

REVIVAL SERIES

No. 2

C. V. Fairbairn

(Pointed paragraphs from "Lectures, 1846-1848," by C. G. Finney)

"Why are there not more revivals?" The inquiry is also made, "What can be done to promote them, and to promote them under a desirable and permanent type?"

I have seen in the public papers various reasons assigned for this declension of revivals, this absence of revival influence, this powerless preaching of the gospel.

Now it does appear to me that we who are ministers, instead of looking abroad and searching for the fundamental difficulty beyond and out of ourselves, should see that whatever else may be an occasion of the great falling off and decline in revivals, our own spiritual state is certainly one, if not the primary and fundamental, reason of this decline. Want of personal holiness, unction, power in prayer, and in preaching the Word, the want of holy living and consecration to the work, of self-denial, and energetic effort in the ministry—these, no doubt, are the principal reasons why revivals are so few and far between, and of so superficial character at the present day.

I appeal to you, my brethren, if it is not a fact in your own experience and observation, that ministers have, to a great and alarming extent, suffered themselves to be diverted from the direct work of promoting the conversion of sinners and sanctification of the Church. The journals of the day, the movements of ecclesiastical bodies, the doctrinal collisions, and—shall I say?—ambitious projects, that have come up, bear no dubious testimony to the fact that the great mass of ministers are turned aside from promoting revivals and the holiness and entire consecration of the Church.

Now, my beloved brethren, does it not become us to take this home, confess it, bewail it, and, first of all, understand that whatever else needs to be corrected and set right, we must ourselves repent and receive a new unction for the work.

Beloved brethren, it is of no use for us to go abroad and search for reasons, while the principal of all reasons lies at our own door. Until the leaders enter into this work, until the ministry are baptized with the Holy Spirit, until we are awake and in the field with our armor on, and our souls anointed with the Holy Spirit, it certainly ill becomes us to be looking around at a distance for the cause of the decline of revivals.

I have no doubt that there are many causes; but this is the first, the greatest; the most God-dishonoring of all—that the ministry are not in the work, that the shepherds have in a measure forsaken their flock; that is, they are not leading them into the green pastures and beside the still waters, are not themselves so anointed and full of faith and power as to be instrumental in leading the Church into the field for the promotion of revivals.

What shall we say, brethren? Are we not greatly at fault? Have not the ministry, to a great extent, lost the spirit of revivals? Is there not a great lack of unction and power among us? And have

we not suffered ourselves to be greatly and criminally diverted from this great work.

If so, my dear brethren, shall we not return? Shall we not see our fault, confess it to the Churches, to the world, and return, and, in the name of our Lord, lift up our banner? Unless there is a spirit of revival in the ministry, it is in vain to expect it in the Church. The proper place for the shepherd is in advance of the sheep. The sheep will follow him; but if he attempt to drive them, he will scatter them in every direction. If the shepherd fall away from a revival spirit, the sheep will naturally decline also. If he advance in the work of the Lord, they will almost as a thing of course follow him.

My brethren, believe me, I speak not this censoriously, or in the spirit of fault-finding; it is the full and deliberate conviction of my mind—an opinion formed, not hastily, but from protracted observation and from an intimate acquaintance with great numbers of the ministers of Christ of different denominations.

While the ministers of Christ are filled with the Spirit of God, the Church, as a general thing will not backslide. There may, in some instances, be influences brought to bear on the churches that will divert them from the promotion of holiness in their own hearts and the conversion of the impenitent, in spite of all that the most wakeful and vigilant ministry can do. And yet it is my deliberate opinion that a thoroughly wakeful, prayerful, energetic ministry, by their influence, would generally, if not universally, prevent all the calamities and disturbances, by deeply engaging the Church in general on religious subjects. However this may be, I cannot believe it to be otherwise than a general truth, that if the ministry are baptized with the Holy Ghost, and deeply anointed with the revival influence, so that Church will be "Like priest, like people."

And now, brethren, it does seem to me that when we ourselves are thoroughly in a revival spirit, our call to the churches to arise and engage in the general promotion of revivals will be immediately responded to on the part of the Church. Let the ministry only come out in the true spirit of revivals, and I DOUBT WHETHER ANY MINISTER IN THE LAND CAN PREACH FOR THREE SABBATHS TO HIS CHURCH, IN THE SPIRIT, WITHOUT FINDING THE SPIRIT OF REVIVAL WAKING UP IN THE CHURCH. Let this experiment once be tried; let us wake up to the importance of this subject, confess and forsake our own sins, and cry aloud to the Church, and spare not; let us lift up our voice like a trumpet, and rally the hosts of God's elect; and if they are deaf to the call, then let us inquire most earnestly what is next to be done. But until we are anointed to the work, do not let us tempt the Lord or abuse the Church, by looking out of ourselves and away from ourselves for the cause of decline in revivals.

Do not misunderstand me. I know that the Church is in a state of decline, and needs greatly to be quickened and aroused; but I am confident that the prime cause of this decline in the Church is to be found in the fact that the ministers have been diverted from their appropriate

work. And I am also confident that the only remedy for this state of things is, first and foremost of all, for ministers to come into a deeply spiritual and revised state of mind. And as soon as this comes to pass, there will be a general revival. And I am not looking for it to come UNLESS MINISTERS DO WAKE UP, THOROUGHLY WAKE UP, TO THEIR OWN STATE AND THE STATE OF THE CHURCH.

"Pray till the victory comes."
Kingston, Ontario.

HOLINESS

No. 3

Chas. V. Fairbairn

"That ye might have a second grace." (2 Cor. i. 15, margin.) On his first missionary trip Paul labored to get men converted. On his later trips he labored to get men in touch with the blood a second time. So he writes to the Romans, "I long to see you, that I might impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established." (i. 11). To the Thessalonians, "Praying exceedingly, night and day, that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith." (I. T. iii. 10) To the Colossians he states that his preaching, teaching and warning, was "that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." (i. 28) He wished them to be believers like Stephen, and Barnabas, good, full of faith, full of the Holy Ghost, full of wisdom. So it is written, "And he went through. . . confirming the churches." (Acts xv. 41) "And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily." (Acts xvi. 5.)

In line with his labors in the other Churches he writes the Corinthians, "I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second grace." (2 C. i. 15, margin). The Corinthians were already a second Church of God, called to be saints, were enriched in all utterance, were lacking in no gift, and enjoyed initial sanctification or separation from sin, nevertheless they needed a second benefit or grace.

Their experience and need are common with believers everywhere; and our text is in harmony with the plain teaching of the Word of God. There is the first benefit, or grace of regeneration, and the second grace of entire sanctification, commonly called by numbers of folk, who enjoy the experience, THE SECOND BLESSING.

The atonement provides two benefits: (1) "Christ died for our sins;" and (2) "that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, Jesus suffered without the gate." (I. Cor. xv. 3, Heb. xiii. 12).

For sinners, Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them." For forgiven sinners he prayed, "Sanctify them through thy truth."

The love exhibited in Calvary was for two separate and distinct peoples. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "Christ also loved THE CHURCH, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it. . . that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle,