

# On Corporate and Personal Revival

by Henry C. Fish

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*The sermon emphasizes the imperative need for revival and the importance of personal and corporate efforts to revive primitive piety and experience the power of the Holy Spirit.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 85:6, Isaiah 64:8, Joel 2:28, Luke 11:13, Acts 2:42, Galatians 6:9, Hebrews 10:24, James 4:8, 1 Peter 4:7, Revelation 22:12

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Personal Revival"

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## Description

Henry C. Fish, a Baptist preacher, emphasizes the need for a revival of primitive piety in the Christian Church, calling for singleness of aim, self-sacrifice, and zealous evangelism to save the lost. He urges believers to seek a return to the apostolic fervor of Pentecost, filled with the Holy Spirit for greater works and a deeper consecration to Christ. Fish encourages ministers to lead in promoting holiness and revival, while challenging all believers to strive for spiritual growth, personal revival, and active engagement in God's kingdom work.

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## Transcript

Henry C. Fish was a Baptist preacher in New York and a prolific writer from the mid 1800's. Unless you like obscure books, he is totally unknown today. This extract is from his book entitled "Primitive Piety Revived, or The Aggressive Power Of The Christian Church."

And is there an imperative necessity for more singleness of aim, and trustful, self-sacrificing, zealous endeavor, on the part of the respective members of Christ's body, for the saving of their dying fellow men? It would no longer exist, if primitive piety were but universally revived. When it prevailed, each disciple considered himself as called to the work of evangelizing the world, and went forth giving to it a practical illustration in his daily life. What is needful, then, save a return of the scenes of apostolic days, especially those of the ever memorable Pentecostal revival of the simplicity of purpose,--the entire consecration,--the scriptural faith,--the self-denial for Christ,--the earnestness and individualism of effort, so signally developed in the early triumphs of Christianity, when the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul; neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possesses was his own, and "great grace was upon them all."

And why may we not anticipate the return of Pentecostal seasons? Why may not Christians now be "filled with the Holy Ghost," as were they in primitive times? Not for the working of miracles, it is true, but for the doing of "greater works than these," is the special presence of God's Spirit available still, for the disciples

of Christ. Moreover, is there not left for our encouragement, the assurance of God's readiness to bestow that Spirit? Behold how the Saviour has condescended to reason the case with us! "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him!" Why, therefore, despairingly lament that Zion languishes? Why deplore the many defects in Christian character, and the worldliness and impiety that prevail, with no efforts toward their removal?

"Whence do our mournful thoughts arise,

And where's our courage fled?"

God lives! He still watches over the interests of his kingdom on earth. He waits to be gracious. He will hear prayer, and bestow his blessing.

Let ministers, then, be more earnest in their endeavors for a general and powerful revival of primitive religion. Let them cry aloud and spare not. Let them set the trumpet to the mouth, and rally the hosts to battle. Let them call upon the people to take to themselves words, and to return unto the Lord with mourning, and with fasting, and with supplication. Let there be weeping once more between the porch and the altar, and the cry heard, "Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them!" Let them preach, and labor, with special reference to more holiness, and deeper religious feeling, and greater engagedness. Let them expect revivals, and not rest satisfied without them. Let them act upon the suggestion of Edwards, and be fellow-helpers in the work,--often meeting together, and acting in concert; since, as he intimates, the very sight or appearance of a thoroughly engaged spirit, together with fearless courage, and unyielding resolution, would do much towards accomplishing the desired end.

And let believers generally strive after higher attainments in spiritual life. Let there be more of that weeping and confessing and praying and covenanting together, among Christians, which characterized the revivals of days gone by, and which always accompany to a greater or less extent, the commencement of a powerful work of grace. Let the great theme be salvation; and the great aim the stirring up of each other's minds by way of remembrance; and the snatching of perishing souls from the everlasting burnings. Let any one believer who mourns over the desolations of Zion, not wait for the revival of the entire congregation, but personally take hold upon the promises, and, in the name of the Lord, resolve never to cease from efforts and prayers for increased religious interest, until it is experienced. What may not one individual, thoroughly in earnest, under God, accomplish!

Fellow Christian; let the work begin in your own bosom! Call upon the Lord to arouse your drowsy soul. Why stand you idle? The future is the time for rest,--the present for action. "In this theatre of man's life, it is reserved only for God and his angels to be lookers-on." Up, then, and seek to compass life's great end. Go work in the Lord's vineyard. He will soon call you to your account. The Judge standeth at the door. The throne will be set. The books will soon be opened, and men's destiny sealed up forever. "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

Have you no spirit for his service? Is your heart cold, and dead? Then take it to Christ.

"None but a bath of blood divine

Can melt the flint away."

Repair again to Calvary, where your heart was first melted. You cannot linger amid the scenes of the crucifixion, and remain unaffected. The Pilgrim in his journey to the Celestial City, saw a cross, and stood still and wondered. He stood and looked, and looked again, "till the springs that were in his head, sent the waters down his cheeks." Draw near, that you may behold a suffering Jesus. Gaze upon that countenance that had borne no other look than that of benevolence. What agony is now depicted! Look again. See those hands, that had been filled only with benefits for men,--that had fed the hungry, opened blind eyes, and ministered healing mercies to the sick,--see them now pierced through with cruel nails! Look again. See those feet, that had borne him up and down, throughout the length and breadth of the land on errands of mercy, now spiked to the wood! And again. See that majestic brow, that had been ever radiant with more than a brother's compassion,--see it now all besprinkled and dripping with blood!

"See from his head, his hands, his feet,

Sorrow and love flow mingled down!"

Look, if you can, still once again. There is that heart, that throbbed with more than a mother's affection,--is it not enough that it has been crushed, till it can beat no more? No, it must bleed! See! they have pierced it with a spear! His heart's blood is pouring forth! And for what? Wherefore all this?

"Was it for crimes that I had done,

He groaned upon the tree?"

Yes, for you, my brother, all this for you! Surely must such love warm into life the best affections of your soul. Surely must it constrain you to make such returns as lie in your power, by putting forth every possible effort to save those for whom Christ died. And thus yourself revived, encourage this same spirit among your brethren; nor cease, at the mercy-seat of the Everlasting Father, to urge, with the faithful of the earth, the earnest cry, "O Lord, revive thy work!"

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