

# The Price and Power of Revival

by Duncan Campbell

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*The Church today needs a Holy Spirit revival to meet the desperate need of the hour, and this can only be achieved by seeking power from on high and being separate from all that is unclean.*

**Scripture:** Isaiah 64:1-2, Matthew 5:14-16, John 14:12, Acts 1:8, Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 2:4-5, Ephesians 3:20, 1 Thessalonians 5:19, 2 Timothy 1:7, James 4:10

**Topics:** "Power of the Holy Spirit", "Revival"

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## Description

Duncan Campbell emphasizes the necessity of divine power for true revival, contrasting the early Church's reliance on the Holy Spirit with today's trend towards entertainment in evangelism. He questions why the modern Church does not experience the supernatural as the early believers did, suggesting that the focus should be on seeking God's unction rather than human influence. Campbell warns against compromising the message of the Gospel for the sake of popularity, advocating for a return to the profound and disturbing truths of Scripture. He calls for a revival characterized by genuine power from on high, urging believers to fully surrender to God to experience His transformative presence. Ultimately, Campbell asserts that revival is birthed through deep prayer and a commitment to holiness.

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## Transcript

In this passage, I discover that a power is placed at the disposal of the Church that can outmaneuver and baffle the very strategy of Hell, and cause death and defeat to vanish before the presence of the Lord of Life. Barrenness is made to feel His fertilizing power.

Yet, how is it that while we make such great claims for the power of the Gospel, we see so little of the supernatural in operation? Is there any reason why the Church today cannot everywhere equal the Church at Pentecost? I feel this is a question we ought to face with an open mind and an honest heart. What did the early Church have that we do not possess today? Nothing but the Holy Spirit, nothing but the power of God. Here I would suggest that one of the main secrets of success in the early Church lay in the fact that the early believers believed in unction from on high and not entertainment from men.

One of the very sad features that characterizes much that goes under the name of evangelism today is the craze for entertainment. Here is an extract from a letter received from a leader in youth work in one of your great cities: "We are at our wits' end to know what to do with the young people who made a profession of conversion recently. They are demanding all sorts of entertainment, and it seems to us that if we fail to provide the entertainment that they want, we are not going to hold them." Yes, the trend of the time in

which we live is toward a Christian experience that is light and flippant and fed on entertainment.

Some time ago, I listened to a young man give his testimony. He made a decision quite recently, and in giving his testimony this is what he said: "I have discovered that the Christian way of life can best be described, not as a battle, but as a song mingled with the sound of happy laughter." Far be it from me to move the song or happy laughter from religion, but I want to protest that that young man's conception was entirely wrong, and not in keeping with true New Testament Christianity.

"Oh, but," say the advocates of this way of thinking, "how are we to get the people if we do not provide some sort of entertainment?" To that I ask the question, how did they get the people at Pentecost? How did the early Church get the people? By publicity projects, by bills, by posters, by parades, by pictures? No! The people were arrested and drawn together and brought into vital relationship with God, not by sounds from men, but by sounds from heaven. We are in need of more sounds from heaven today.

Pentecost was its own publicity. I love that passage in Acts that tells us that "when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together." What was noised abroad? That men and women were coming under deep conviction. That was God's method of publicity, and until the Church of Jesus Christ rediscovers this and acts upon it, we shall at our best appear to a mad world as a crowd of common people in a common market babbling about common wares. The early Church cried for unction and not for entertainment. Uncion is the dire and desperate need of the ministry today.

Further, the early Church put power before influence. The present state of our country presents a challenge to the Christian Church. Those who have eyes to see tell us that at this very hour forces are taking the field that are out to defy every known Christian principle.

In many quarters there is today a growing conviction that unless God moves, unless there is a demonstration of the supernatural in the midst of men, unless we are moved up into the realm of the Divine, we shall soon find ourselves caught up in a counterfeit movement, but a movement that goes under the name of evangelism. There are ominous sighs today that the devil is out to sidetrack us in the sphere of evangelism, and we are going to become satisfied with something less than Heaven wills to give us. Nothing but a Holy Spirit revival will meet the desperate need of the hour.

The early Church, the men of Pentecost, had something beyond mere human influence and human ingenuity. But what do we mean by influence? The sum total of all the forces in our personality--mental, moral, academic, social, and religious. We can have all these, and we can have them at their highest level, and yet be destitute of power. Power, not influence, was the watchword of the early Church.

While at the Keswick Convention, it was my privilege to spend an afternoon with a leader in foreign mission activity. I was arrested by what that man said to me. Here are his words: "Our Bible schools are turning out young men and young women who are cultured and polished, but who lack power." I want to suggest that he was near to the truth. We may be polished, we may have culture, but the cry of our day is for power from on high.

I could take you to a little cottage in the Hebrides and introduce you to a young woman. She is not educated. One could not say that she was polished in the sense that we use the word, but I have known that young woman to pray heaven into a community, to pray power into a meeting. I have known that young woman to be so caught in the power of the Holy Spirit that men and women around her were made to tremble--not influence, but power.

The Apostles were not men of influence--"not many mighty, not many noble." The Master Himself did not choose to be a man of influence. "He made Himself of no reputation," which is to say that God chose power rather than influence. I sometimes think of Paul and Silas in Philippi. They had not enough influence to keep them out of prison, but possessed the power of God in such a manner that their prayers in prison shook the whole prison to its very foundations. Not influence, but power.

Oh, that the Church today, in our congregations and in our pulpits, would rediscover this truth and get back to the place of God realization, to the place of power. I want to say further that we should seek power even at the expense of influence. What do I mean by that? I mean this: never compromise to accommodate the devil. I hear people say today, "These are different days from the days of the 1859 Revival or the Welsh Revival. We must be tolerant and we must try to accommodate." The secret of power is separation from all that is unclean. We must seek power even at the expense of influence.

Think again of the great Apostle Paul. What an opportunity he had of gaining influence with Felix. Had he but flattered him a little in his sin, he could have made a great impression, and I believe he could have got a handsome donation for his missionary effort by being tolerant, by accommodating the situation. But Paul chose power before influence and he reasoned of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Let Felix say what he will, let Drusilla think as she chooses to think, I must be true to my conscience and to my inner convictions and declare the whole counsel of God and take my stand on the solid ground of separation unto God.

Now the person who will take his stand on that ground will not be popular. He will not be popular with some preachers of today who declare that we must soft-pedal in order to capture and captivate. Here I would quote from the saintly Finney: "Away with your milk and water preaching of the love of Christ that has no holiness or moral discrimination in it, away with preaching a Christ not crucified for sin." Such a collapse of moral conscience in this land could never have happened if the Puritan element in our preaching had not, in great measure, fallen out.

Hear a Highland minister preaching on this very truth: "Bring me a God all mercy but not just, bring me a God all love but not righteous, and I will have no scruples in calling Him an idiot of your imagination." Strong words, but I say words that I would sound throughout our land today, in this age of desperate apostasy, forsaking all the fundamental truths of Scripture. Here you have the Apostles proclaiming a message that was profoundly disturbing. We are afraid of disturbing people today. May God help us; may God have mercy upon us.

I would to God that a wave of real godly fear gripped our land. Let me quote from a sermon delivered by the Rev. Robert Barr of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa: "This is what our age needs, not an easy-moving message, the sort of thing that makes the hearer feel all nice inside, but a message profoundly disturbing. We have been far too afraid of disturbing people, but the Holy Spirit will have nothing to do with a message or with a minister who is afraid of disturbing. You might as well expect a surgeon to give place to a quack who claims to be able to do the job with some sweet tasting drug, as expect the Holy Spirit to agree that the tragic plight of human souls today can be met by soft and easy words. Calvary was anything but nice to look at, blood-soaked beams of wood, a bruised and bleeding body, not nice to look upon. But then Jesus was not dealing with a nice thing; He was dealing with the sin of the world, and that is what we are called upon to deal with today. Soft and easy words, soft-pedaling will never meet the need."

Finally, the early Church believed in the supernatural. Someone has said that at Pentecost, God set the Church at Jerusalem on fire and the whole city came out to see it burn. I tell you if that happened in any church today, within hours the whole of the town would be out to see the burning, and they would be caught in the flames.

It is fire we want. The best advertising campaign that any church or any mission can put up is fire in the pulpit and a blaze in the pew. Let us be honest. We say "God, send revival," but are we prepared for the fire?

I believe we have only to regard and observe those laws and limits within which the Holy Spirit acts, and we shall find His glorious power at our disposal. Surely that was the conviction that gripped an elder in the Isle of Lewis when, in a situation that was difficult and trying, he cried, "You made a promise, and I want to remind You that we believe You are a covenant-keeping God. Your honor is at stake." That man was at the end of his tether; that man was in the place of travail.

Revival is not going to come merely by attending conferences. When "Zion travailed she brought forth children." Oh, may God bring us there, may God lead us through to the place of absolute surrender. Is it not true that our very best moments of yielding and consecration are mingled with the destructive element of self-preservation? A full and complete surrender is the price of blessing; it is the price of revival.

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