



REMEMBERING 1904

Historical Review of Revival

Rev. Graham Harrison

The title of this address gives a very wide view of the subject, which allows me freedom to range more widely than simply to concentrate on the revival of 1904. To quote one of the greatest theologians who ever lived and who had personal experience of revival in a quite extraordinary way, Jonathan Edwards in his *History of the Work of Redemption* which contained about twenty sermons covering the whole span of the Bible and church history that he preached during the 1730s, commented on the text, 'Then began men to call on the name of the Lord' [Genesis 4:26], as follows: 'It may be observed that from the fall of man to our day the work of redemption in its effect has mainly been carried on by remarkable communications of the Spirit of God. Though there be a more constant influence of God's Spirit always in some degree attending His ordinances yet the way in which the greatest things have been done towards carrying on this work always have been by remarkable effusions at special seasons of mercy as may fully appear thereafter in our further prosecution of our subject. And this in the days of Enos was the first remarkable pouring out of the Spirit of God that ever was. There had been a saving work of God on the hearts of some before, but now God was pleased to bring in a harvest of souls to Christ so that in this way we see that great building of which God laid the foundation immediately after the fall of man carried on further and built higher than ever it had been before.' Jonathan Edwards went on to make the point that this actually constitutes the first of what we would call revivals - and that is no small claim to make. He stated in fact that God's great means of preserving and advancing His church has been through revivals, and of these this is the first. The fourth chapter of Genesis contains a very depressing account as the terrible consequences of man's sin unfold. But into that situation God intervened and so at the close that chapter Enos began to call on the name of the Lord. Jonathan Edwards believed surely that prayer is not ineffectual and that it has been the means that God has honoured down through the years.

Biblical Revivals

Rev. John Gillies (1712-96), who had deep experience of revival during his ministry of over fifty years in Scotland, wrote his *Historical Collections of Accounts of Revival* in 1754 and Rev. Horatius Bonar (1809-89) produced a new edition of the book in 1845. In his introduction Bonar quoted the writings of Jonathan Edwards and illustrated his claim in terms of the Old Testament by mentioning fourteen occasions when revival can be said to have happened. These included the times of Noah, Abraham, Israel's wanderings in the wilderness, Joshua, the days of the Judges, Samuel, David, Solomon, some of the kings such as Jehoshaphat, Josiah and Hezekiah; during the exile, Ezekiel and Daniel; the rebuilding of Jerusalem after the return from Babylon, and a final example in the time of Malachi. Edwards, Gillies and Bonar all had no hesitation in saying that revival was known to the people of God in the Old Testament, which is a point worth emphasising, because a view has arisen lately claiming that revival was not possible before the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out in power. Such a view seems to show a fallacy in thinking and a lack of understanding of the principles on which God operates. Just as there was one way of salvation in the Old Testament in looking forward to what was going to be accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ in living and then dying on the cross and rising again, so too in revival there is a principle which runs through the whole of Scripture and continues on into the history of the Christian church. It might well be said that at Pentecost there was a tremendous intensification of blessing - of that there is no doubt - but the principle of the reviving work of the Spirit is there in the Old Testament as God visits His people. At times of their greatest need He does things that humanly speaking are impossible and rescues them from their predicament for His glory.

Of course, in the New Testament we come to the Day of Pentecost which we acknowledge as the mightiest outpouring of the Spirit of God. Yet we still hear of some today who would ask, 'Where is revival to be found in the New Testament?' Even to ask such a question would suggest they are reading the Scriptures with blind eyes. Surely the New Testament, at least from the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles onwards, is a book of revivals. There were variations and fluctuations within the accounts, but once the Spirit of God has been poured out on that remarkable day at Pentecost it is as if something has begun which God has been pleased to go on doing again and again down through the centuries that constitute church history.

Historical revivals

The story continues through the Middle Ages, although we are not so familiar with that period partly because the accounts were often written by those who chose to ignore the glorious works of God that underlay the text. However, as the years passed we learn of men such as John Wyclif (c1320-84) and the Lollards and Jan Hus (1369-1415) in Bohemia. When Martin Luther (1483-1546) broke on to the scene, the description 'revival' is the only word adequate to describe the events that followed, not simply in Germany but throughout much of Europe and even beyond. Its marks and its blessings are still with us today. The work of God continued through the English Reformers and then the Puritans. It is an ongoing story of revival in various parts of the British Isles, not particularly in Wales at that time, but certainly in Scotland in the seventeenth century where several remarkable outpourings of the Spirit of God were experienced. There was an unction and a power upon the preaching of the Word of God that is strangely and sadly absent from our churches today.

As the eighteenth century dawned, before we come to the more familiar events such as the Methodist Revival and the Great Awakening, we discover that God was doing remarkable things that can only be described as revival. A notable example was amongst the Moravians, when a movement of the Spirit began a work in the 1720s which had far-reaching effects as their missionary endeavour spread throughout the known world decades before missionary outreach caught on as a theological and spiritual idea amongst Christians in Britain. There are accounts of Moravians who were willing to be sold into slavery in order that they might gain opportunities for missionary work amongst the slaves, since there seemed no other way of bringing the Gospel to those poor benighted people. Another example were the Salzburger in 1732 when there was a great work of God in what is modern day Austria, resulting in several thousand people being converted. The ecclesiastical authorities tried to suppress them by depriving them of their rights and cruelly ejecting them in the depths of winter. They were scattered throughout the German states where many found refuge, while others moved on to Britain and to America where, in later years, they were associated with the work of George Whitefield at Savannah in Georgia.

Obviously, in the eighteenth century men such as Whitefield, Daniel Rowland, Howell Harris and the Wesley brothers have received much attention, and it truly is a remarkable period when the very face of the nation was changed by the work of

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God through those men. In 1735 in Wales both Harris and Rowland were converted and so, too, was a young undergraduate at Oxford named George Whitefield. Three years later John and Charles Wesley were converted and the movement known as the Methodist Revival soon followed – mainly called ‘Wesleyan Methodism’ in England but ‘Calvinistic Methodism’ in Wales. As far as Wales was concerned, it inaugurated a series of revivals that was to last down into the next century, culminating in the tremendous work of God in 1859 which again so affected the nation.

These things were not confined to our country, but there were similar events in other lands. Just as we speak of the Methodist Revival in Britain, there were remarkable happenings known as the Great Awakening in what were then the British colonies in America, where Jonathan Edwards and others were mightily used of God. George Whitefield later visited the colonies several times and preached to most appreciative crowds with tremendous blessing attending his ministry. Beginning in 1734-5 in the frontier town of Northampton, Massachusetts where Edwards was minister, a series of revival began merging into what history knows as the Great Awakening, especially after Whitefield made his first visit in 1739.

There was a series of revivals during the next century as the work of God continued in different places in Britain, including Wales, Cornwall, parts of the Midlands and Scotland. Then in 1857, starting with a small group of businessmen meeting for prayer in a church building in New York, the meetings grew as

hundreds and soon thousands met together in the lunch-hours to call upon God to revive His work. And He did! God heard and answered those prayers in a glorious way, and one of those affected by these events was a young Welshman named Humphrey Jones who had emigrated to America. He was a Wesleyan Methodist and God used him in revival work amongst his fellow Welsh-speaking emigrants. But his heart longed to see revival back in his native land. By the grace of God he returned to Wales and began preaching around his home district near Aberystwyth at the same time as Dafydd Morgan, a Calvinistic



Dafydd Morgan

Methodist, was endeavouring to do the same in that area of north Cardiganshire. The Spirit of God came upon both men as they worked together and in 1859 amazing results were seen. It was said of Dafydd Morgan that ‘he went to bed one night like a lamb and he woke up like a lion’, and for two years he stalked up and down the land as a lion, preaching with mighty power and seeing great numbers of people being converted and the face of the nation was transformed.

As we come to 1904 and the revival which is being commemorated at present, we remember how God did amazing and wonderful things that even took the attention and imagination of the secular world. It could not be ignored, because there was something extraordinary taking place. It is said that around one hundred thousand people were converted in the course of a year or so, and it was a great blessing for the whole nation. J. Edwin Orr, the noted authority on religious revivals, reckoned that the Welsh revival of 1904 has been the most influential revival in the history of the whole world so far. He spent much time travelling to various countries tracing the effects of that revival and he claimed that there were enormous influences emanating from it in places as far away as India, Mongolia and Korea.

Now – and then

We can learn much by examining accounts of what used to happen during times of revival. For instance, in 1791, Thomas Charles of Bala wrote to a minister named Edward Griffin in London who had asked about conditions in Wales. They had been students together at Oxford and Charles replied to his friend's questions.



Thomas Charles

My dear friend, You inquire about the state of churches in poor Wales. I have nothing but what is favourable to relate. We had lately a very comfortable Association at Pwllheli. Some thousands attended – more than ever was seen before, and here in our town of Bala for some time back we have had a very great, powerful and glorious outpouring of the spirit of God on the people in general, especially young people. The state and welfare of the soul has become the general concern of the country. Scores of the wildest and most inconsiderate of the people have been awakened. Their conviction was very clear, powerful, and in some individuals, very deep, till brought for a time to the brink of despair. Their consolations which soon follow are equally strong. A wild, vain young woman of this town was a singular instance of this. She had such a deep sense of a lost and helpless estate as to confine her to bed for three weeks where in the greatest agony of soul distress she roared till her strength failed her. She hung, supported only by a slender thread of hope, over infinite and eternal misery justly deserved. In this distressing situation I found her on my return from London and a more awful case I never saw. The arrows of God stuck fast in her and His hand pressed her sore, killing her to make her alive, and in His own good time He graciously removed the bitter cup and filled her soul with consolations and joy unspeakable. He set His prisoner free and gave her the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. This case struck awe and terror into the minds of many but still they were able to go on in their usual course and no visible good effect appeared till the first and second Sundays in October, which are weeks ever to be remembered by me. This glorious work began on a Sunday afternoon in the chapel where I preached twice that day and I cannot say there was anything particular in the ministry that day more than what I had experienced among our dear people here, but towards the close of the evening service the Spirit seemed to work in a very powerful manner on the minds of a great number present who never appeared before to seek the Lord's face but now there was a general and loud crying, ‘What must I do to be saved?’ and ‘God be merciful to me, a sinner,’ and about nine or ten o'clock at night there was nothing to be heard from one end of the town to the other but the cries and groans of people in distress of soul. And the very same night a spirit of deep conviction and serious concern fell upon whole congregations in this neighbourhood when calling upon the name of the Lord. In the course of the following week we had nothing but prayer meetings and general concern about eternal things swallowed up all other concerns and a spirit of conviction spread so rapidly that there was hardly a young person in the neighbourhood but began to inquire ‘What will become of me?’ The work has continued to go on with unabated power and glory, spreading from one town to another, all round this part of the country. New converts are gained each week, new captives brought in. A dispensation so glorious I never beheld, nor indeed, expected to see in my day. In the course of the eight years I have laboured in this country I have had frequent opportunities of seeing and feeling also much of

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the divine presence in the Lord's work and ordinances, and great success attending the ministration of the Word, but nothing to equal the present work. Whilst it stirs up the dormant enmity and rage of some who continue the determined enemies of our God, yet the coming of the Lord amongst us has been with such majesty, glory and irresistible power that even His avowed enemies would be glad to hide themselves somewhere from the brightness of His coming. What numbers have been savingly wrought upon time will reveal. There are hardly any here without some concern for their souls, but some feel a much deeper work than others. The revival of religion has put an end to all the merry meetings for dancing, singing with the harp and every kind of sinful mirth which used to be so prevalent among the young people here. A large fair kept here a few days ago, the usual revelling, sound of music and vain singing was not heard in any part of the town. A decency in the conduct and a sobriety in the countenances of our country people appeared the whole of that fair which I have never observed before, and by the united desire of hundreds we assembled at the chapel that night and enjoyed the most happy opportunity. I am very well aware that should the rationalists in England hear of what is going forward in this country they would consider the whole as wild enthusiasm and the effect of an overheated imagination. We deny not that there may be dross mixed with fine gold, but that this is a work of God we could no more doubt than the light and heat that proceed from the sun. We are willing to rest the credit of it upon the fruits of righteousness which it produces in rich abundance and if the Lord is graciously pleased to continue the work as it has prevailed for some months past, for some months yet to come, the devil's kingdom will be in ruins in our neighbourhood. 'Ride on, ride on Thou King of glory' is the fervent cry of my soul day and night. I doubt not that you will join me.

Would to God if we had correspondence from England or anywhere else asking us what was the state in 'poor Wales' today, we could write a letter like that! That is what happens when God sends revival. Consider another letter written in 1829 by Rev. David Peter, a tutor in the academy at Carmarthen, to Rev. Caleb Morris in London:

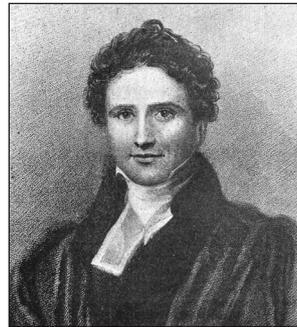
My dear Sir, It affords me the greatest pleasure that I have it in my power to communicate to you for the information of our religious friends in England and other parts of the world, a brief account of the progress of the Redeemer's Kingdom in the Principality of Wales and especially of the unusual revivals with which many of the Welsh churches have been favoured of late. Few perhaps beyond the confines of the Principality are aware of the progress which the Gospel has made among all denominations of Christians in this part of Great Britain. For the last fifty years we have experienced an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in some degree at various times, and we must say that the hand of the Lord is still stretched out in the salvation of many amongst us. The number of ministers and chapels in the Principality is now double what it was half a century back. The number of professing Christians of all denominations has increased more than threefold during that period, indeed I could name some churches among the Independents that have increased eight, ten and twelvefold in the number of



David Peter

members within the last thirty-five years. For you well know that some years back it was not an unusual thing for many of our churches to receive ten, twenty or thirty members to Communion at a time, and that for several successive months.

Let me proceed to give you a particular account of the rise and progress of the great revival with which we have been blessed in South Wales for these last fifteen months. For some months previous to the revival, the greatest attention was paid to the Sunday Schools throughout the country. Religious meetings were more than usually numerous, the style of preaching more pointedly impressive, church discipline better attended to, and a greater degree of brotherly love prevailed in the churches. To inform you of



Caleb Morris

what I myself have witnessed will be sufficient to show the people are generally affected at those religious meetings where the revival prevails. I have seen on these occasions some with bended knees, folded hands and uplifted eyes engaged in earnest prayer, others prostrated on the ground agonising under the sense of guilt, others praising God for the salvation of the Gospel. Much perhaps of what we see and hear at these religious meetings

where the revivals prevail may be the effect of enthusiasm, but when we consider the moral change that is so visible in the temper and conduct of those who were before notoriously wicked, and the religious awe which pervades all ranks in the towns, villages and neighbourhoods where revivals appear, we are compelled to acknowledge that the hand of the Lord is present and these revivals in South Wales are the effect of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit . . .

and so the writer continues with his description of the measure of the blessing of God that had descended.

But things did not remain like that, and certainly some places in England never experienced anything to that degree of blessing. Less than forty years later Charles Haddon Spurgeon, when preaching in 1866, said, 'Mercy is also wanted for the land itself. This is a wicked nation, this England. Its wickedness belongs not to one class only but to all classes. Sin runs down our streets. We have a fringe of elegant morality but behind it we have a mass of rottenness. There is not only the immorality of the streets at night, but look at the dishonesty of businessmen in high places, cheating and thieving upon the highest scale - little thieves are punished and great thieves are untouched. This is a wicked city, this city of London, and the land is full of drunkenness, of fornication, of theft and of all manner of idolatry. I am not the proper prophet to take up this burden and to utter a wailing. My temperament is not that of Jeremiah and therefore I am not well-called to such a mission but I may at least with Habakkuk, having heard the Lord's speech concerning it, be afraid and exhort you to pray for this land and be asking that God would revive His work in order that drunkenness may be given up, that this dishonesty may be purged out, that this great social evil may be cut out from the body politic as a deadly cancer is cut by the surgeon's knife. O God, for mercy's sake cast not off this island of the seas, give her not up to internal distractions, leave her not in darkness and blackness for ever - but revive Thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.' To adapt William Wordsworth's phrase, 'Spurgeon! thou should'st be living at this hour,' is all we need say.

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Times of Refreshing

Here in Wales, of course, we have seen no revival for a hundred years and in one sense assumptions can be made without explaining what is meant by revival. It can be defined in these terms - the manifested presence of God graciously authenticating the Gospel message, convicting and converting sinners. First of all it is the quickening of the church out of its mere habit, formality and lifelessness. That is what happens when God comes and visits His people with revival. In the Acts of the Apostles there is a remarkable account in chapter 3 of how Peter and John go up into the Temple and at the Beautiful Gate they see a crippled man who had never walked in his life and who lay there begging every day. They had no money to give him but they say they have something better than money and in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth they command him to rise up and walk - and he does! He stands and jumps and leaps about. Predictably, a large crowd gathers and, predictably too, Peter starts to preach to them. He tells them, 'Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord' [Acts 3:19]. In answer to the question, 'What is revival?', it can be called a 'time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.' In fact, this is the only time in the New Testament that the term is used; the Greek word can be traced to a medical term dating back to Hippocrates, the famous physician, who wrote a treatise on the treatment of fractures and recommended that when setting a broken bone, air should be allowed to get at it. We use the same expression when someone faints in a crowd and we say, 'Stand back and give them air.'

Revival is God giving His church some refreshing air; it is the breezes of heaven blowing upon a church that is sadly in need of refreshing. When this happens it brings a wonderful sense of God's presence. Many examples could be cited to illustrate this, but let one suffice. When Duncan Campbell, who was himself to be greatly used in revivals in the Hebrides in the late 1940s and early 1950s, was involved in a battle in the First World War, his horse was killed during a cavalry charge and he himself was badly wounded. As he lay on the ground thinking he was dying, he remembered words from Hebrews 12:14, '... holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord': and he recalled a hymn he sang as a boy, 'Must I go and empty-handed, Must I meet my Saviour so?' Just then a unit of Canadian cavalry charged past and the hoof of one of the horses struck him, causing him to groan loudly. The rider heard Campbell's cry and he returned later to look for him and carry him back to a Casualty Station. What followed was truly remarkable:

Duncan was now weak from loss of blood and could see little hope of life, but he was still more concerned about the state of his soul. Then the prayer of Robert Murray McCheyne, which he had often heard his father pray, flashed into his mind: 'Lord, make me as holy as a saved sinner can be.' Lying on the horse's back, persuaded that he was dying, Duncan prayed it again in an agony of earnestness. Instantly the power of God possessed him. Like a purging fire the Holy Spirit swept through his personality, bringing cleansing and renewal until [as he put it later] 'at that moment I felt as pure as an angel'. The consciousness of God was so real that he concluded he was going straight to heaven. But God had other work for him to do and this revolutionary experience was preparation for it. On reaching the Casualty Station he was placed with the other wounded men, mainly Canadian troopers, and one of the nurses tending them was from Scotland. When the newcomer arrived, she came to his bedside and began to sing in Gaelic the words of Cowper's hymn:

*There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins.*

Already in an ecstasy of joy, his heart bubbled over with praise to God. He began to quote, also in Gaelic, the Scottish metrical

version of the 103rd Psalm. It is doubtful if any of the men around understood a word of the language he was speaking, but a stillness came over the ward and the awareness of God captured the consciousness of each one. Within minutes conviction of sin laid hold of them and at least seven Canadians trusted Christ. Before being lifted from the Station, Duncan heard these men testify to what happened in that moment of miracle. The reality of God's presence, through the praise of His servant had so charged the atmosphere with the fear of God that these men were convinced of their sin and gloriously converted. (Duncan Campbell - A Biography: Andrew Woolsey, 1974, pp.51-53.)

That is but one example of the power of God in revival - when His presence is manifested and experienced, and people who hitherto were far from the Kingdom of God are not only brought under conviction, but are also converted and become new creations in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Why No Revival?

The subject before us requires that we ask this question because, as we gather to commemorate that last great working of God in our land a hundred years ago, what we are doing almost mocks us. It is almost painful and agonising to think of what happened then but what manifestly is not happening today. So we have to face the question, 'Why no revival?' and do so honestly and carefully, lest we should presume to pontificate on why things are as they are. God is sovereign and we cannot demand revival from Him as our right, and if He were to withhold it we can have no legitimate complaints. There are other considerations we would do well to remember. Has there been a misuse of the concept of revival so as to disguise spiritual laziness and hopelessness? People can piously say they are looking to God for revival, and yet they may be neglecting the plain duties of devotion and evangelisation that should be part and parcel of the experience of every child of God. We say we are waiting for that thunderbolt from heaven, but whether it is more than words is open to question. Sometimes such abuse of the concept of revival is coupled with a misunderstanding that assumes that anything excitable or emotional must be revival. Also the very fact that there has been this long absence of revival, so that we can only speak from our knowledge of books about it and not from personal experience constitutes a difficulty. It means that sometimes there is a lack of interest in revival as a result. In addition we have to agree with Paul's experience that although 'a great and effectual door' had been opened to him, there were 'many adversaries' [1 Corinthians 16:9]. We are all aware that during the last hundred years there have been many adversaries to the Gospel and to the work of God and to the work of His church, but at root level it may simply be that there is not any real burden for revival.

That can be illustrated by an incident related by an old lady I once knew who could remember the coming of the 1904 revival in Newport. The young people in the church she attended were stirred and began to pester their minister for permission to hold special meetings to pray for revival. Eventually he agreed to their requests but he afterwards wrote that they had 'come to him in great distress of soul because they realised that prior to the revival they had wrong views of God.' In response he had assured them that they had nothing to worry about because 'God would not hold against them views that were conscientiously held, but wrong.' It is hardly surprising that by the end of 1905 that same church had abandoned the special prayer meetings and was busy following its usual secular activities. As in so many places the revival was regarded just as an 'incident' that soon passed and the churches returned to their formality and coldness.

That is an attitude which can prevail today. Revival is seen as something confined to former generations and which does not affect us any more. However, there was a time when Christian people in our land had revival as part of their 'mind-set', these

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were the terms in which they thought, and certainly the terms in which they prayed. We find the same is true of other places; for example, W. B. Sprague (1795-1876) a Presbyterian minister in New York in the 1830s collected the accounts of men who had experienced revival in their churches in earlier times. Clearly a consistent pattern was evident. They described how churches felt hard and lethargic until they became concerned enough to seek God's face in prayer, to humble themselves and confess their sins, pleading with God to have mercy upon them. Time and time again that is what happened. God visited them with reviving power, and churches large and small would experience great blessing. As the years passed they would lapse into a cold and dreary condition until once again they were led to turn to God for pardon and forgiveness. As we read such accounts we realise that such was the normal response of Christians. What is wrong with us today? Why are things so hard? Why are so few being converted? Why is there not an evident sense of God's presence as we worship and as His Word is preached? In those days, people did not stand back and say, 'Ah yes! It is the sovereignty of God to give or to withhold,' they began to plead the promises of God and beseech Him to come in great power. That was characteristic of God's people, not just in America but in Wales and many other places. What is so distressing today, especially in Wales, is an almost contemptuous attitude shown towards the concept of revival and towards those who say that the great need is for God to come and revive His work. Some church ministers even dismiss such things as totally irrelevant or as escapism from the reality of the situation, and they adopt an indifferent outlook which relegates revival to an increasingly remote possibility. They seem blind to the dire consequences facing the church if God does not send revival to halt the disastrous decline of the last hundred years.

Principles of Revival

Both Scripture and church history combine to teach the lesson that in times of spiritual hardness and barrenness there are principles that should govern our responses. First and foremost we must remember that God is all-powerful. Do we believe that His power is illimitable? 'Is anything too hard for the Lord?' [Genesis 18:14] - that is a biblical question, and it is a rhetorical question that needs no answer. Let God be God! See how He transforms the most hopeless situations, and not by human effort and ingenuity but by His absolute intervention and power - suddenly!

Then there is the grace of God. We can do nothing to deserve it but He delights to lavish it upon needy men and women. There is Christ's concern for the church. He loves the church and He gave His life for it. He has promised to build it and to guard it against all the powers of hell. All the directions of God from Pentecost onwards point us urgently to beseech Him to visit us again in power. There is something gloriously unpredictable and sudden about God - with the people and the places He chooses to use so mightily. He takes obscure and unlikely men like Luther, or Whitefield, or Howell Harris, or Evan Roberts and fills them with His Spirit. He comes to a remote, unheard-of village and begins a mighty work which sweeps through a whole nation. Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones once asked whether a revival had ever been known in a cathedral, because history shows that it is to some small tin chapel in a rural backwater that God is often pleased to send His blessing. Scripture says, 'The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah' [Zechariah 12:7]. God's ways are not our ways - He does it to bring glory to His own name in His own way and in His own time.

Revivals are not produced by highly-organised human efforts, however well-meaning they may be. Recently an author drew attention to this mistaken outlook: 'The evangelical ideal of a revival was one that could not be planned or organised, but despite these assertions, evangelicals essentially have been

planning revivals ever since Charles Finney published his Lectures on Revivals of Religion in 1835. They embraced a growing repertoire of methods and institutions designed to win souls. Reinforcements of the developments emerged in the evangelical press. In 1859 the 'Revival Advocate' told its readers, "God works by means. He employs human agency. The church therefore has a great deal to do in promoting a revival of religion." Calls like this became more frequent as the century wore on. By 1900 a revival was considered "a magnificent spiritual miracle that was the simple result of the use of means." Christians were told they were not justified in idly waiting until some overwhelming influence comes upon them, and almost against our wills, bears us onwards in God's work. And as part of the trend, more and more evangelistic workers were using a growing variety of methods with increased frequency. By the late 19th century these had become formalised into a well-established group of techniques and practices which were widely used and aggressive in tone. As methods of saving souls however they came under increasing criticism, both from supporters and opponents of revivalism, and undoubtedly contributed to the general decline of revival as a whole.' (Religious Revivals in Britain and Ireland 1859-1905, Janice Holmes, Ulster 2001.)

As a result of that decline, Horatius Bonar's observation of the religious scene in 1846 could well be applied to our present situation:

Our backslidings testify against us. We have sinned away His mercy. We have grieved the Holy Spirit so that His hand works not now among us as in the same mighty power as in other days. Our pride in which we so resemble Israel has grieved Him. He cannot dwell with those whose feeling is 'Stand by . . . for I am holier than thou' [Isaiah 65:5]. Our unteachableness and stubbornness of heart have vexed Him and constrained Him to leave us to the blindness of our own dark minds. Will He always strive with those who will not be taught? - and who prefer man's wisdom to His? Our anger, wrath, malice, clamour and evil speaking have grieved Him, for He is the Spirit of love. His emblem is the dove and how can He dwell amid the bitter strife of human passions? Our inconsistency and worldly-mindedness have banished Him from our coasts. How can He whose office is to glorify Christ abide with those who name the name of Christ yet do not depart from iniquity? Nor can anything more certainly quench Him than that formality and hollowness in religion which is all too prevalent in these days? The drawing near to God with the lip while the heart is far distant is one of the sins which God must abhor and which tends more perhaps than any other sin to grieve the Spirit away. And oh! what an amount of formal, hollow profession is there amongst us! The churches of Christ like Jeshurun have waxed fat and kicked, like Ephesus they have left their first love, like Sardis they have but a name that they live and are dead, like Laodicea they fancy that they are rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing not knowing that they are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. Yet God has not forsaken them and He is making these, their iniquities and backslidings the occasion of displaying yet more of the riches of His grace. He is lifting up His voice to awaken us from our security. He is stretching out His hand to shake us out of our slothfulness and causing us to feel that it is not for any Christian or any church of Christ to be enjoying the luxury of ease in Zion and forgetting that this is the wilderness not Canaan, Egypt not Jerusalem, a place for pitching our tents day by day not the city of everlasting habitation. Oh that the churches of Christ would awake at the sound of His voice! Oh that they would turn unto Him who hath torn and who will heal them, who hath smitten and who will bind them up! Oh that they would recognise the Holy Spirit's hand and power from the beginning downwards

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to the present hour! Oh that they would cease to think of Him as some vague, diffusive influence and acknowledge Him as the living Spirit of God by whose personal indwelling and inworking in our souls we are quickened, convinced, converted, comforted, sanctified and made meet for the Kingdom. Who can say how much of our present barrenness and backsliding may be traced to our not honouring the Spirit with the honour which is due to His name? Dr. John Owen truly remarks, 'There is nothing excellent among men, whether it is absolutely extraordinary or whether it consists in eminent improvement of their abilities but is ascribed in Scripture to the Holy Spirit as the immediate operator and efficient cause of it.' Of old He was all - now some would have Him to be nothing. How can there be prosperity in a church or progress in a soul where there is not the distinct acknowledging and honouring of the Spirit in everything?

In conclusion it is worthwhile recalling the account of an incident from 1859 when Dafydd Morgan had been preaching at three services at Devil's Bridge on 1st January. He was walking home to Ysbyty Ystwyth several miles away accompanied by a young lad who had attended the services where there had been a great sense of the power and presence of God that had deeply humbled many people. At midnight the boy stopped and said, 'Didn't we have great meetings today, Mr. Morgan?' But the preacher did not reply and so the boy repeated the question. At which Dafydd Morgan said, 'Yes', and after a long pause he added, 'The Lord would do great things with us if only He could trust us.' 'What do you mean?' said the boy, and Morgan answered, 'If He could trust us not to be thieves, not to steal His glory for ourselves', and then at the top of his voice he shouted, 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name be the glory.'

That was, and always remains, the secret of true revival.

(Transcribed from an address at Heath Church by Rev. Graham Harrison of Newport on 15 March, 2004).