers within the church. Because it says nothing to them of power such as they have learned to love, or of ease, or of success; it accuses them of sin, it tells them they are dead, it calls them to awake, to renounce the world and to follow Christ.
- L. We can see in the studies of four of the exceptional men of the first and second Great Awakenings some of the characteristics of the lives of revivalists. We can look on these two centuries as illustrations of the New Testament model of revival, but how can we summarize the dominant features of such a New Testament pattern?

- M. Charles Finney may have said it best: "The antecedents, accompaniments and results of revivals are always substantially the same as in the case of Pentecost." Albert Barnes said: "That day which shall convince the great body of professing Christians of the reality and desirability of revivals will constitute a new era in the history of religion and will precede manifestations of power like that of Pentecost." ***Arthur Wallis, keying off the Scriptural record of the second chapter of Acts, and quoting extensively from that "Prince of Revivalists" Charles Finney, gave an outstanding outline of a true revival's characteristics, here excerpted and partly amplified.***

V. ALLOWING GOD TO MOVE:

- A. **Divine Sovereignty:** Implicit in the phrase, "When the day of Pentecost was fully come" (Acts 2:1), is the fact that every genuine revival is clearly stamped with the hallmark of God's sovereignty. Consider the timing, the significance of the day, the nations all divinely ordered there.
- B. **God times every outpouring, a kairos related to a thousand other plans He alone can co-ordinate.** Finney, speaking of the 1859 revival, mentions this sovereignty: "When I was in Boston ... a gentleman stated he had come from Nebraska and had found prayer meetings established throughout all the vast extent of country over which he had traveled. Think of that-a vast region of 2,000 miles, along which the hands of the people of God were lifted up to God in prayer! From North to South till you come within the slave territory, a great and mighty prayer went up to God that He would come down and take the people in hand and convert souls; and He heard and everybody stood astounded." ***Likewise in the Welsh Revival: "The outpouring of the Spirit came dramatically with precision in the second week in November 1904 on the same day-both in the North and the South."*** Zechariah 10:1 says, "Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain...."

VI. SPIRITUAL PREPARATION:

- A. "All together in one place... with one accord continued steadfast in prayer" (Acts 1:14). The two essential conditions of revival are unity and prayer. Revival has two foundation stones: "the preparedness of man and the sovereignty of God" (Walks, In the Day of Thy Power, p. 60). The Word and history teach us that an attitude of indifference and fatalism must be abandoned before revival can be expected.
- B. If the blessing comes, then we may be sure someone has met the conditions and paid the price. Yet we cannot have revival as if God is at our beck and call. "Thy people [offer themselves] willingly in the day of Thy power" (Psalm 110:3 KJV). (Also see Ezekiel 36:33-37; Mark 6:5,6; Deuteronomy 11:13,16-17).
- C. **Martyn Lloyd-Jones said: "Our essential trouble is that we are content with a very superficial and preliminary knowledge of God, His being, His cause... we spend our lives in busy activism . . . instead of realizing our own failure, (that) we are not attracting anybody to Christ and that**

they probably see nothing in us that makes them desire to come to Him... The inevitable and constant preliminary to revival has always been a thirst for God, a thirst, a living thirst for a knowledge of the living God and a longing and a burning desire to see Him acting, manifesting Himself and His power, rising and scattering His enemies... *The thirst for God and the longing for the exhibition of His glory are the essential preliminaries to revival* (Martyn Lloyd-Jones: Revival, pp. 90-91).

VII. EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

- A. **Suddenness. "And suddenly there came"** (Acts 2:2). *Revival is a Divine attack on society. In revival, God's work may be sudden and unexpected; often even believers are caught unaware, while fear and astonishment grip unbelievers' hearts:* "There was nothing, humanly speaking, to account for what happened. Quite suddenly, upon one and another came an overwhelming sense of the reality and awfulness of His Presence and of eternal things. Life, death and eternity seemed suddenly laid bare" (Joseph Kemp of Charlotte Chapel in Edinburgh 1905).
- B. *Finney said: "They would wake up all of a sudden, like a man just rubbing his eyes open and running around the room pushing things over and wondering where all this excitement came from.* But though few knew it, you may be sure there had been somebody on the watchtower constant in prayer until the blessing came" (Walks, In the Day of Thy Power, p. 62).
- C. **Revival is God springing a convicting surprise on His creation:** "I have declared the former things from the beginning, and they went forth out of My mouth and I shewed them; I did them suddenly and they came to pass... and new things do I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them" (Isaiah 48:3; 42:9 KJV). The effect of the sudden working of the Spirit in revival is very striking in the conviction of sinners. Often, without any preparatory concern or even thought for spiritual things, a sinner will be suddenly seized with an overwhelming conviction of sin.
- D. Although the people in Broughshane, Ulster, of 1859 were expecting revival, says Paisley, they were still "taken by surprise, so sudden, so powerful and extraordinary were the manifestations of the Spirit's Presence... about one thousand people were suddenly, sensibly and powerfully impressed and awakened."
- E. The current-day horror movie shock tactic of sudden confrontation with the unexpected is a perverted, cheap copy of a holy original—the awesome fear of the Lord. Suddenness is a divine shock tactic to remind men of their spiritual vulnerability. "But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly they shall be wounded ... and all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider his doing" (Psalm 64:7,9 KJV).
- F. John Shearer, in Old Time Revivals, writes of a farmer returning from market in Ulster at Ballymena in 1859: "His mind wholly intent upon the day's bargain, he pauses, takes out some money and begins to count it. Suddenly, an awful presence envelopes him. In a moment his only thought is that he is a sinner standing on the brink of hell. His silver is scattered, and he falls on the dust of the highway crying out for mercy."

VIII. WHOLLY OF GOD

- A. **Spontaneous Working.** *"There came from heaven" (Acts 2:2). Revival is the result of divine, not human impulse. It cannot be worked up.* Fulfilled conditions do not provide the motive force of revival. Revival, like salvation and healing, is an act of divine mercy. Like salvation, too, its grounds are God's grace though its conditions are repentance and the prayer of faith. Acts 3:19 says: "...seasons of refreshing ... from the presence of the Lord."
- "A movement bears this mark of spontaneity when men cannot account for what has taken place in terms of personalities, organizations, meetings, preachings, or any other consecrated activity; and when the work continues unabated without any human control" (Authur Wallis, *In the Day of Thy Power*, p.63). As soon as a movement becomes controlled or organized, it has ceased to be spontaneous-it is no longer a revival.
- B. The course of the 1904 revival has been outlined thus: "God began to work; then the Devil began to work in opposition; then God began to work all the harder; then man began to work and the revival came to an end" (Walks, *In the Day of Thy Power*, p. 65).
- C. **God-Consciousness. The spirit of revival is the consciousness of God.** Men were "pricked in their heart" (Acts 2:37). "Fear came on every soul" (Acts 2:43). "The effects of such manifestations of God are twofold; men are made aware both of His power and His holiness. This manifestation... was intensely personal" (Walks, *In the Day of Thy Power*, p. 66). It is God moving in power and holiness toward you; God coming for you and calling your name!
- D. Here is an outstanding feature of revival; it is easy to see why it results in overwhelming conviction, both among the saved and the lost whenever there is unjudged sin. At such times man is conscious that God is there; He seems to deal with him alone, until he is oblivious of all but his own soul in the agonizing grip of a holy God. If these facts are borne in mind, the extraordinary effects of past revivals will not seem incredible.

IX. A DIVINE TERROR

- A. **The ruthless logic of Jonathan Edward's famous discourse "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" could not have produced the effect it did had not God been in the midst of the congregation.** "When they went into the meeting house the appearance of the assembly was thoughtless and vain; the people scarcely conducted themselves with common decency," *recorded Trumbull, who goes on to describe the effects of the sermon: "The assembly appeared bowed with an awful conviction of their sin and danger. There was such a breathing of distress and weeping that the preacher was obliged to speak to the people and desire silence that he might be heard" (Walks, In the Day of Thy Power, p. 67). Conant says, "Many of the hearers were seen unconsciously holding themselves up against the pillars and the sides of the pews as though they already felt themselves sliding into the pit" (Walks, In the Day of Thy Power, p. 67).*

- B. **Finney at the village schoolhouse near Antwerp, New York, describes such conviction: "An awful solemnity seemed to settle upon the people; the congregation began to fall from their seats in every direction and cry for mercy. If I had a sword in each hand, I could not have cut them down as fast as they fell. I was obliged to stop preaching."** "Did you ever witness two hundred sinners with one accord in one place weeping?" asked Asa Nettleton. "The scene is beyond description. . . I felt as though I was standing on the verge of the eternal world; while the floor under my feet was shaken by the trembling of anxious souls in view of a judgment to come" (Thornton, God Sent Revival, pp. 91-92).

X. A CHAIN REACTION

- A. **Sometimes the manifested presence of God creates a divine "radiation zone"; all coming within that expanding spiral of tangible power are brought under awesome conviction.** During the 1859 revival, no town in Ulster was more deeply stirred than Coleraine. A schoolboy in class became so troubled about his soul that the schoolmaster sent him home. An older boy, a Christian, went with him and before they had gone far, led him to Christ. Returning at once to school, this new convert testified to his teacher: "Oh, I am so happy! I have the Lord Jesus in my heart." These artless words had an astonishing effect; boy after boy rose and silently left the room. Going outside, the teacher found these boys all on their knees, ranged along the wall of the playground. Very soon their silent prayer became a bitter cry; it was heard by another class inside and pierced their hearts. They fell on their knees, and their cry for mercy was heard in turn by a girls' class above. In a few moments, everyone in the whole school was on their knees! Neighbors and passers-by came flocking in, and all as they crossed the threshold came under the same convicting power. Every room was filled with men, women, and children seeking God (Orr, The Second Evangelical Awakening, p. 44).
- B. During the same 1859 revival in America, ships entered a definite zone of heavenly influence as they drew near port. Ship after ship arrived with the same talk of sudden conviction and conversion. A captain and an entire crew of thirty men found Christ at sea and arrived at port rejoicing. This overwhelming sense of God bringing deep conviction of sin is perhaps the outstanding feature of true revival. Its manifestation is not always the same; to cleansed hearts, it is heaven; to convicted hearts, it is hell.

XI. A NEED FOR THE SPIRIT

- A. **Anointed Vessels. "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:4) There is a fresh emphasis on the person and work of the Holy Spirit. "With those stirrings of the Spirit that are the precursor of revival, there is born in many such hearts a wholesome dissatisfaction with that vague and mystic view of being filled with the Spirit that leaves one in the dark as to what it is, how it comes and whether or not one has received it"** (Walks, In the Day of Thy Power, p. 69). Finney again says, "Many times great numbers of persons in a community will be clothed with this power, when the very atmosphere of the whole place seems to be charged with the life of God. Strangers coming into it and passing through the place will be instantly smitten with conviction of sin and in many instances converted to Christ" (Walks, In the Day of Thy Power, p. 71).

- B. **Supernatural Manifestation.** *"They began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4 NAS).* The most ordinary conversion of a sinner is a supernatural work, but it is not manifestly so. Revival features conversions that are, in the eyes of men, manifestly supernatural and that can be accounted for in no other way. It produces in the hearts and minds of observers the reaction described here: "They were all amazed and were in doubt, saying one to another, 'What meaneth this?'" (Acts 2:12 KJV).
- C. **Revival always seems to bring a return to apostolic Christianity. Never is the church nearer to the spirit and power of the first century than in times of revival.** In times of spiritual blessing, the gifts are more especially manifest. Spurgeon noted "If you read the story of the Reformation, or the later story . . . of Whitefield and Wesley, you are struck with the singular spirit that went with the preachers. The world said they were mad; the caricaturists drew them as being fanatical beyond all endurance; but there it was, their zeal was their power. Of course the world scoffed at that of which it was afraid. The world fears enthusiasm, the sacred enthusiasm kindled by the thought of the ruin of men and by the desire to pluck the firebrands from the flame, the enthusiasm which believes in the Holy Ghost, which believes God is still present with His church to do wonders" (Spurgeon, Sermons On Revival, p. 15).

"Dislike of enthusiasm," said D.M. Lloyd-Jones, "is to quench the Spirit. Those ... familiar with the history of the Church, and in particular the history of revivals, will know this charge of enthusiasm is one always brought against people most active in a period of revival" (Lloyd-Jones, Revival, p. 72).

XII. UNDER THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT

- A. **Crying out and falling down under the awesome presence of the Holy Spirit was common in the Wesley-Whitefield revivals.** Lady Huntingdon wrote to Whitefield, advising him not to remove the people as it had been done, as it seemed to bring a damper on the meeting. "You are making a mistake. Don't be wiser than God. Let them cry; it will do a great deal more good than your preaching" (Walks, In the Day of Thy Power, p. 75).
- B. This seems a natural reaction of people in Scripture who had a divine "close encounter of the fourth kind"-the invading sense of God's convicting power. "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead" (Rev. 1: 17 KJV). Wesley recorded in his journals on July, 1739:
- C. **He (Whitefield) had opportunity of informing himself better; no sooner had he begun. . . to invite all sinners to believe in Christ than four persons sunk down close to him, almost in the same moment. One of them lay without sense or motion.** A second trembled exceedingly. The third had strong convulsions all over his body, but made no noise unless by groans. The fourth, equally convulsed, called upon God with strong cries and tears. From this time, I trust, we shall allow God to carry on His own work in the way that pleases Him.

XIII. A TERRIFYING BLESSING

- A. Sometimes this sense of identification with the hurt of God is awesome and terrifying. An observer of the Welsh Revival, David Matthews, said of Evan Roberts:
- B. *Mr. Roberts had an experience which I believe was never repeated. . . Prayer was the keynote of his tireless life. No action taken or engagement entered into was done without definitely committing the matter to God in prayer. His soul appeared to be saturated through and through with the spirit of prayer... He asked God to give him a taste of Gethsemane.*

... I am a living witness of the incident, that the prayer was answered in a terrifying way. Falling on the floor of the pulpit he moaned like one mortally wounded, while his tears flowed incessantly. His fine physical frame shook under crushing soul-anguish. No one was allowed to touch him... The majority of us were petrified with fear in the presence of such uncontrollable grief. What did it mean? ... When Evan Roberts stood before the congregation again, his face seemed transfigured. It was patent to all he had passed through an experience that was extremely costly. No one who witnessed that scene would vote for a repetition. One wonders whether such a hallowed scene should be chronicled (Matthews, I Saw The Welsh Revival. p. 41).

XIV. REVIVAL AND THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER

1. Daniel Nash – Charles Finney’s Assistant:

- A. In the battlefields of the spiritual world the true heroes are often the unseen by the world. These are the ones often touched by heaven, who breathe the rarified air of the secret place of the Most High. Such a one was Father Nash a partner to the much better known evangelist Charles Finney during the Second Great Awakening.
- B. **Daniel Nash** started as a preacher in upstate New York. His record there is singularly unremarkable. At age 48 he decided to give himself totally to prayer for Finney's meetings. Nash would come quietly into towns three or four weeks in advance of a meeting, gather three or four other like minded Christians with him and in a rented room start praying and bringing heaven near. It is reported that in one town all he could find was a dank, dark cellar, but that place was soon illumined with holy light as he made it the place of intercession. In another place as Finney relates:
- C. When I got to town to start a revival a lady contacted me who ran a boarding house. She said, "Brother Finney, do you know a Father Nash? He and two other men have been at my boarding house for the last three days, but they haven't eaten a bite of food. I opened the door and peeped in at them because I could hear them groaning, and I saw them down on their faces. They have been this way for three days, lying prostrate on the floor and groaning. I thought something awful must have happened to them. I was afraid to go in and I didn't know what to do. Would you please come see about them?" "No it isn't necessary," I replied. "They just have a spirit of travail in prayer."

- D. When the public meetings started Father Nash would not usually attend but kept praying in his closet for the convicting power of the Holy Spirit to fall on the crowd and melt their hearts. When opposition arose Father Nash would pray all the harder.
- E. Once a group of young men promised to break up the meetings. Nash was praying nearby and came out of the shadows to announce: "Now mark me, young men! God will break your ranks in less than one week, either by converting some of you, or by sending some of you to hell. He will do this certainly as the Lord is my God!"
- F. Finney thought his friend had lost his sense. But by next Tuesday morning the leader of the group suddenly showed up, confessed his sinful attitude before Finney and accepted Christ. "What shall I do Mr. Finney?" he asked. Finney told him to go back to his companions and tell them how Christ had changed his life. Before that week was out nearly all of the original group had come to Christ.
- G. In 1826 both Finney and Nash were burnt in effigy. The enemy recognized the threat of Father Nash's prayers to their ways of wickedness.
- H. Shortly before Nash died in 1831 he wrote: I am now convinced, it is my duty and privilege, and the duty of every other Christian, to pray for as much of the Holy Spirit as came down on the day of Pentecost, and a great deal more....My body is in pain, but I am happy in my God....I have only just begun to understand what Jesus meant when he said, "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

It is interesting to note that within four months of Father Nash's death Finney left the evangelistic field to take a Church in New York City. His prayer partner in taking the enemy by storm was gone. He whose prayers and been the strength of the campaigns was now in his eternal home and the loss of power was felt.

XV. REVIVAL AND ANOINTED INTERCESSION AND PREACHING

- A. Anointed intercession is as much a supernatural gift as anointed preaching. Jesus promised that the Spirit would supernaturally convict the people of sin. Anointed preaching that supernaturally pierces hearts is even more powerful than raising the dead. It is very rare in the church today.
- ⁸ *He (Holy Spirit) will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and judgment (Jn. 16:8)*
- B. Throughout history, when the spirit of conviction has been fully manifest, the Word took hold of the hearts of people until they were powerfully converted as seen in Acts 2 and Acts 19.
- ³⁷ *When they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter..."What shall we do?"*
³⁸ *Peter said, "Repent...41 that day about three thousand souls were added to them. 42 They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine...43 Fear came on every soul (Acts 2:37-43)*
- ¹⁰ *All who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks...20 So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed. (Acts 19:10, 20)*

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- C. I have been a student of the power of conviction through history. Supernatural conviction can be released many ways such as through preaching, singing, writing, dramas, media productions, etc.
- D. My favorite preachers in history are **David Brainerd** (1718–1747); **Jonathan Edwards** (1703–1758); **George Whitefield** (1714-1770) and **John Wesley** (1703-1791). They all lived during the First Great Awakening in America (1730-1755). Also **Charles Finney** (1792-1875) who preached during the Second Great Awakening (1790-1840) and **John G. Lake** (1870-1935). The east coast and England were set ablaze by apostolic preaching during the First Great Awakening.
- E. I read the biographies of these men over and over. Their stories gave me a vision in my early twenties to be used by God to bring unbelievers to salvation with supernatural conviction. This vision has helped me to continue through the years with fasting and prayer.
- F. I read David Brainerd’s biography near daily for almost 5 years. I noticed a cause-effect dynamic in the grace of God in Brainerd’s ministry. When God granted him supernatural grace in prayer with groaning (Zech. 12:10; Rom. 8:26), then power on his preaching followed. This was related each time to evangelism. He wrote of lacking power in his preaching when his prayer life lacked power. He embraced more ardent fasting, prayer and connection to God until power came back on his prayer times. I set my vision to have supernatural intercession unto anointed preaching.
- G. Brainerd lay in the snow for 3-4 hours under the supernatural burden of travail. He sweat so much that the snow melted around him as he coughed up blood because of his tuberculosis. The next day, when he preached to unbelievers, the power of God fell on them. Even when He preached through a drunken interpreter, the power of God fell on the Native Americans. Many of his converts were deeply devoted because of getting saved with such power.
- H. He died of tuberculosis when he was only 29 years old. Jonathan Edwards described young David Brainerd as having piety, purity and abandonment to God second to no man in that day.
- I. Jonathan Edwards preached the famous sermon, *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*. He read it by candlelight in the evening meetings, yet people wailed under the conviction of sin.
- J. George Whitfield and John Wesley were operating in the same power of conviction in England. George Whitfield was only 22 years old when he spoke regularly to crowds well over ten thousand people. As the power of God descended on them, they cried out for mercy.
- K. Charles Finney was a lawyer who baptized with fire in his preaching. In 1857, he preached in New York City and saw 500,000 converts in eight weeks or 60,000 new converts a week.
- L. We need a vision for apostolic preaching. There is a measure of authority inherent in being born again. It is our mandate to raise up young men and women with vision for apostolic preaching.