

REVIVAL – CONFESSION OF SINS
Revival
Banska Stiavnica, 9 January 2020

<p>Ps 32:5</p> <p style="text-align: center;">חַטָּאתִי אֶדְרִיעַךְ וְעוֹנִי לֹא־כִסִּיתִי אֶמְרָתִי אֶדְרָה עָלַי פֶּשְׁעֵי לִיהוָה וְאַתָּה נָשָׂאתָ עוֹן חַטָּאתִי</p>	<p>Ps 32:5 I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.</p>
<p>Mk 1:5 καὶ ἐξεπορεύετο πρὸς αὐτὸν πᾶσα ἡ Ἰουδαία χώρα καὶ οἱ Ἱεροσολυμίται πάντες, καὶ ἐβαπτίζοντο ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ ποταμῷ ἐξομολογούμενοι τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν.</p>	<p>Mk 1:5 And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins</p>
<p>James 5:16 καὶ ἡ εὐχὴ τῆς πίστεως σώσει τὸν κάμνοντα καὶ ἐγερεῖ αὐτὸν ὁ κύριος· καὶ ἡ ἁμαρτία ἢ πεποικώς, ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ</p>	<p>James 5:16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.</p>
<p>Mt 18:18 Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν· ὅσα ἂν δήσητε ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται δεδεμένα ἐν οὐρανῷ, καὶ ὅσα ἂν λύσητε ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται λελυμένα ἐν οὐρανῷ</p>	<p>Mt 18:18 Truly, I say to you, whatever <u>you</u> (<i>plural</i>) bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.</p>
<p>Eph 5:12 τὰ γὰρ κρυφῆ γινόμενα ὑπ' αὐτῶν αἰσχρὸν ἔστιν καὶ λέγειν</p>	<p>Eph 5:12 For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret</p>

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0. INTRODUCTION

0.1. THE PROBLEM

- [Oswald J. Smith *The Revival We Need*] Now, how May we secure such an Outpouring of the Spirit? You answer, by prayer. True, but there is something before prayer. We will have to deal first of all with the question of sin; for unless our lives are right in the sight of God, unless sin has

been put away, we may pray until doomsday, and the Revival will never come.

- [FINNEY *Revival Lectures*] A revival always includes conviction of sin on the part of the church. Backslidden professors cannot wake up and begin right away in the service of God, without deep searchings of heart. The fountains of sin need to be broken up. In a true revival, Christians are always brought under such convictions; they see their sins in such a light, that often they find it impossible to maintain a hope of their acceptance with God. It does not always go to that extent; but there are always, in a genuine revival, deep convictions of sin, and often cases of abandoning all hope.

0.2. PSYCHOLOGY OF REPENTANCE

- Isa 59:2 Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you so that He will not hear.
- [LLOYD-JONES *Revival*, p. 40-41] The third great cardinal article of belief which has been ignored is man in sin and under the wrath of God. Here is a doctrine that the natural man abominates. He feels that it is insulting to him. ... Men and women in the midst of revival are, at first, conscious of two things above everything else. One is their own unutterable sinfulness. When you have a revival you see men and women groaning, agonising under the conviction of sin. They are so conscious of their **unworthiness**, and their **vileness**, that they feel that they cannot live. They do not know what to do with themselves. They cannot sleep. They are in an agony of soul. If you read the history, you will see that that is the thing which stands out. The fact that is taught in the Bible is that the human heart is 'deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?' (Jer. 17. 9).
- [EDWARDS *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God*] Now the **conviction** of sinners for their conversion is the obtaining of the end of religious means. Not but that I think the persons thus extraordinarily moved, should endeavour to refrain from such outward manifestations, what they well can, and should refrain to their utmost, at the time of their solemn worship. But if God is pleased to convince the consciences of persons, so that they cannot avoid great outward manifestations, even to interrupting and breaking off those public means they were attending, I do not think this is confusion, or an unhappy interruption, any more than if a company should meet on the field to pray for rain, and should be broken off from their exercise by a plentiful shower. Would to God that all the public assemblies in the land were broken off from their public exercises with such confusion as this the next sabbath day! We need not be sorry for breaking the order of means, by obtaining the end to which that order is directed. He who is going to fetch a treasure, need not be sorry that he is stopped, by meeting the treasure in the midst of his journey
- [EDWARDS *Religious Affections*, p. 65] This seems to be what some persons lay a great weight upon; esteeming **great terrors** an evidence of the great work of the law as wrought on the heart, well preparing the way for solid comfort; not considering that terror and a conviction of conscience are different things. For though convictions of conscience do often cause terror; yet they do not consist in it; and terrors do often arise from other causes. Convictions of conscience, through the influences of God's Spirit, consist in conviction of sinfulness of heart and practices and of the dreadfulness of sins as committed against a God of terrible majesty, infinite **holiness** and hatred of sin, and strict justice in punishing of it. But there are some persons that have frightful apprehensions of hell, a dreadful pit ready to swallow them up, and flames just ready to lay hold of them, and devils around them, ready to seize them; who at the same time seem to have very little proper enlightenings of conscience really convincing them of their sinfulness of heart and life. The devil, if permitted, can terrify men as well as the Spirit of God, it is a work natural to him, and he has many ways of doing it, in a manner tending to no good.

0.3. EXAMPLES

- extreme(?)
- [FINNEY *Autobiography*]

I had not spoken to them in this strain of direct application, I should think, more than a quarter of an hour, when all at once an awful solemnity seemed to settle down upon them; the congregation began to fall from their seats in every direction, and cried for mercy. If I had had a sword in each hand, I could not have cut them off their seats as fast as they fell. Indeed nearly the whole congregation were either on

their knees or prostrate, I should think, in less than two minutes from this first shock that fell upon them. Every one prayed for himself, who was able to speak at all.

- [WESLEY *Journal*]

Wed. 28. — I received farther accounts from Limerick; one letter ran thus: — “July 20, 1762. “There is a glorious work going on at Limerick. Twelve or fourteen have a clear sense of being renewed; several have been justified this week; and on Sunday night, at the meeting of the society, there was such a cry as I scarce ever heard before, such confession of sins, such pleading with the Lord, and such a spirit of prayer, as if the Lord himself had been visibly present among us. Some received remission of sins, and several were just brought to the birth. All were in floods of **tears**: They **trembled**, they **cried**, they **prayed**, they **roared** aloud; all of them lying on the ground. I began to sing; yet they could not rise, but sang as they lay along. When we concluded, some of them could not go away, but stayed in the House all night: And, blessed be our Lord, they all hitherto walk worthy of their calling.”

- [WHITEFIELD *Journal*, 1739]

Though God has shewn me great Things already in this Place, yet to To-day I have seen greater. I preached twice with Power, and to larger Congregations than ever: And in the Evening went to fettle a Society of young Women, who I hope will prove wife Virgins.—As soon as I entered the Room, and heard them **singing**, my Soul was uncommonly delighted. When the Hymn was over, I desired to pray before I began to converse: But, contrary to my Expectations, my Soul was so carried out that I had not Time to talk at all. A wonderful Power was in the Room, and with one Accord, they began to cry out and weep most bitterly for the Space of half an Hour. They seemed to be under the strongest Convictions, and did indeed seek Jesus sorrowing. Their Cries might be heard a great Way off. When I had done, I thought proper to leave them at their Devotions. They continued in Prayer (as I was informed by one of them afterwards) for above an Hour, confessing their most secret Faults: And at length the Agonies of some were so strong, that five of them seemed affected as those that are in Fits.

1. SINS AND THE HOLINESS OF GOD

- confrontation → conviction → confession → repentance

[REID W. (ed.) *Authentic Records of Revival Now in Progress in the United Kingdom*, p. 87] Same day, in the National School connected with the Presbyterian church, two children, a boy twelve years of age, and a girl ten, were "stricken," and the convulsive sobbing shook their breasts, and the tears poured in torrents, when each was asked, "What's wrong, dear?" "Sin, sir, sin—such a load of sin on my heart? In persons so young it is not easy knowing whether a saving change has followed.

1.1. CONVICTION BY THE PRESENCE

- **Isa 6:1-5** In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ...⁵ And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"
- **Isa 33:14** The sinner in Zion are afraid; trembling [רַעְדָה] has seized the godless: "Who among us can dwell with the consuming fire (מי יגור לנו אש אוכלת)? Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings (מי יגור לנו מוקדי עולם)?"

[James BURNS *Revivals, their Laws and Leaders*, p. 21] Under the pressure of this agony of conviction men openly confess their sins. They go through the long and terrible catalogue, hiding nothing; their one intense longing is to cast their sins for ever from them, and be brought into reconciliation and be at peace with God. 'I simply cannot describe the scene,' says one who recently passed through such an experience in Manchuria. It made one think of the Judgment Day. God had come among us. All knew it, and every heart was open before Him. For myself, I had the most intense realisation of the holiness of God, and of my uncleanness in His sight.'

1.2. THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER

- (MCGAW *Praying Hyde*, 1923, p. 21) At once you knew you were in the holy presence of God, where there could be only awful reality. Others in the room were forgotten except when the combined prayers and praises made you realize the strength and power and sympathy of such

fellowship.

2. THE SOURCES OF RELIGIOUS EMOTIONS

- [EDWARDS *Religious Affections*, p. 166] Those affections that are truly holy, are primarily founded on the loveliness of the moral excellency of divine things.

2.1. SPIRITUAL WARFARE

[WESLEY *Addresses, Essays, Letters*] “One John Haydon, a man of a regular life and conversation, being informed that people fell into strange fits at the societies, came to see and judge for himself...labored above measure to convince them it was a delusion of the devil. We were going home, when one met us in the street, and informed us that J. H. was fallen raving mad. It seems he had sat down to dinner, but had a mind first to end the sermon on ‘Salvation by Faith.’ In reading the last page, he changed color, fell off his chair, and began screaming terribly, and beating himself against the ground ... Two or three men were holding him as well as they could. He immediately fixed his eyes upon me, and cried, ‘Ay, this is he, who I said was a deceiver of the people. But God has overtaken me. I said it was all a delusion. But this is no delusion.’ He then roared out, ‘O thou devil! Thou cursed devil! Yea, thou legion of devils! Thou canst not stay! Christ will cast thee out. I know his work is begun. Tear me to pieces if thou wilt, but thou canst not hurt me.’ He then beat himself against the ground again, his breast heaving at the same time, as in the pangs of death, and great drops of sweat trickling down his face. We all betook ourselves to prayer. His pangs ceased, and both his body and soul were set at liberty.”

2.2. LOVE

- **Acts 3:14-15** But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, ¹⁵ and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. ... **Acts 3:25** You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers
- → Sense of shame

[John HAMILTON, minister of the Barony parish of Glasgow]¹ the extraordinary work at Cambuslang, ... And though some of them said that they had regularly attended the preaching of the gospel, yet they acknowledged with much regret their misimprovement of it; that they had heard many sweet (1) sermons without benefit, and had come to (2) church only to see and be seen. I have heard them express great sorrow for these things, and seemingly in the most serious and sincere manner, and this not so much, as some of them told me, from fear of punishment as from a sense of the dishonour done to God and the blessed Redeemer.

[Alexander WEBSTER, Edinburgh]... Thousands are melted into tears. Many cry out in the bitterness of their soul. Some of both sexes, and all ages, from the stoutest man to the tenderest child, shake and tremble, and a few fall down as dead. Nor does this happen only when men of warm address alarm them with the terrors of the law, but when the most deliberate preacher speaks of redeeming love. Bring them to Mount Sinai, where the thunder roars and lightnings flash, and this may occasion greater outcry: but lead them to the consolations that are in Jesus, and then vastly greater numbers fall under the most kindly impressions.

3. “MECHANISM”

- → how to get the conviction of sin?
- [18th century, Cambuslang p. 56] But even the more blameless declared, that till now, their hearts had never been touched with the word; that they had never till now felt the influence of religion, but were altogether unconcerned.

3.1. HELPS TO CONVICTION OF SINS

- FINNEY *Revival Lectures*:

SINS OF OMISSION (1) Ingratitude (2) Want of love to God (3) Neglect of the Bible (4) Unbelief (5) Neglect of prayer (6) Neglect of the means of grace (7) The manner in which you have performed

¹ MACFARLAN, D. *Revivals of the Eighteenth Century*, (Cambuslang), p. 55.

those duties (8) Want of love for the souls of your fellow-men (9) Want of care for the heathen (10) Neglect of family duties Neglect of social duties (11) Neglect for watch over your brethren (12) Neglect of self-denial

SINS OF COMMISSION (1) Worldly mindedness (2) Pride (3) Envy (4) Censoriousness (5) Slander (6) Levity (7) Lying (8) Cheating (9) Hypocrisy (10) Robbing God (11) Bad temper (12) Hindering others from being useful

3.2. PUBLIC MEETINGS

- Wesley: *The Nature Design and General Rules of the United Societies in London, Bristol, Kingswood, and Newcastle upon Tyne*, 1747.

1. What known Sins have you committed since our last Meeting?
2. What Temptations have you met with?
3. How was you delivered?
4. What have you thought, said, or done, of which you doubt whether it be a Sin or not?
5. Have you nothing you desire to keep secret?

3.3. PRIVATE CONFESSION

- [SPRAGUE *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, p. 165-6]

The searching and probing of his own heart, and the recollection of his sins, is a work peculiarly for the closet; because there the mind is least likely to be diverted by external objects and circumstances. I know there is a strong tendency in most persons who are awakened, to mingle continually in public religious exercises. This may be the easiest, but it is not the safest or most desirable course.

- [FINNEY *Autobiography*, p. 262-3]

He had been at the meeting that evening, and the sermon had torn him to pieces. He went home in a terrible state of mind, his convictions and distress increasing till it overcame his bodily strength; and his family feared he would die. Although it was in the midst of such a terrific storm, they dispatched a messenger for me. We had to face the storm, and walked perhaps fifty or sixty rods. I heard his moanings, or rather howlings, before I got near the house. When I entered I found him sitting on the floor, his wife, I believe, supporting his head and what a look in his face! It was indescribable. Accustomed as I was to seeing persons under great convictions, I must confess that his appearance gave me a tremendous shock. He was writhing in agony, grinding his teeth, and literally gnawing his tongue for pain. He cried out to me, "Oh, Mr. Finney! I am lost! I am a lost soul!" I was greatly shocked and exclaimed, "If this is conviction, what is hell?" However, I recovered myself as soon as I could, and sat down by his side. At first he found it difficult to attend; but I soon led his thoughts to the way of salvation through Christ. I pressed the Savior upon his attention and upon his acceptance. His burden was soon removed. He was persuaded to trust the Savior, and he came out free and joyful in hope.

4. TO REMEMBER

- Confession of sins belongs to God. In revival it becomes public because of the powerful experience of the holiness of God.
- Conviction must precede confession and confession has to be "channeled" properly where it belongs: to the offended parties (1) God, (2) men, (3) church
- Naming concrete sins in public has to be discouraged, if it does not belong to the nature of necessary restitution.