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"Preaching The Same Truth We Preached Before Kentucky Was A State

THE REVIVAL WE NEED

By: C. D. Cole

"Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?" Psalm 85:6.

INTRODUCTION: We use the word revival rather loosely and without much thought. We call it a revival when we are able to get members into the church. But strictly speaking a revival has nothing to do with the lost directly--a revival is for the saved. Revival implies life--dead things are not revived. A revival is the refreshing, strengthening of the Christian whose spiritual pulse is weak and his interests in eternal things is at a low ebb. So revival also implies that the Christian is anemic. There is life but little activity. Now it is the general rule that when God's people are revived the lost will be saved.

With many a revival, it is something the evangelist brings in his grip, or something he "pulls out of the hat," as it were. But a true revival is not magic. A true revival goes deep into the human soul. There is a burden for sin, a confession and forsaking of sin, followed by joy of salvation. In a true revival all sorts of sins--big sins and little sins--sins of commission and sins of omission--are dragged into the light and confessed before God. In a true revival there is abhorrence of self and rejoicing in Christ.

I. The revival we need. This implies the need of a revival.

A. A revival of heartfelt and sincere interest in eternal things. By every rule of measurement there is a sad lack of interest in Christ and His church. This interest has been lost under testing. Some have been tested by business. Their business has become an idol. It has robbed them of God. Some have been tested by pleasure. They have run after pleasures that last only for a season and forgetting that at God's right hand are pleasures eternal. Some are tested by money--either by lack of it or by having too much of it.

"Some are so busy with their fees
That they ignore all my pleas.
The louder I cry
The faster they fly
In the wrong direction
To their own destruction."

It may be that some have been tested by affliction. They have been sick and have become allergic to themselves. They feel so sorry for themselves that they have no interest in the church and its work. If some of us were to consult a psychiatrist he would say something like this: There is nothing wrong with you except too much self-interest. You have become an isolationist; you forget there is anybody else in the world; you are allergic to yourself. I recommend you take interest in something else. Join a Sunday school class; go to church and help with whatever you can do. Find somebody who is really having trouble and lend a helping hand.

Pardon the personal reference, but I think I have had all these tests I have mentioned within the past year. The poet tells us of souls that well apart in a fellowless firmament. Bob Jones, for instance, says to himself: "Well, I've made a lot of money in late years. I'm pretty well fixed; my nest is pretty well feathered. And my son John and his wife are in good shape too. So we will all crawl into our nest and watch the world go by. We will stop our ears to the call of Christ and His church. We will shut our eyes to a suffering, wailing world. We are rich and have need of nothing." Poor deluded souls! If indeed, they are alive, they need a revival in their souls.

B. We need a revival of respect for the church of Christ.

1. A respect for its value. What Christ loved and gave Himself for can be despised only at awful peril.

2. A respect for its claims. Every one of us needs to raise the question, Do I really belong to the church? If I belong, then the church has some claims upon me, for whatever I belong to, I have obligations to. For example, my wife, my country, etc.

3. A respect for its mission. What is the church for anyway? Is it a pullman to glory? Is profession of faith a magic formula for eternal bliss? No, No. The church is a workshop where God's children work in the interest of His business. The church is an army with banners fighting the good fight of faith. The church is the base of supplies from which go out to the world that which is essential to eternal life. The church is the divine granary from which the bread of life is to be sent into all the world. The church has the most expensive mission of any institution on this earth. Members neglect the church and its work with little concern.

"I love Thy church, O God,
Her walls before Thee stand,
Dear as the apple of Thine eye,
And graven on Thy hand."

C. A recovery of love for God's word. By the word, we became babes; by the same word we are to become strong men. Most church members know all they want to know, and they know so little that they do not know enough to know how little they do know. People lose love for God's word because they lose interest in the things

the Bible talks about. They lust after sensual and senseless things and want books that deal in these low sordid things. One of the most alarming signs of the times is the kind of literature being read by the masses. People read what they think about and as a man thinketh so is he. So judging from what people read, most of us are living on the low level of the beasts.

D. A recovery of the lost sense of sin. Who is bothered and distressed over sin? And really what else is there to be distressed about? Our consciences are calloused that we cannot feel sin. There is such a hard pan of indifference over our souls that no word of warning gets through to awake us. Blessed are they that mourn, but with most it is blessed are they that snicker at sin. The Bible says "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion," but the average church member says "Woe to the preacher who tries to break up my nest of ease." The Bible says that sin is the abominable thing God hates, but it is the thing many roll under their tongues as a sweet morsel. There can be no revival in our souls until sin becomes to us the awful thing that God says it is. There can be no revival until we judge ourselves--until we abhor ourselves--until we slay our self-righteousness and cry out through repentance toward God and faith in Christ, "God be merciful to me the sinner."

II. How can we get the revival we need? This is not easy to answer. Our text tells us that it is God sent. Some say a revival cannot be worked up; that it must be prayed down. That may be true, but when a child of God begins to pray as he ought to pray, the revival has already come to him. A revival is not man-made; it is God-sent. "Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?"

We cannot have a revival without wanting it and yet when we want it as bad as we ought to, it is already on its way. We cannot have a revival without falling out with sin and falling in with Him, and yet when sin becomes bitter and Christ becomes precious, the revival is within us. The choir cannot bring a revival by its good singing, and yet when they begin to sing with the spirit and understanding, the revival is on. The preacher cannot bring a revival with his good preaching,

and yet when he begins to speak with lips that have been touched by coals from off the altar of God, the revival has already struck.

CONCLUSION: Do we want a revival? Are we satisfied with our past service for God? Have we been ideal church members in our own eyes? If we are self-satisfied, that is proof that we are a victim of spiritual amnesia--we are walking in our sleep and do not know who we are nor where we are. Our only hope is the awakening, convicting, withering work of the Spirit

of God. O Spirit of God, make these dry bones to live!

"Some are on pleasures bent,
And for trifles their money is spent.
In the devil's den they dance
and they dine,
But for God's church they have
not a dime.
In the scorner's seat they
delight to sit,
But at church they fear
they'll be hit.

He Swapped With Me

BY THE LATE: C. D. COLE

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor. 5:21).

Speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul says, "For our sakes He (God) made Him to be sin who Himself knew nothing of sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." In a word, Paul is saying that God the Father treated Jesus Christ, the Son, as a sinner or unrighteous person, so that we sinners might be treated as righteous persons.

A missionary was once preaching from this text to a group of natives in a foreign land. When he had finished his message, he was desirous to know whether they had understood it or not. So, he asked them to tell him in their own words just what it all meant to them. The chief of the tribe spoke up and said, "It means that the Lord Jesus swapped with me." And I might say that this puts the way of salvation just about as plain as human language can put it. He Who was without sin took the place of sinners under God's Holy Law, so that sinners might have the place of sons before God the Father. Christ, the righteous Son of God, took the place of the guilty and bore their sins in His own body on the tree of the cross. He Who was rich became poor for our sakes, that through His poverty, we might become rich. Christ died as the Just One for the unjust ones, that He might bring us into God's favor.

A man was once asked if he would like to be saved. He replied, "Yes, if God can save me without doing wrong." This man was a thinker. He saw a problem in a just God saving unjust people. He realized that a just God must punish sin. He confessed that he was a sinner, and that if God was just in dealing with him, He would have to punish him for his sins. This was Job's problem in the long ago when he cried out, "How then can man be justified with God?" Their reasoning is after this fashion: "If God is holy and righteous, and all men are sinners and deserve punishment, how can they justly go unpunished?" The answer is in the blessed and glorious gospel truth that the Son of God swapped places with sinful men and redeemed them from the curse of the law by being made a curse for them.

In swapping with us, He took our place under the law of God and obeyed the law for us. The sinner is saved by obedience, but not by his own obedience. Romans 5:19 says, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." If we had obeyed the Holy Law of God, we would have been righteous in our own

name and on our own record. God will never punish a good man. If a man can be found who has never sinned, that man will live before God as a matter of justice. He will need no grace or mercy, but only justice. But the truth is that no such person has ever lived except the sinless Son of God. The Bible is very clear on the fact that all have sinned--that none is good--that there is none righteous, not even one.

The Chief of Police in a Western town received a letter from a woman, asking him to put her in touch with a perfect man with a view to matrimony. The Chief did a very sensible thing; he sent the letter to the Bureau of Missing Persons. The perfect man is missing, and there is no kind of bureau that can locate him on this earth. The spirits of the just made perfect are even now in heaven. There once lived a perfect man, the Lord Jesus Christ, and He kept the law for sinners, and all who trust Him have His righteousness--the righteousness He provided--and stand justified before God. "There is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

The Lord Jesus obeyed until death; that is, He obeyed all the days of His life here on earth. He never had a sinful thought; He never did a selfish or sinful thing; He never spoke a sinful or even idle word. He did the will of God in all things, at all times, and in all places. When He came to die, He could truly say, "I have finished the work Thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4). And let us remember that all that work was for us, to make us right with God. I reject with abhorrence any religion that adds anything to the precious blood of Christ as the ground of salvation. The Bible says that it is the blood of Christ that cleanseth us from all sin. I John 1:7. The Bible says that when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Hebrews 1:3. And the redeemed sinner delights to confess, "Nothing in my hands I bring, Simply to Thy cross I cling."

The Lord Jesus Christ obeyed unto death; that is, He obeyed at the cost of His life. The word "unto" denotes both time and degree. The time of His obedience was until He died; the degree of His obedience was at the cost of His life. In swapping with sinners, Christ had to settle with the holy law of God for all our sins. As sinners, we were responsible to settle with the law we have broken. But this would have meant our eternal ruin, for the wages of sin is death. As Saviour, Jesus Christ paid our sin-bill, and as believers in Him, we delight to sing, "Jesus paid it all, All to Him I owe."

Let us look a little deeper into the meaning of the death of Christ. He died the death that denoted a curse. In His death, He was being cursed by God.

In Galatians 3:13, Paul says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." He adds a quotation from Deut. 21:23 which says, "he that is hanged is accursed of God." In saving sinners, God had planned that His Son would die the kind of death that denoted a curse. And so Christ died while the Romans were in power. If Christ had died under Jewish law, He would have been stoned to death. But God had decreed that His Son would die on a cross, and the Scriptures had foretold this kind of death; and so in divine providence, Christ died on a Roman cross as a sign that He was being cursed by God. It was more than physical suffering Christ endured for us; He suffered separation from God. On the cross, the Father turned His back upon His Son because He was being made sin for us. The Father was forsaking His Son for a while that He might not, in justice, forsake us forever. If God had been with Christ on the cross to help Him bear our sins, He could not have redeemed us. To save us, He had to be forsaken and punished by God, and this is what constituted His terrible suffering. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32).

Jesus was an exile from heaven while here on this earth. Heaven was His proper and rightful place, where He enjoyed all the glory of God the Father. While here, He spake of the glory He had with the Father before the creation of the world. It is to be observed that after Jesus went to Calvary, no word came to Him from heaven and the Father. The heavens were as brass above His head. No help came in response to His cry. It was easy enough for our Lord to hear from home (from heaven) before He went to the cross. At His birth, myriads of angels came from heaven to celebrate the great event. They may have sung the songs He had heard them sing in heaven around the throne. At His baptism, the Holy Spirit came from heaven in the form of a dove, and the voice of the Father was heard, saying, "This is my beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." On the mount of transfiguration, the Father's voice was again heard, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him." And all through His earthly sojourn, He was in constant touch with the Father. When He would pray in the silent hours of the night, He could hear the Father speaking to Him. When His enemies came to arrest Him, He told them that even then He could ask the Father and get twelve legions of angels for His defense. But on the cross, He had no word from God. Heaven was silent. The three hours of darkness sym-

bolized this separation from God. God was making His Son to be sin for us, and, therefore, He could not smile or even look upon sin with any mercy. God spared not His own Son when He found Him in the sinner's place. All that a Just and Holy God can do with sin is to punish it and pour out His wrath upon it. If God were to give us sinners what we deserve, we would not deserve salvation, but His wrath. Jesus Christ, the sinless Son of God, came and exposed Himself to the wrath due us that we believers might receive the blessings due His Son. Yes, blessed be His name, He took our place as sinners that we might have the place of sons in the Father's house. He took our guilt that we might have right standing with God. Yes, He swapped places with us: He was made to be sin for us that we might be righteous before God. It becomes us to sing with Charlotte Elliot those verses which so beautifully and strikingly set forth the experiences and lopes of the redeemed:

“Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.”

“Just as I am and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.”

“Just as I am, tho' tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.”

“Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because Thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.”

Yes, the Lord Jesus Christ swapped places with us. He took our place in guilt of sin that we might have the place under grace in Him. Hallelujah, What a Saviour!

