

The COMING Revival

A SERMON BY CHARLES S. PRICE

DURING MY present evangelistic tour one question has been asked of me scores of times. Ministers have come with hope and anticipation in their eyes, and laymen have taken me aside time after time with the same burning question on their lips. Is the war driving people nearer to God? Will there be a revival of old time religion before Jesus comes? Can we look for an outpouring of Holy Ghost power before the skies at last open and the Saviour of the world comes back to receive His own?

In my heart the conviction has been growing steadily that we are on the eve of one of the greatest revivals of modern time. I know of the apostasy and I am aware of the spiritual declension. I know of the fear and uncertainty that grip the hearts of men, and I know that during the past decades the church has lost its grip upon the minds and hearts of the people.

All this I know. Yet I hear the sound of the coming of an abundance of rain. I am not blind to conditions, neither do I engage in wishful thinking when I rejoice in my heart in anticipation of what soon will come to pass. Neither am I swayed by sentiment or controlled by desire when I declare I have been brought face to face with some very pronounced and definite convictions. I am not saying that the world is going to be saved; I am not declaring that every church will be rescued from the swirling waters of its modern interpretation, but I am believing that villages will shake and cities rock under the outpouring of Holy Ghost power.

Out Of The Night

In the first place, we should remember that all revivals have broken out in times of the deepest apostasy. It is when spirituality has been at its lowest ebb and the hearts of the people have been broken and empty because they have had no food that satisfied that some John the Baptist has come along to preach the coming of the Christ. In those days when the first great revival broke out under the ministry of John you must remember that for four hundred years Israel had been without a prophetic voice. Was there ever a time in their history when they were so persecuted and so trodden down by the powers of a Godless world? They had been through the darkness of nights of sorrow and suffering before, but no night was as dark as this. Had you spoken to any of the people about the restoration of joy and peace and hope

they would have shaken their heads in despair and told you such a thing could never be. It was dark--very dark--just as dark as it is today. Suddenly, in the midst of that darkness there was the sound of a voice crying in the wilderness. It was out of that darkness that the dayspring came, and the light of the world beamed with rays of revival upon the hearts of the people. Do not say there was no revival because they crucified my Lord. Do you know that during the next few generations the fires that were kindled at Pentecost rocked empires, changed the course of nations, and transformed the map of the world. The Spirit-filled fishermen captured Rome, and all of the powers of human will were unable to stop the majesty of the sweep of God's presence. From that day to this revivals have come out of the night. The tears of widows in the time of war have watered the seeds and made them grow. The broken heart having nowhere to turn for its healing has had to look away to the Lamb of God. The dying man with eternity beckoning with death's cold finger has had to go back to the sacred page to find the hope of his salvation and discover the doors of pardon that lead to the vales of Eden. It has been in the day of the church's prosperity that the dangers have arisen which have brought about defeat. It seems to be part of human nature that men will not seek the Lord until they need Him in a most desperate way. They will not ask the way home until things become so bad that they must confess they are lost. It is out of the darkness into which this broken, bleeding world has staggered that the Spirit-filled church will be privileged to lead humanity back to the sunlight that gleams on the hills of God.

The Reformation

The Reformation was born in the dungeon of the dark ages. It was the travail of lost men crying out for freedom they had never known that brought forth the renaissance of faith and sent the Reformation fires burning throughout the countries of the world. When Martin Luther jumped to his feet and cried: "The just shall live by faith" he kindled a fire of revival flame that illumined the last night of the Dark Ages. There was revival. It is out of our sickness that healing is born. It is out of the night that sunshine comes. It is out of the rainstorm that violets lift their heads, and the trees of the fields clap their hands and grow. It is out of captivity that freedom comes, and out of life's bondage that we know the joys of liberty.

We would never know the touch of His hand were there no tears to wipe away. We would never dream of resurrection were it not for the grave. We would never long for the re-union were it not for the parting. We would never know revival were it not needed. It is only when we are helpless that we know how to pray for power. So I say that the fact of our present deplorable spiritual condition will not retard the outpouring in the latter days of the power and presence of the Holy Ghost. I believe with all of my heart that the sorrows of our present day will drive us to our knees and that when Heaven's answer comes at last it will be in a voice of thunder that will be

heard the world around.

The Cycles Of God

Then again we should remember the story of the glory of God's unfailing cycles. The world began with Eden, and with Eden it will finish. It started with God walking and talking with a sinless man in the place where rivers flowed and flowers bloomed, and sorrow and sin and death had never come. It will end the same way. It began with an atmosphere of such beautiful peace that the Lamb could play by the side of the lion, and the tiger was as gentle as a kitten in the home. It will end the same way. The baby feet will toddle away in the light of the millennial glory to put baby hands in the mane of the lion and to fondle the purring leopard. It will be the finish of the cycle of the wheel. It will be the completion of a cycle that took us down from the heights of God's love and glory to the deepest depths of shame and sin. But it was there we found a place called Calvary, and from that vale of suffering both human and divine we shall come back up to Eden restored, where the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

The beginnings of the times of the Gentiles featured an image. The end of the Gentile times will end with an image. So move along the cycles of our God. This church age began with Pentecost, and it will end with Pentecost. It began with the outpouring of gifts, and the sweep of divine power that all the forces of hell and earth were unable to stop. It will end up just the same way. It has to. It is in the last days that the Spirit is to be poured out upon all flesh. Can you doubt it? How sorry I am for those people who, recognizing their need, want us to go back to what we had twenty and thirty years ago. They are continually crying for the Lord to take them back to Azusa Street, or to the mission, and experience again the "good old days" when the power first fell on them. I pity them. They are like children crying for the bottle. The things that are ahead of us are greater by far than anything we have had in the past. The experiences of today are richer and sweeter than those of yesterday, but I shout when I think of what God is *going* to do tomorrow.

Only the other day I was discussing this question with a group of consecrated men who are ministers of God, and the Spirit of the Lord put into my heart the instructions given to the people by the anointed of the Lord, whose name was Joshua. Glorious had been the way in which they had been led. Marvelous and wonderful had been the paths over which their feet had traveled. Think of it. The Palms of Elim and the bitter waters made sweet; the honey in the rock and the manna on the ground; the pillar of fire and the majesty which was hidden in the cloud . . . miracle after miracle--blessing after blessing--victory after victory. Sometimes there was defeat, but when experiences come to you such as came to them you have every right to sing the song of victory and praise the Lord for the outpouring of the Spirit.

Then they came to a test. They were to pass over Jordan. In front of them

were giants and walled cities. In front of them was the impossible, if left alone to man. Then came the word from the officers of the army that every man in the camp of Israel must be obedient to Joshua. They were told they were to obey. Then came the statement: "Ye have not passed this way before." And Joshua said, "Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you."

Victory Ahead

It is just as true today. I don't want to go back over the old paths. I want to go on with God. If there was a miracle back in old Azusa Street I will praise God for it, but I do not want to go *back* there. Why go back to the wilderness for manna when you are at the gates of the Promised Land? That is my message to the church of today. Tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you. The things which are ahead are greater far than the things which are behind. There is victory around the corner of the hill, and the darkness of this night will soon break in the last scriptural prophetic outpouring of the Holy Spirit. If the devil can get you to sit down and fold your hands in the prison cell of the "Status Quo" he will be satisfied, and great will be your loss. I know the days are dark, but I shall preach until He comes the gospel that while there is a Christ to save and a Holy Spirit who can convict there can always be revival. So let every church prepare for the "battle." Let every Spirit-filled saint of God wait for a fresh enduement. Let every preacher tarry for his anointing, for *tomorrow* the Lord will do great things among you in a way you have not known before.

Sometimes I am persuaded that when we think of the coming of our Lord we habitually turn to the dark signs instead of the bright ones. Nine out of ten of the sermons we hear about the signs of the times are filled with the story of the apostasy of the church, wars and famines and earthquakes: plagues, pestilence, sorrows, and tears; and all of the tragic situations in which men and nations will find themselves. This is all true. Have we forgotten that it is also true that the gospel of the kingdom should be preached throughout all of the earth, that every tribe and tongue will hear the story of a Savior and a cross and an empty grave? Have we forgotten the last days in which the Spirit should be poured out upon all flesh? Do we not remember that our sons and daughters will receive the gift of prophecy and men who are too old and feeble to preach will receive heavenly visions and dream their inspired dreams of God and His glory? Have we forgotten that it is in these days that the gifts of the Spirit are to be manifest in a greater way than ever they have been before? Does not revelation tell us of the glory of the overcomer, and are not the scriptures pregnant with the power of consecrated, surrendered lives in the day of the coming of our Lord? We call it the day of anti-Christ. It really is the day of the triumph of Jesus. We call it the hour of darkness and of misery, forgetting that if today be dark the brightness of tomorrow will be multiplied a thousand fold. The little bells that ring in my heart are ringing out the message of the revival which is to come. If there is to be no

outpouring, if there is to be no restoration of the fullness of Pentecostal power then God have mercy upon our poor souls. For, I believe, it is not only the people of the world who need a revival, but it is the church--even the church professing to be filled with the Spirit--that needs the anointing oil.

The Yielded Will

Before I tell you of the things I believe will happen I want to draw to your attention some things the Lord has been putting on my heart. Is it possible we have been hindering the outpouring which God alone can give by choking the channels through which His grace and love can flow? It is the economy of God and the plan of the eternal that a Spirit-filled church should be united in the bonds of a sanctified love. Have we become dictatorial in our teaching, and sectarian in our living until we sit in judgment on a legalistic throne and know no more the sweetness of the paths we should be walking in Christian grace and love? I have noticed that the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit to any pronounced extent have always been preceded by the moving of God's love upon the hearts of the people. When prejudices have been broken down and barriers burned away the melting of heart to heart by the warmth of love divine has opened the door to the moving of the Spirit of God. Are we not foolish, or shall I say rather is it God's will that we isolate ourselves within the barriers of our own little interpretations? Are we justified in building a wall around our feeble concepts, and insisting that all with whom we fellowship must meet us there? I cannot get over the heart appeal of the Master that His disciples should love one another. I have not forgotten that He sent them out two by two. I still remember that the body has many members which are not alike, but have distinct and separate ministries as far apart as the poles. I cannot get away from the words you know so well that inform us they "were all together with *one accord* in one place."

Is there not some way in which the divisions that bar one from fellowship may be largely swept aside and the sectarian spirit of isolationism give way to the sweeter and nobler spirit of cooperation and fellowship? I had an example of this not so very long ago. I was asked to preach in a certain meeting in which a large number of ministers from various organizations and independent churches were in attendance. The platform was full. Everybody in that building knew of the little things that had crept in unawares, and having crept in they were nurtured until they had become big. The little molehills had grown to be mountains. Tooth picks had become fences, and they certainly could not have sung with truth: "We are not divided; all one body we." They were divided, and they knew it. I knew it too. And God knew it. I could have thrown that meeting into an uproar by taking sides in a factional dispute, and insisting on the righteousness of my cause. Instead I took Paul's advice when he declared: "I shew unto you a more excellent way." We sang of love divine, all love excelling. We mingled our prayers until out of them came the note of triumph and praise. The king

left the gate open. The breezes of heaven began to blow. One preacher went over to a man who used to be his rival, but now was a fellow worker and put his arms around him. Out from the realms of glory came more and yet more of Holy Ghost power. People broke into tears. We could almost hear the Master say: "My little children, a *new* commandment I give unto you, that ye *love* one another, as I have loved you.

Toward the close of the service a minister leaned over and whispered in my ear and said somewhat excitedly: "Why, Brother Price, this is a revival." I looked at him and felt the warmth of his heart, filled with God's love, and said: "Yes; this is how revivals come."

Workers Together

Have we not been called workers together? Was there ever in human history a revival built alone on cold doctrine? Or produced by insistence upon dogma? Was there ever in the history of the church a revival produced from the mechanics of ritual or the formulae of systems? Even church drives will not produce a revival, and great crowds cannot bring down the power. There must be "the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees." There must be the moving of God on the hearts of the people. There must be forgiveness instead of animosity. There must be rejoicing instead of jealousy. There must be gratitude instead of envy. There must be the breaking down of self in order that we might become susceptible to the leading of the Lord. When tears are more eloquent than our oft repeated phrases and self is put on the altar of surrender to His will, then we know that the Holy Spirit will begin to move in the midst of His people, for there can never be revival without the Holy Ghost.

When we begin to think of "our church" as more than the building in which we worship and start to believe that perhaps the folks down the street belong to the heavenly family as well as we, then perhaps we shall feel the beginning of the flame that will blaze until all the city shall see. When we can go to church with a prayer that we put more into it than we get out perhaps then the cup of our joy will begin to overflow. When we can in honor prefer one another and walk the second mile with a smile instead of a frown perchance we shall hear in the distance the song of the angels proclaiming His victory. Is it not true, friend of mine, that we need to avail ourselves of the grace of His love until our heart shall burn within us as we talk with Him as well as each other while we travel the Emmaus Road of our lives? It is coming. I have seen it all over the country. Prejudice and sectarianism are beginning to melt under the sunshine of His smile. The Ark is coming up the road. It is coming, I tell you. I have seen evidences on the right hand and on the left, and in some recent meetings there has been such a surge of heavenly power that we have been lifted far above the little squabbles and troubles of our lives. The sharp pain of the thing that separates has been forgotten in the blessing of the tie that binds.

But the thing that brings the greatest joy to my heart is the clear-cut declaration of the eternal word for there I find His promise—there I see the declaration of the things which are shortly to come to pass. There I find the promise of His coming. There I read the herald of the return of my Lord. And if His coming is soon and I believe it is then the revival He has promised and the outpouring He has said shall come to pass cannot be very far away. I do not believe it will be patterned after the outpouring of the past. It will be born out of a deeper understanding of our Lord and His glory.

Let me ask you in all sincerity a question. Have we ever really received the fullness of the gifts of the Spirit? I know of the outpourings and of the grace and goodness of our Lord. I know of meetings in which the places wherein we have gathered have been shaken by His power. But have we really received the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit as they did in the days of the falling of the former rain? That was the day of the upper room and the victory march of the spirit-filled disciples across the plains of the earth. Take healing, for example. I have seen miracles which would make the angels rejoice. I have been in meetings, and so have you, in which we wept and shouted for joy because of the virtue that came from our healing Christ. But if we are honest we must admit we have not seen a repetition of what happened in the days of the apostles. We know that many have been healed. We have had a foretaste of what is to come, but we cannot honestly say we have received the fullness of the gift in all of its power. There are too many sick in our churches to believe that we have.

But I tell you of a truth the day is not far away when Spirit-filled, anointed, consecrated men of God will be so bathed in the glory of Pentecost that the Spirit within them will enable them to take that helpless woman by the hand and raise her from a wheel chair, in the name of the Christ they love and serve. The day is not far away when the gift will be so used by the giver that multitudes will follow as they did in the days of old to behold the wonderful works of our God. The tongue of the dumb shall be loosed. The eyes of the blind shall be opened. The ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Sickness and suffering with all their hellish power will melt like snow before the spoken word of the Lord. In His name shall they cast out devils, and by His power the lepers shall be cleansed.

I would not detract from the victories of yesterday, but I am not going to let friendly memories blind my eyes to the glories of tomorrow. I praise Him for what He has done. But my soul is reaching out for the power of the apostolic fullness. The church is spiritually conscious that something is about to happen, and I believe it is so sure that all of the powers of earth and hell cannot prevent the fullness of the outpouring before He shall come.

This, then, is my message. This is the gospel story I would proclaim. Not back to what we had a few years ago, but forward to the riches of our inheritance, and the glory of the power of the indwelling paraclete. Make no mistake about it. We have

not passed this way before. Thank God for what we have seen, and for your back tracks. God forbid! Jesus is coming soon. Of that we are all agreed. But before He comes, and in preparation for His appearing there will be an outpouring of the power of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh who will receive it. Know ye not, my Christian friend, that the Lord will do great things in our midst tomorrow, and there will come a time when that tomorrow will be today.