

WE NEED REVIVAL

Samuel Logan Brengle

The Prophet Habakkuk lived in awful times. The nation was backslidden. The city was full of violence and wickedness. The vendors of strong drink gloried in making men drunk and exulted in their degradation and shame. Fortunes and great houses were built on fraud and robbery. Judges sold justice for bribes. Reeking vices and cruel and abominable idolatries abounded.

The nation was threatened with utter ruin. On the southwest were the Egyptians; east and southeast were the Edomites; on the north were the Syrians, ready to fall on the flanks of the little country, whereas to the east in the rich Mesopotamian plain were the Chaldeans, fiercer than wolves, swifter than leopards, cruel as the grave.

It was in such a time that the prophet prayed for a revival, girded himself for the worst and cried, "The just shall live by faith," thus laying the foundation for Protestant freedom, for that text, whispering in the heart of Luther, liberated him from inner bondage, and he rose a newborn son of God. Habakkuk armed himself with invincible trust in the living God and sang in the presence of the threatened desolations of the Chaldean invasion: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat: the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Hallelujah! His faith in God's righteousness and power and pity and mercy shone bright and clear in the spiritual darkness and held like an anchor in the storm, and so he pleaded for a revival.

Shall we not take up his plea? Do we not need, can we not have a great revival? The need is great. The times are all out of joint. A vast revolution in economics, in politics, in morals, in the home and family, in the fundamental thoughts of men is taking place. Atheism is lifting its ugly head, incorporating itself in laws and institutions, mocking the name of God and His Christ. Everything that can be shaken is being shaken. It seems that the words of Paul are being fulfilled: "Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven . . . that those things which cannot be shaken may remain."

We need a revival. It is the greatest need of our times. The Church needs it. The world gropes in darkness and confusion for want of it; sinners perish without it. We need a revival that will sweep away, as with a whirlwind and fire, all nebulous views of God, until His glorious personality is sensed in all His holiness and righteousness, His loving-kindness, His pity and mercy, His hatred of sin.

We need a revival that will restore the reverent fear of God which has been lost. There have been revivals in which "the terrors of the Lord" gripped men, and they cried, "What must we do to be saved?" A true revival will make men realize a blissful heaven above prepared for all who are washed in the blood of the Lamb and a grievous and everlasting hell beneath for all who impenitently live and die in sin.

We need a revival that will restore the lost sense of sin. Because they have not committed some crime that would put them behind prison bars, some men count themselves righteous; they may, however, be full of sin that separates them from God and hides His face

from them. A revival will make them see, as with a lightning flash, the sin of their hearts and the distinction between sin and crime.

We need a revival that will make men stand in awe of moral law. The law is not a source of life, but it is an expression of God's nature and character and never has been or will be abrogated as the rule of conduct for all moral beings. Christ kept it, fulfilled it for Himself and so proved Himself worthy to be our Redeemer; and in redeeming us, forgiving our past offenses, washing us in His own blood and baptizing us with His own Spirit, He empowers us to keep the law through "faith which worketh by love," as He Himself kept it.

The law with its penalties is an expression of God's holy love for all His creatures, and men who despise it find Him to be a consuming fire. The law is fulfilled in us when we walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. It is written upon our hearts and becomes our delight, and woe to him who ignores and despises it!

We need a revival that will quicken the sense of moral and spiritual responsibility to God where that responsibility exists and will restore it where it is lost.

We need a revival that families may be saved and that sinners may know the compassion of the Lord and His readiness and power to save from guilt and sin and shame, that society may be purified and nations saved from the hells into which they plunge themselves when they forget God.

How shall a revival be brought to pass? Someone must see and feel the need of the revival in each church. Face facts around you—the foolishness and boldness of sinners, their carelessness and indifference and contempt for God's claims—and you will see the need. Note the coldness and indifference of many and possibly of your own heart. Who weeps because sinners are not saved? Who agonizes in prayer for them? Who pours out his soul in love and deep concern for them? Think of the sure doom awaiting them if they are unsaved and of your own danger if you are lukewarm and indifferent, and you will realize the need for a revival. Then stir yourself up and ask God day and night to help you feel the need.

Twenty-seven years ago I arrived in Malmo, Sweden, for my second campaign in that beautiful country. I had been there the year before. We had been having blessed meetings in Stockholm and other cities—hundreds of people had sought the Lord for salvation. But in Malmo, everybody seemed to have entered into a spirit of pessimism, doubt and discouragement. I was told that Malmo was different. It was a rich, worldly seaport, unlike the other cities we had visited. They said that we could hardly expect a revival there, but I cried to God and told Him I believed that He was not only the God of Stockholm and Jonkoping but also of Malmo, and that I expected to see His glory there in the saving of souls. I was not disappointed. Some wonderful things happened there. Preceding this second visit in Malmo, the officer had made some preparation. He had procured some little cards, which read when translated: "O Lord, send a revival and let it begin in me." I began to pray that prayer, but to it added one word—great. "Send a great revival and let it begin in me."

Those words sank deep into my soul and became almost a constant cry. I found myself waking in the night with that prayer swelling out of my heart. One day I went out for a walk and took a back street to avoid the crowds of people; constantly that prayer was

within me, and suddenly I burst into tears. I travailed for souls and God gave us revivals in every place from Malmo to far northern Hévrásand.

There are difficulties, of course, but there were difficulties in Paul's day, too. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit was in Paul; the unseen Christ went with him, and he cried, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." The mountains of idolatry and bigotry, unbelief and vice, melted to a plain before him, and he had revivals. There were difficulties in Luther's day, and Wesley's, but they faced them—prayed and loved their way through and over them. Let us have faith in God and do our whole duty; let us fear not the devil and faint not before difficulties. Then we shall see the glory of God in a world-wide revival.

THE THANKFULNESS OF JESUS

By Peter Wiseman, D.D.

"Father I thank Thee" (John 11:41).

Jesus was thankful; even in that dark hour when He said, "Nevertheless not my will but Thine". There is revealed, if not expressed, a sigh of thankfulness that the highest and best will be done.

Unthankfulness is an ugly thing, if not quite sinful, and it is so common. How seldom now do we hear just the words, "Thank you", for a kindness rendered.

The Bible says much about thankfulness. The command is, "Be ye thankful". The scope indicated is great: "Whatsoever ye do"—eat, drink, thought, word, home, shop, church—'Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God, giving thanks to God and the Father by him', Christ. "Whatsoever" covers the whole of life's action—God is everything and everything taken to God with thankfulness.

"Do all to the glory of God", is a statement revealing a sacred principle—one standard for all. That which is necessary to be done in life's program must be done to God's glory.

"Giving thanks" reveals a wonderful spirit. "In every thing give thanks." Indeed, the writer of this epistle even declared on one occasion at least that we should "give thanks for all things", and that "always". (Eph. 5:20). If nothing can come to the child of God without God's permission, why not give thanks for all things?

Let us take a little while and "count our many blessings, name them one by one", if we can really do that; I mean "count them" and "name them one by one". Let us do so; and if we cannot find a lot of things for which to be thankful, then there is something wrong with us. If we have had "dark days", put over against them the "bright days"; if we have had "defeats", put over against them the "victories"; if we have had "sorrows", put over against such the "joys" that have come; and so on. Let us be thankful for life, food and raiment, thankful that this awful world war has come to an end; thankful for a stainless future and the promise of God's grace to keep it clean.

Yes, and don't forget to sing often that little expression of thankfulness;

"I thank Thee, Lord, for saving my soul.
I thank Thee, Lord, for making me whole.
I thank Thee, Lord, for giving to me
Thy great salvation so full and free."

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"Great God of Nations, now to Thee
Our hymn of gratitude we raise;
With humble heart, and bending knee,