



Revivals And Church History :: When God Stepped Down From Heaven

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When God Stepped Down From Heaven

By Rev. Owen Murphy

THIS IS REVIVAL!

When men in the streets are afraid to open their mouths and utter godless words lest the judgments of God should fall; when sinners, overawed by the Presence of God tremble in the streets and cry for mercy; when, without special meetings and sensational advertising, the Holy Ghost sweeps across cities and towns in Supernatural Power and holds men in the grip of terrifying Conviction; when "every shop becomes a pulpit, every heart an altar, every home a sanctuary" and people walk softly before God—This is Revival!

Today the word Revival has largely lost its real meaning. Our present generation, never having witnessed the mighty movings of God in nation-wide spiritual awakening such as has taken place in past generations, has little conception of the magnitude of such a "visitation."

REVIVAL is confused with EVANGELISM!

Heaven-sent revival is not religious entertainment where crowds gather to hear outstanding preachers and musical programs; neither is it the result of sensational advertising—In a God-sent revival you don't spend money on advertising; people come because Revival is there! Revival is an "awareness of God" that grips the whole community, and the roadside, the tavern, as well as the church, becomes the place where men find Christ. Here is the vast difference between our modern evangelistic campaigns and true revival. In the former, hundreds may be brought to a knowledge of Christ, and churches experience seasons of blessings but as far as the community is concerned little impact is made; the taverns, dance halls, and movies are still crowded, and godlessness marches on. In revival, the Spirit of God like a cleansing flame sweeps through the community. Divine conviction grips people everywhere; the strongholds of the devil tremble and many close their doors, while multitudes turn to Christ!

THE AMERICAN REVIVAL OF 1857

The mighty "visitation" of those days, from which has flowed almost a century of spiritual blessing, represents a challenge even today. Like a spiritual tornado, the Spirit of God swept through the land, and New England became the center of the great awakening, resulting in great numbers finding Salvation. In some towns it was reported as being "almost impossible, to find anyone who had not been converted." Like a great spiritual epidemic, tremendous Conviction of Sin swept through the land, and thousands turned to Christ. Drunkards, as they stood at the saloon bars, gamblers as they sat at the card tables, congregations as they sat in churches, even passengers on board incoming liners came under the influence of this strange and wonderful moving of God and, kneeling in repentance, found pardon.

In many places, dance halls, theaters, and gambling dens were closed or emptied: new churches began to spring up everywhere; family altars were restored, and the spirit of prayer grew in intensity until anyone could cross the land and find a "mid-day" prayer meeting in almost any town! It was estimated, that as many as 50,000 decisions were made in a week, when this gracious visitation was at its height! Following in its wake came mighty preachers of the Word of God. Including D.L. Moody, under whose ministry multitudes were called to repentance; and pioneer missionaries who have taken the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth.

THE WELSH REVIVAL OF 1904

The year, 1904, stands out in the history of Wales, as a year that will never be forgotten, and those who were privileged to live in those days still speak of its heaven-sent scenes with the greatest awe!

Like a mighty tornado, the Spirit of God swept across the land until mountains and valleys, cities and villages were filled with the mighty manifestations of God. Churches were crowded and meetings went on day and night. Prayer, singing and testimony would sweep over congregations in torrents, and hundreds turned to Christ. Never in the history of Wales has

d such indescribable scenes been witnessed.

Dr. Campbell Morgan, preaching on this great revival, in the Westminster Chapel in 1904 declared:

"Here Is REVIVAL that comes from heaven; There is no PREACHING, no ORDER, no HYMNBOOKS, no CHOIRS, no ORGANS, no COLLECTIONS, and finally no ADVERTISING! Now think of THAT for a moment! There were organs, but they were silent; there were ministers but no preaching - they were among the people praising God! Yet the Welsh Revival is a "revival of preaching" for EVERYBODY is preaching! No order, yet it moves from day to day, county to county, with matchless precision, with the order of an attacking force. No songbooks, but ah, me, I nearly wept tonight over the singing! When the Welsh sing they abandon themselves to their singing. We sing as if we thought it wouldn't be respectable to be heard by the one next to us! No choir, did I say? It was all choir!"

Today the Sunday School, the Bible Class, the Family Altar are reaping their harvest. Wales is ablaze for God, already 50,000 converts have been recorded and the great awakening shows no sign of waning. It's sweeping over hundreds of hamlets and cities, emptying saloons, theatres and dance halls, and filling the churches night after night with praying multitudes. Go where you will, into the bank, the store, the trains and everywhere men are talking about God. If you could stand above Wales, looking at it, you would see the fire breaking out here, and there, and yonder, and somewhere else, without any pre-arrangement. It is a Divine visitation in which God - let me say this reverently - in which God is saying to us: "See what I can do without the things you are depending on. See what I can do through a praying people who are prepared to depend wholly and absolutely upon me!"

Like a tree shaken by a mighty storm, Wales was moved by the Power of God until almost every home in the nation felt its impact. Newspapers, in bold headlines carried the news of the amazing scenes taking place. So great was the fear of God, and conviction of sin that gripped the people, that in some communities crime disappeared—magistrates were presented with a blank paper, no cases to be tried. And to commemorate the occasion, they were presented with white gloves! In more than one place, the post office's supply of money order blanks were exhausted as people sought to make restitution by paying their debts! Saloons and theaters were closed while stores were sold out of Bibles and Testaments. Members of Parliament, busy attending Revival services, postponed their political meetings. Theatrical companies coming into districts found no audiences for "all the world was praying!" Temperance workers saw the Spirit of God accomplish more in 3 months than they had accomplished in forty years!

Such, then is Revival, a mighty, sovereign "moving of God" in answer to the cries of men and women who have gone down upon their knees to travail before God. A visitation of God, through His Spirit, that pours tormenting CONVICTION OF SIN upon the ungodly, wherever they may be, until multitudes have turned to Christ. A demonstration of God that closes the dens of iniquity, transforms the lives and homes of multitudes, fills the churches, and causes the influence of spiritual values to be felt throughout a whole nation. A genuine "moving of God" that lays a spiritual foundation for the blessing of God in future generations.