

The Gospel of Salvation

Evangelistic Addresses

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Two -

RETURNING FOR REVIVAL

"Come and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth." (Hosea 6:1-3).

AMERICA began in prayer on bended knee, before the open Bible. America will never return to the peace and prosperity of sobriety, sanity, safety, security, until she comes to the altar of GOD in holy repentance, seeking the robes of GOD's righteousness. America was not built on its natural resources, on its vast land areas, on its great man power. No! It was founded, favored, fed by GOD.

The original thirteen colonies were all established for a wholly or semi-religious reason. JEHOVAH showered our land with all of the bounties of Heaven. The rains came, the fields prospered, the earth gave up its treasures, the mountains yielded their wealth; health and grace were evident on every hand. All this has changed. We have forgotten GOD. We have taken the bounties He has bestowed upon us and wasted them in riotous living. GOD has closed His hand. Nothing but a return to the SAVIOUR, the Bible, the family altar, the church, will solve the multitudinous problems, the heart-breaking difficulties that face us. Only a God-sent, Heaven-directed, HOLY-SPIRIT-empowered, CHRIST-uplifting revival will bring us out of the pit, from the miry clay. Such revivals do not come as a "happen so."

There is a work to be done, a word to be heeded, a way to be followed by the people of GOD before the windows of Heaven will open unto us. Consider then, first, the Conditions we face; second, the Course we must pursue; third, the Consequences that will follow.

I. THE CONDITIONS WE FACE

A tidal wave of infidelity has swept across the land. Beginning with the incorporated society, the Association for the Advancement of Atheism, and ending with some half-baked, embryonic undergraduate, a miasma of unbelief has deluged our nation. GOD has been denied, CHRIST dethroned, the Bible defiled. Schools, great institutions that were built on the sweat and the blood of sacrificial Christians of some generations ago, now endowed by the easily acquired

millions of Pharisaic pundits who are clamorously anxious to let their right hands, and everyone else's right hand for that matter, know what their left hands are doing, have sold their royal birthright for the very messy pottage of Higher Criticism. Many of our pulpits are filled by men who deny the inspiration of Scripture, the virgin birth of the SAVIOUR, the efficacy of the atonement, the resurrection from the dead, the judgment, Heaven and hell. Our schools, in increasing numbers, taught by unbelievers, are spouting forth a morass of denial of the tenets of our religion that shake the foundation of home-learned and church-acquired faith in the hearts, souls, lives of grade-school, high-school, university, technical-school, and even seminary students.

In the train of infidelity has come intemperance - intemperance in money making, in eating, drinking, pleasure-seeking, and in every other venture and adventure of living. Without thought or consideration of GOD or of man, without any appreciation of the traditions of our forebears, without any regard for the needs of coming generations, without any recognition of the obedience and responsibility due to GOD, we have taken the prosperity that has been so gratuitously and graciously sent upon us and have gone on a spree of high living that would make the most wicked among the ancients blush with shame. It has wrecked our nerves, robbed our vitality, ruined our influence. Generations yet to be born - should the Lord withhold His coming - will bear and pay in toil and travail, in pain and penalty, for the orgies of this day.

Hard upon the heels of infidelity and intemperance has come impurity. Having dethroned GOD and denied CHRIST, having destroyed the Bible's hold upon the hearts of the people, having reduced the divine in man into physiological, psychological, philosophical, natural, and, consequently, animal level, it is small wonder that the code of the jungle has come to rule in ethical, physical, social, financial, political affairs. Having blotted out the fear of death and judgment, having nullified the existence of a blissful Heaven as well as of a burning hell, there is but one thing left - this present life. Eat, then; drink, then; be merry, then; live this life to the full, drain its cup to the very dregs. There is no pleasure in the grave. There is no life to come.

This trinity of evil has replaced the holy Trinity. We need a visitation from GOD to change it. Our everyday activities will not suffice. Our regular programs will not avail. Our ordinary evangelistic campaigns will not succeed. We need a demonstration by fire. We need a cataclysm like Sodom and Gomorrah. We need a manifestation like Mt. Carmel. We need an impartation like that of Pentecost.

II. THE COURSE WE MUST PURSUE

Turn to the text again. Now, read. There are two things GOD wants us to do. We must "**return unto the Lord.**" We must "**follow on to know the Lord.**" Yes, returning unto the Lord for revival should be the cry of every person in every pulpit, in every pew, in every prayer closet. "**Let us return unto the Lord**" in penitence. Let us confess and forsake our sins. Judgment in this case, as ever, must begin in the house of the Lord. In the secrecy of our prayer closets, in the publicity of our church services, let us retrace our steps back to GOD and to His CHRIST. Let us face our GOD, and, asking Him to reveal every secret evil and fault in our souls, let us promise Him that we shall declare unceasing, unending war against Satan and all the myrmidons of hell. Regardless of cost or consequence, regardless of pains or penalties, let us beseech GOD to strip us of every idol, no matter how near or how dear to our hearts it may be, that stands between us

and the fullness of GOD's power.

"Let us return unto the Lord" in prayer. Surely, no Christian in all the world needs be told that prayer is power, that, as without faith it is impossible to please GOD, so without prayer it is impossible to press GOD. No great outpouring of GOD's SPIRIT ever came upon the church, upon any city or nation, until the people of GOD were prostrate on their faces, claiming the promises of GOD. Search out the reason for the greatness of the evangelistic victories of the generations that have past. Invariably they were preceded and accompanied by seasons of intense supplication and intercession. Now turn to the meetings of this day. How weak, how small, what little crowds, what paucity of results!

Is GOD's arm shortened that He can no longer save? Is His ear heavy that He can no longer hear? No, brethren, the fault is not GOD's. How long has it been since there has been an all-night prayer meeting in your church, or even an after-service special prayer meeting? How long do you stay in the presence of GOD in your prayer meeting? How quickly do people get tired of being with GOD! How watchful the evangelist or the pastor has to be not to keep them too late, the members of the church, for fear they will not come back! GOD have mercy on our prayerless hearts, on our prayerless churches!

After returning to the Lord in penitence and in prayer, we must follow on in devoted, loyal, surrendered, intelligent, untiring, sacrificial obedience. With clean hearts, obtained through the exercise of repentance, with SPIRIT-possessed souls, received in answer to tarrying prayer, we must do the will of GOD in every way in which GOD puts it upon our hearts. That, too, is an absolute condition of a great revival. The Lord knows our hearts. We cannot lie to Him. Vaporous words of devotion will not suffice. He will not trust us with what is, next to salvation, the greatest of all His gifts, the gift of the SPIRIT, unless He knows that we are going to use this Pentecostal power for the advancement of His kingdom and the salvation of the lost. It is not enough to sing, "Where He leads me, I will follow," and then go home to bed, tired or not tired. It is not enough to go down the aisle in a mass dedication, and, in the grip of a passing emotion, make a promise of obedience to GOD, only to have it forgotten the minute the benediction amen is said. GOD cannot, does not, will not empower people of that caliber. When the heart, the soul, the mind, the hand, the feet, all mean what the lips say, the fire will fall. It always has. GOD is the same yesterday, today, forever.

III. THE CONSEQUENCES THAT WILL FOLLOW

Dwell on the text once more. Three things GOD promises to do for us in this great answer to penitence, prayer, and perseverance. All three of them are revival blessings. First, He will heal us, He will bind us up. Recall that other marvelous assurance of GOD's word: **"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from Heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."** Our land needs healing. Our homes need healing. Our own hearts need healing. The disease of sin has taken possession and is claiming the lives of millions among us. When the revival fires begin to burn, when the balm of Gilead is applied to the sin-sick sinners all about us, GOD will heal the cancer of the soul, the tuberculosis of the heart, the slow fever of the mind - all induced by sin. We need healing economically, socially, politically, nationally, internationally. GOD is the Great Physician. Where the panaceas, the quackeries, the misguided

diagnoses of reformers, speculators, so-called scientists, statesmen, diplomats, and New Dealers have but encouraged the ravages of Satan, the power of GOD will stop him.

Second, He will revive us, He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight. We need reviving. Our hearts have grown cold, our souls timid, our minds becluttered by the fears and burdens of the things of this world. Our desires are little. Our expectations are low. We boast of the few accomplishments we have achieved, measure ourselves by other peoples, other churches, other communities, other denominations, and are content with the thought that others are doing less than we are. We need reviving! We need reviving!

We need reviving in our love for CHRIST!
We need reviving in our loyalty to the Word!
We need reviving in our longing for the souls of men!

We need our personal piety, our prayer lives, our preaching activities, our personal working revived. We may talk about, gather in conventions to deplore, the absence of power, and devise ways and means to achieve it, but until a Pentecostal revival sweeps the land, coldness, indifference, unconcern, will be the rule instead of the exception in the activities of the kingdom. Let us pray down a revival. Let the fires of apostolic intensity for the service of GOD and the souls of men begin to burn, and we shall all be raised up. We shall all go on in newness of vital life.

Third, "**He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.**" We need that also. Our lives are as parched ground, clodded, tracked, cruel, after months, years of deadly drought. We need the showers of GOD's presence, of GOD's power. Drops have fallen here and there. Once in every long while we hear of a great meeting here or a great meeting somewhere else. Our hearts rejoice with those of the brethren whom GOD has so honored and favored. Inevitably there comes the question, "Why could not this happen in my own field, in my own part of the vineyard of the Lord, in my own church or community?" These infrequent rains are but a sign to us that the treasuries of GOD are still unexhausted and inexhaustible, that Jehovah is still on the giving hand, that whenever and wherever His simple conditions are complied with, Pentecost will repeat itself. These unusual happenings are a standing rebuke to our laxness, to our little faith, to our failure to avail ourselves of the might of GOD.

The HOLY SPIRIT of GOD, sent down by the enthroned JESUS of the Day of Pentecost, is standing at the door of every preacher, of every church member, of every evangelist, pastor, deacon, Sunday-school teacher, B. T. U. leader, W. M. S. officer, pleading that we open our hearts to Him so that He may flood us with the outpouring of the former and the latter rains of His great grace and glory.

Brethren in CHRIST, great things will come to pass this year, if we shall but walk in the way of Hosea 6:1-3. Consciously or unconsciously, realizing their fearful need, or blinded by the GOD of this world, concerned and unconcerned, the people of the nation, may I say, of the nations, are looking to us in this great endeavor. Starving, bread-of-life hungry multitudes are looking to us, aching of heart, troubled of mind, distressed of soul, mutely pleading that we lead them to the fountain of life that flowed from Immanuel's veins.

In the name of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, in the name of the vows of love and loyalty that we made to Him, in the name of the devil-ridden, soul-lost myriads about us, let us fearlessly envision the conditions we face; let us pursue the course GOD has set out for us; let us claim in the name of the SAVIOUR, standing on the promises of GOD's Word, inerrant, unchangeable, unshakeable, the power GOD has offered to us.

~ end of chapter 2 ~
