Revive Thy Work, O Lord!

By Andrew Murray

Revival is God's work! He alone can give it. It must come from above. We are in danger of looking to what God has done, and is doing, and count on that as the pledge that He will do more. And all the time it may be true that He is blessing us up to the measure of our faith and self-sacrifice, and cannot give more until there has been a new discovery and confession of what is hindering Him.

Or we may be looking to the signs of life around us, and congratulating ourselves on all the agencies that are being created, while the need of God's mighty and direct involvement is not rightly felt, and entire dependence on Him is not cultivated.

To have the spiritual discernment that can understand the signs of the heavens, and indicate a coming revival, we need to enter deep into God's mind and will, as to its conditions, and the preparedness of those who pray for it—to bring it about. *"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets"* (Amos 3:7). It is the spirit of absolute dependence upon God, giving Him the honor and glory, that will prepare for revival.

Revival Is the Fruit of Prayer

Revival must be asked and received directly from God Himself. An extraordinary spirit of prayer, constraining believers to much secret and united prayer, pressing them to "labor fervently" in their supplications, will be one of the surest signs of approaching floods of blessing. If there is to be a mighty Divine awakening it will be born in the wholeheartedness of our prayer and faith for it.

Let no believer think himself too weak to help, or imagine his prayers are not needed. Let every believer stir up the gift that is in him and begin to cry every day, *"Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?"* (Psalm 85:6).

Every revival has come as Pentecost came, as the fruit of united, continued prayer. It is in the closet, with the door shut, that the sound of abundance of rain will be heard. An increase of secret and united prayer with ministers and members will be a sure harbinger of blessing.

"Thus saith the high and lofty One…I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit…to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Is. 57:15). It is to the humble and contrite ones that revival is promised.

We want revival to come upon the proud and the satisfied, to break them down at His feet. God will give this—but only on the condition that those who feel the sins of others take their burden of confession and bear it, and that all who pray for God's reviving power for His Church, shall humble themselves and confess the sins of the nation and of the people of God.

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Humiliation and contrition have ever been the conditions of revival. If there is no humiliation and forsaking of sin there can be no revival or God's merciful intervention in our behalf. *"These men have set up their idols in their heart…should I be inquired of…for them?"* (Ezek. 14:3).

"To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my Word" (Is. 65:2). Amid the most gracious promises of Divine visitation, there is ever this note: *"Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O House of Israel"* (Is. 36:32).

The Sermon on the Mount promises the Kingdom to the poor and to them that mourn. In the Epistles the religion of man of worldly wisdom and confidence in the flesh, is denounced. Without sin being confessed and forsaken, all the promises of grace and of the Spirit are rendered void.

Revival Dependent on Repentance

All the glorious promises given to five out of the seven churches in the Book of Revelation, are dependent on the one word—repent!

If there is to be a revival among our churches to give a holy, spiritual membership, that trumpet needs to be heard—repent! In the Church of our day there is a prevalent idolatry of money and talent and culture, a worldly spirit, making it unfaithful to its one and only Husband and Lord.

There is a confidence in the flesh that grieves and resists God's Holy Spirit. Let all who long for revival hasten it by asking the Lord to prepare His prophets to go before His face, crying aloud and sparing not, lifting up their voice like a trumpet and showing His people their transgressions (Is. 58:1).

Every revival has had its root in a deep confession of sin. Until those who lead the Church in the path of revival bear fruitful testimony against the sins of the Church, there is no breaking up of the fallow ground, no seeking of the Lord till He comes and rains righteousness upon us (Hos. 10:12).

Men are trying to bring revival through their agencies. God's revival will come out of death, acknowledged as the desert of sin, confessed as utter helplessness. It is as we return to the Lord that revival will come!

O let us return, in the surrender of a dependence and a devotion which has no measure but the absolute claim of Him who is the Lord! Let us return to the Lord with our whole heart that He may make us wholly His. Let us turn to the God of Pentecost, and the God of Pentecost will turn to us!

It is for this returning to the Lord that the great work of intercession is needed. It is here the coming revival will find its strength. Let us begin as individuals in secret to plead with God, confessing whatever we know of sin or hindrance in ourselves or others. Let us seek to foster the spirit of confession and supplication and intercession in those around us.

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Let us help to encourage and train those who think themselves too feeble. Let us lift up our voice and proclaim that revival is brought down from above by prayer, and that revival comes to the humble and contrite ones.

Among God's people everywhere let there be "great searchings of heart" as to whether they are willing to deny themselves and give the time and strength that the Lord requires to praying through for revival. Let every minister and Christian worker, and every believer give himself or herself in secret to their places in the front rank of the great intercession-host that must prevail with God before the floods of blessing can come.

Of all who speak or think of or long for revival, let us not one hold back in this great work of honest, definite, continual, unceasing pleading: *"O Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy"* (Hab. 3:2).

"Come…let us return unto the Lord…He [will] revive us…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 unto the earth" (Hos. 6:1-3).

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