



Articles and Sermons :: The Sound of Marching

The Sound of Marching - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2012/5/13 14:07

The following excerpts are taken from chapter 14 of Arthur Wallis' book *In the Day of Thy Power*, they present some of the evidences of impending revival;

A Spirit of Lawlessness and Deadness

It is strange but true that the prevalence of lawlessness in the world and of deadness in the church is often an indication of impending revival. Said the Psalmist, "It is time for the Lord to work, for they have made void Thy law" (Ps. 119:126). "The wave of spiritual progress recedes, but even in receding it is gathering in power and volume to return, and to rush further in. . .; when the night is at its darkest the dawn is on the way" (James Burns).

They make a big mistake who always expect to see revival heralded by a decreasing of wickedness or by a marked and widespread improvement in the spiritual state of the church.

The very reverse is often the case. Those who look for such improvement may shake their heads at a time when God is about to pour out His Spirit, and declare that there is no hope of a revival. Said Finney, "The prevalence of wickedness is no evidence at all that there is not going to be a revival. That is often God's time to work."

In an address on the eighteenth century revival Dr. P. V. Jenness said: "Every student of history knows that the dawn of the eighteenth century was a time of material prosperity in England. The colonies were pouring their new wealth into the mother country. It was a day of luxury, dishonesty, speculation, and extravagance, and was followed by a severe panic when the South Sea bubble collapsed. It was a time of increased intellectual activity and expression.

The freedom of worship secured through the Reformation had degenerated into licence to defy all authority, human and divine.

Hobbs and Locke made infidelity popular. Gibbon and Hume devoted their talents to discrediting the church. Bolingbroke and Shaftesbury (Note - not to be confused with the famous Christian philanthropist of the nineteenth century) among statesmen helped to create an atmosphere of spiritual chill. The church seemed helpless. The Reformation was a spent force. The ministry was largely corrupt. Blackstone, author of the *Commentaries on Law* writes as a young man that he sought in vain for a sound gospel preacher in London.

The Sabbath was a day of general carousal. Public blasphemy was common. Current literature and common conversation was lascivious and corrupt. God was openly defied. The outlook was dark indeed. Here and there a few godly men and women were crying unto God for reformation and revival. Then the Lord 'made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, that the ends of the earth might see His salvation.' Three men were born in one year, 1703, John Wesley in England, Gilbert Tennent in Ireland, and Jonathan Edwards in Massachusetts. Eleven years later George Whitefield was born.

These four men were the human agents of the great spiritual awakening that broke, like a storm, over England and America just two hundred years ago."

This extraordinary fact, that the river of blessing is often flowing at lowest level prior to a time of awakening, could be confirmed from history again and again. Jonathan Edwards in his *Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in New England* (1742) wrote: "Who that saw the state of things in New England a few years ago, the state that it was settled in, and the way that we had been so long going on in, would have thought that in so short a time there would be such a change?" And again, "How dead a time it was everywhere before this work began."

Shortly after the 1904 Revival broke out, the correspondent of the *Liverpool Daily Post* wrote in that paper: "If I had been asked a month ago whether a revival was probable in Wales, I should have answered, 'No'. It seemed to me that the 'higher criticism' had wrecked the ordinary machinery of a revival, and that, until theology had been reshaped in accordance with its conclusions, nothing would happen to disturb the prevailing apathy" (from *Rent Heavens* by R. B. Jones).

Prevailing deadness among believers and abounding lawlessness in the world are not an indication that revival is impossible, but that it is imperative. The hopelessness of the situation was to the Psalmist one of the strongest arguments in favor of divine intervention, for he saw therein a challenge that an omnipotent God could not ignore. To him the very need of the hour cried out, "It is time for the Lord to work."

Re: The Sound of Marching, on: 2012/5/13 16:54

Amen. It is interesting, my husband and I were speaking of this this morning.

If revival is to come, it is we who need it, and a merciful God who bestows it. Our desire for it is something only God could have provoked in our hearts and it is He who declares to us "ask!" we can not run ahead of Him, and do what only He can do. We can, as John did, declare repentance. And wait on Him.

Are we saying to Him, I am glad that I am not as other men? Or are we asking, send revival, Lord and unearth the hidden things in my heart, allow no sense of my significance for asking, but place me amount the masses of needy children, and graciously forgive and revive us together.

Re: , on: 2012/5/13 17:05

<http://sermon3a.tscnyc.ws/2012/mp3g/20120513S1.mp3>

Re: , on: 2012/5/13 19:35

Good quote' thanks again!

Shortly after the 1904 Revival broke out, the correspondent of the Liverpool Daily Post wrote in that paper: "If I had been asked a month ago whether a revival was probable in Wales, I should have answered, 'No'. It seemed to me that the 'higher criticism' had wrecked the ordinary machinery of a revival, and that, until theology had been reshaped in accordance with its conclusions, nothing would happen to disturb the prevailing apathy" (from *Rent Heavens* by R. B. Jones).

Re: The Sound of Marching - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2012/5/13 20:50

A Spirit of Dissatisfaction

This second factor may be widespread among peoples of all classes, or it may be confined to a few of the people of God who are being quietly prepared for what God is about to do. James Burns writes that the period preceding a widespread awakening "is characterized by a profound sense of dissatisfaction awaking in many hearts. A period of gloom sets in, a weariness and exhaustion invade the heart, the pleasures of the world no longer satisfy, they set up a deep distaste and satiety. Sick in soul, men turn with a sigh to God; dimly they wake to the consciousness that, in bartering heavenly for earthly joys, they have encountered irremediable loss; that in the decay of spiritual vision the world has lost its soul of loveliness.

Slowly this aching grows, the heart of man begins to cry out for God, for spiritual certainties, for fresh visions. From a faint desire this multiplies as it widens, until it becomes a vast human need; until in its urgency it seems to beat with violence at the very gates of Heaven" (*Revivals, their Laws and Leaders*).

Though this widespread dissatisfaction is almost always there in measure, it cannot always be discerned until the movement is under way. But a sure mark of impending revival is where this spirit of dissatisfaction becomes apparent among believers. It may not be widespread, but here and there among different groups there is a growing thirst for a fuller, richer, and deeper experience of God than they have known.

This spiritual restlessness, this holy dissatisfaction that is wrought in their hearts by God causes them to reach out with a great longing for that life more abundant that they know is theirs in Christ. Here are the birth pangs of that new thing that God is about to do, the travail out of which revival is born. "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and streams upon the dry ground"(Isa. 44:3). "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6). Thank God for every thirsty, dissatisfied heart in a day when coldness, apathy, and complacency abound.

This profound dissatisfaction with which these believers view themselves and the work of God around them is nothing less than a thirst for God. "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God"(Ps. 42:1). There is a thirst for the holiness of God, for the power of God, for the manifestation of God, for the truth of God.

There is a thirst for the holiness of God. A longing fills the soul for victory over sin and deliverance from the corruptions of the carnal man; for hearts of flesh instead of hearts of stone; to be wholly sanctified and conformed to the image of God's Son; to walk, like Enoch, in unbroken fellowship with God, and to be well pleasing in His sight.

There is a thirst also for the power of God in personal experience. Believers begin to view with growing concern the ineffectiveness of their own efforts to serve the Lord. They are conscious of the reproach of the ungodly that God is not amongst them, even as was David, when he confessed in the same Psalm. "My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?" (Ps. 42:3). The more they examine the pages of the New Testament, and the lives of those whom God has used, the more convinced they become that they too ought to be clothed with power from on high, filled with the Spirit, and speak the word with boldness.

There is a thirst for the manifestation of God, to see His power and glory displayed before the eyes of men. It is this that David expresses in another Psalm, "My soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee, in a dry and weary land, where no water is. . . to see Thy power and Thy glory" (Ps. 63:1). That their beloved, yet rejected Lord should be vindicated before the eyes of men becomes the passion of their souls. As in that first recorded prayer meeting of the early church, they long that God would stretch forth His hand to heal and that signs and wonders may be done in the name of Jesus, so that He may be glorified and the hearts of the people may be opened to Him.

Lord, we are few, but Thou art near;
Nor short Thine arm, nor deaf Thine ear:
Oh, rend the heavens, come quickly down,
And make a thousand hearts Thine own.
- COWPER.

There is a thirst too for the truth of God. Believers begin to crave for a deeper understanding of God's word; they search for it as for hid treasures, and rejoice in it as one that finds great spoil. There is often a healthy unwillingness to accept without question all that is taught and accepted as orthodox. A spirit of inquiry and discernment necessitates a fresh examination of what Scripture has to say. There is often a purging of the floor of truth, which scatters the chaff of human tradition and interpretation. James Burns points out one of the curious facts connected with the human mind - "its power to see only that which corresponds with current opinion, and of failing to see, not by conscious rejection, but by a strange incapacity, all that opposes it. Every age is imprisoned in its own conceptions, and has to be set free by the master minds which refuse to be enslaved." Such are often raised up preceding or during times of revival, when hearts have been unconsciously made ready to receive fresh light from God.

Re: - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2012/5/14 22:56

A Spirit of Sin consciousness

Like the spirit of dissatisfaction, this sensitivity to sin will be in evidence here and there among the people of God, where hearts are being made ready. It will be seen that most of these signs of impending blessing anticipate in the hearts of the few that which is to characterize all who will be affected when revival comes. Just as a cloud "as small as a man's hand" betokened to Elijah on Carmel the sound of abundance of rain, and was to him the earnest of "the heaven black with clouds" (1 Kings 18:44, 45), so does this growing sensitiveness to sin in the hearts of the few indicate to the watchful eye that the day is at hand when God shall be revealed in holiness, and men shall repent in dust and ashes. The God who dwells in "the high and holy place" has promised "to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isa. 57:15). A spirit of contrition among the saints is therefore a strong indication that revival is coming.

This conviction of the conscience regarding personal sin is usually manifested by confession.

Christians are not easily brought to the point where they are prepared to obey the exhortation, "Confess therefore your sins one to another" (Jas. 5:16), to apologize and ask forgiveness, and to make restitution. Where this happens, and there is a deep desire on the part of the saints to walk in the light with God, and in love one with another, it is evident that the Spirit of God is working, and hearts are being prepared for the outpouring of the Spirit. "A revival of religion may be expected when Christians begin to confess their sins one to another. . . when there is an ingenuous breaking down, and a pouring out of the heart in making confession of their sins, the floodgates will soon burst open, and salvation will flow over the place" (Finney).

Re: - posted by lindi208 (), on: 2012/5/15 1:50

This thread is a blessing full of encouragement :) !

Re: - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2012/5/15 19:54

A Spirit of Tender Concern

Where this is found in the hearts of believers it is a strong indication that revival is at hand.

"Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for it is time to have pity upon her, yea, the set time is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and have pity upon her dust" (Ps.102:13, 14).

When the harsh, unfeeling criticism with which believers often speak of the state of the church or the sin of the world gives place to a deep solicitude and tender concern which manifests the strong compassion of the Son of God, then we may be sure that the hour of revival is near. When believers feel as though they could cry out with the weeping prophet, "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" (Jer. 9:1), then it is evident that the fountains of the great deep are being broken up, that the windows of heaven may be opened (Gen. 7:11). When the saints mourn before the Lord, as did Hannah, Nehemiah, and Daniel, the answer of heaven will be as near to them as it was to those of a bygone age when they wept in the secret place.

Re: - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2012/5/16 19:20

A Spirit of Expectancy

This is a further mark of coming revival, when found in the hearts of God's people. To find groups of Christians in different places, meeting independently of one another, with no denominational or other connection, and yet possessing the same spirit of desire and expectancy throbbing in their hearts, is presumptive evidence that it has been created by the sovereign Spirit, that out of the fulness of His loving heart God may abundantly satisfy it. The measure of expectancy may vary greatly; with some it is little more than a vague presentiment that something, they hardly know what, is going to happen; with others it is a clear and definite expectation of the outpouring of the Spirit. But however dim or definite it may be, it is the beginning of that spirit of faith that rises like the waters within the lock gates, until it has reached the required level, and the ship of revival moves forward on its divinely appointed way.

News of stirrings of the Spirit or even outpourings of the Spirit in other parts is a means God commonly uses to foster this spirit of expectancy. Every evidence of God's willingness to bless in other places should be to every longing soul a most hopeful sign of impending revival. "If God has done it there, may He not do it here also?" - this is the simple but reasonable ground of optimism. There is nothing more calculated to quicken desire and expectancy in prepared hearts than the news of what God has done or is doing elsewhere.

When there comes news of striking conversions, of local movements of the Spirit, of touches of revival - if we may call them such - here and there, longing hearts will beat with quickened expectancy, and opened ears will hear God saying through these unusual events, "I will work, and who shall reverse it?" (Isa. 43:13, R.V. margin).

Re: - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2012/5/17 19:56

A Spirit of Unity

When this is manifest among various believers it is a strong indication that revival is at hand.

"With one accord" marked the preparation of those early believers for the first outpouring of the Spirit, and so it has been in every subsequent outpouring. In spite of the prayer of the Son of God, "That they all may be one," sectarianism, exclusivism, and an attitude of spiritual superiority have everywhere split the people of God. Churches and groups act as though they and they alone were the rightful recipients of divine blessing.

The Lord's servants outside their circles, although they may be signally used of God, have evidently nothing to impart to them. They only desire ministry from the man who, in the realm of theology, will dot all their "i"s, cross all their "t"s, and subscribe to all their shibboleths. They have, it would seem, the monopoly of truth and spiritual illumination. They feel that God ought to favour them in a special way; and when, as is often the case, He blesses elsewhere, they are at a loss to know why, and all too often try to disparage or belittle what God has done.

When, however, such barriers are thrown down, and believers come together in true humility and on the common ground of their love for Christ and desire for souls; when denominational pride and jealousy are slain, and there is a willingness, without compromising personal convictions, to learn in meekness one of another, to receive light and impart light, then there is evidence indeed that revival is coming. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! . . . For there the Lord commanded the blessing" (Ps. 133).

Re: - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2012/5/18 20:11

A Spirit of Prayer

Finally, the infallible sign of impending revival is a spirit of prayer for it. When you see this in evidence among the people of God, you may be sure "it is time to seek the Lord, till He come and rain righteousness upon you" (Hos. 10:12). It has been well said that "Satan laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray". Therefore we may be confident that where a true spirit of prayer for revival exists, it does not proceed from the Devil. Such a spirit of prayer leads to humbling before God; to confession of sin, coldness, and unbelief; and to the consecration of oneself to the Lord: therefore we may be certain it has not issued from the flesh. Therefore it has come from God; and if God has created and maintained in the hearts of His children that spirit of prayer for revival, however few and feeble they may be, there can be but one logical explanation - He intends to send revival.

This spirit of prayer need not be widespread before it constitutes a sign of impending blessing.

It may be but a small group of earnest souls; it may be but a single intercessor who has caught the vision of what God is about to do, and refuses to let Him go until He does it. Such was a case recorded by Finney: "There was a woman in New Jersey who was very positive there was going to be another revival. She wanted to have conference meetings appointed. But the minister and elders saw nothing to encourage it, and would do nothing. She saw they were blind, and so she went forward, and got a carpenter to make seats for her, for she said she would have meetings in her own house.

There was certainly going to be a revival. She had scarcely opened her doors for meetings, before the Spirit of God came down with great power. And these sleepy church members found themselves surrounded all at once with convicted sinners. And they could only say, 'Surely the Lord was in this place, and we knew it not.' The reason why such persons understand the indication of God's will is not because of the superior wisdom that is in them, but because the Spirit of God leads them to see the signs of the times. . . . that converging of providences to a single point, which produces in them a confident expectation of a certain result."