

MOODY'S LATEST SERMONS

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by Dwight L. Moody

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SERMON SEVEN -

REVIVALS

Address delivered on Wednesday morning, August 2, 1899, at East Northfield, Mass.

THERE is nothing I am more concerned about just now than that GOD should revive His church in America. I believe it is the only hope for our republic, for I don't believe that a republican form of government can last without righteousness. It seems to me that every patriot, every man who loves his country, ought to be anxious that the church of GOD should be quickened and revived.

I think you will find that revivals* or awakenings are perfectly scriptural. In all ages GOD has been quickening His people. I don't know that they had any before the flood; if they had, perhaps there wouldn't have been a flood. But they didn't believe in it, and the flood was the result of their wickedness.

** Perhaps "awakening" is a better word than "revival," but the term "revival" is better known. - D. L. M.*

REVIVALS ARE SCRIPTURAL

But after the flood, in the days of Moses, there was a mighty awakening when he was sent down into Egypt to bring the children of Israel out of the house of bondage; and from Moses right on down, whenever Israel went back into idolatry, GOD raised up prophets and men of GOD to bring the nation back to Him. I used to think that I would like to have lived in the days of one of those prophets; but I have got over that, because the prophets appeared on the scene only when everything was dark as midnight, and Israel had fallen away from the worship of JEHOVAH to serve the gods of the nations around them. Then GOD used the prophets to call His people back.

It was dark when Samuel appeared. Eli's family had gone astray, the ark of GOD had fallen into the hands of the enemy, and everything was dark. But read those verses in I Samuel 7:3, 4: "**And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve Him only; and He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the Lord only.**"

Then in the eleventh verse we see the result, in that Israel smote their enemies. It has always been so in the history of man. Whenever man has repented and put away his idols and served GOD only, then GOD has come with mighty power and driven out the enemy.

In the days of Elijah midnight darkness had settled upon the land, and GOD used him to bring about a mighty revival. GOD raised up Jeremiah to draw the people back (to the old paths), and some heard his voice and took warning; but others persisted in living in their sins, saying, "**We will not walk therein.**" The result was that they went into captivity.

ENEMIES OF GOD'S WORK

Every true work of GOD has had its bitter enemies, - not only outside, but also inside, - just as in the days of Nehemiah. There are usually some good people who join with the ungodly, and lift up their voice against the work of GOD.

The best work usually meets the strongest opposition. A man may go into a town and preach for ten years with all the eloquence of Demosthenes, and draw great crowds, and if there are no conversions the papers will applaud him, and there will be a great many fine things said about him. But let there be a few hundred conversions, and the opposition will grow as hot as hell can make it. It always has been, and always will be. The nearer a man lives to CHRIST, and the more truth he has, the more bitter and vile will be the things that are said against him by the enemies of GOD.

Did this world ever have such a preacher as John the Baptist, except the Master Himself? See how bitter the opposition was, not only among bad people, but among the so-called good men of that time. His ministry was very short; but it was like a breath of spring after a long dark winter's night. Then came CHRIST with His apostles, and they did a great work, and yet met opposition everywhere.

DENOMINATIONS BORN IN REVIVALS

Now, I cannot for the life of me see how any man or woman who knows the Bible can throw his influence against a revival. I am amazed to find, in the history of the church, denomination after denomination setting their faces against what I call the work of GOD.

The Roman Catholic church claims to be apostolic. How then can they be opposed to revivals, when the Christian church was empowered at Pentecost? that was the mightiest revival this world has ever seen, and yet the Catholic church does not like that word "revival," although the priests hold "missions," which they claim to be the same thing.

If the Episcopal church can trace their line back to Pentecost, they too are a child of a revival. I don't see how any Episcopalian can set his face against a revival. The older the church is the more it needs to be revived, because the tendency is into formalism.

Then where did the Lutheran church come from, if it wasn't born of a revival in the days of Martin Luther? How any Lutheran can set his face against revivals is a mystery to me. And GOD

have mercy on a Methodist who doesn't believe in revivals, because that church sprang right straight out of a revival almost in our own day. Where did Methodism come from, if not from the revival under Charles and John Wesley and George Whitfield? Wasn't the nation stirred mightily under the preaching of these men? Where did the Quakers come from if not from a revival under Fox? Is not our Young Men's Christian Association a result of the revival of 1857? All our best institutions have sprung out of revivals; and yet many people are afraid of them, and bring up objection after objection against them.

*****BBB NOTE: Please bear in mind that these words of approval of these denominations were spoken long before modernism and rationalism caused these groups to reject the Gospel of the blood and the denial of the fundamental doctrines of the Word of GOD. We could not say this about these groups today, although we would heartily agree that they all need a true heavenly revival!*****

SOME OBJECTIONS TO REVIVALS

One popular objection is: *So many converts do not hold out.*

That is quite true. If all the people who have professed conversion had been faithful, we would have had this world brought to CHRIST long before now. But you know, I find that some ministers, and elders, and deacons, do not hold out. If all held out, it would be contrary to scriptural experience. This argument against revivals does not bear looking into. The professed converts did not hold out in CHRIST's day. In John 6, we read:

"Many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him."

Suppose that the farmer should refuse to sow because all his seed doesn't take root and ripen. Suppose that we should cut down our apple trees because all the blossoms don't mature. It is estimated that over ninety per cent of the men who go into business fail. Suppose that men would not enter business because so many business men fail. That is the argument that people bring against revivals: "They don't all hold out." A child is born, but I cannot rejoice, because so many children die. A man tumbles into the river, and another man jumps in and pulls him out. He wants me to rejoice, but I cannot, because I am afraid he may fall in again. that is the strongest argument that people bring against revivals.

Another argument which seems to have great weight with many people is: *There is so much excitement.*

My dear friends, I wish I could see as much excitement in the church of GOD, in the work of GOD, as I see in other things. If you want excitement, go to some place of amusement! I know of a minister who preached a very eloquent sermon against a revival meeting that Mr. Sankey and I were to hold in Great Britain. The whole argument of the sermon was against "undue excitement," and on Friday night he had been floor manager at a dance, and was there until five o'clock on Saturday morning. Then I suppose he wrote this eloquent sermon against "undue excitement in religious meetings"!

Some saloons keep open all night, and men get so excited that they knock one another down, and

kill one another, and yet we must not have revivals because there is "undue excitement." There is more excitement in the billiard halls and gambling dens, brothels and drinking saloons, in one week, than there is in the whole church of GOD in one year.

Newspapers can say nothing. If there is anybody under the sun that tries to get up sensations, it is the reporter. If there isn't any sensation in sight, he makes one. He is the last that should throw stones at us. I am not so afraid of excitement as some people.

The moment there comes a breath of interest, some people cry, "Sensationalism, sensationalism!" But, I tell you what, I would rather have sensation than stagnation any time. There is nothing a seaman fears so much as fog; he does not fear a storm nearly as much. We have too much fog in the church; let us get out of it. Get any preacher befogged, and he will say, "I cannot draw the crowds, but then, thank GOD, I am no sensationalist!"

Let him write a book so dry that it will almost catch fire, and no one thinks of reading it. But he thanks GOD he is no sensationalist!

Do you think there was ever a country in the wide world stirred as Palestine was under the preaching of John the Baptist, and of JESUS and His apostles? Don't be afraid of a little excitement and a little "sensationalism." It seems to me that almost anything is preferable to deadness.

There is no excitement or sensationalism in a graveyard - a man lies where they put him; but I think there will be a stir on the resurrection morning. Where there is life, there will always be a commotion.

What we need is life! I don't believe that our young men would go off on bicycles every Sunday, or spend the day reading newspapers, if we had more life in the church.

A Scotch minister went to labor with one of his members who was in the habit of going to sleep during the sermon every Sunday.

"Don't you think," said he, "you had better stay at home if you can't keep awake?"

But she said that she was brought up to attend church, and she would go.

"Then don't you think you'd better take a little more snuff to keep you awake?"

She replied, "Don't you think you'd better put a little more snuff in your sermons, mon?"

People ought to get stirred up over eternal life and death.

AN EXPERIENCE IN A WESTERN TOWN

I stopped in a town of six thousand people out West last winter. A great many of the inhabitants were young men, some of them graduates of our colleges, who had gone out into that new country to make their way in the world. They were enterprising fellows.

They had four churches and thirty-six saloons in that town. Some of the saloons and concert halls were open day and night, summer and winter; but they closed up most of the churches in summer. The Episcopal minister's lungs had given out and so he had gone off, and they couldn't have any preaching in the Episcopal church. The Baptist minister had died, so there was no preaching there. The Methodist minister had only one lung, and about all he could do was to whisper. There was one more minister, and when I got there he was preaching against revivals, warning his people not to be carried away by the meetings I was to hold.

I found that only two young men between the ages of fifteen and thirty belonged to those churches, and one of them only had one lung, and he was laid on his back at the first meeting, so I only had one young man left. One young man between fifteen and thirty in the church, and that minister preaching against revivals! I tell you it is enough to make the angels weep.

Was anything under Heaven needed more than a revival to save those young men, who had gone from some of the best homes in this country, and were spending their time and their money in those saloons and dens of iniquity? GOD have mercy on that minister!

A bishop once said to me: "We don't believe in revivals. We believe in taking them in childhood, like Timothy, and training them up in the church."

But didn't Paul say Timothy was begotten by him? I have an idea that Timothy was converted in one of Paul's meetings.

A minister said to me in one place: "I hope this work will turn out better than the last we had here. I took one hundred into my church, and can only find two of them now."

It was very depressing, I said to another minister in the same city:

"If I thought this work wasn't going to turn out any better than that, I would rather go to sweeping the streets or breaking stones."

"Why," said he, "I took in about one hundred at that time, and I can put my hand on all but three. One moved out of the city, and two fell away, but ninety-seven out of the hundred are doing well, and that was five or six years after the revival!"

If that first minister had been honest he would have told me that the moment his church got those young converts in, they thought it was a good time to move out of a poor neighborhood into the aristocratic part of the city. The church split, and he not only lost the young converts, but the old ones, too, and the church went to pieces.

I believe that if we ask GOD for a real work, He won't give us a counterfeit. If we ask GOD for bread, He isn't going to give us a stone.

If we have counterfeit dollars there must be genuine dollars somewhere, and if there are counterfeit revivals - and the devil tries to counterfeit everything - we are not going to give up the real ones. People stretch their necks and say, "Where are the people converted in that great revival?" I don't know; but I do know that they are not going to go around to your house and ring

the front door bell, and tell you where they are. If you set your face against revivals, you are the last person they will come to.

THE SKEPTIC AND THE MISSIONARY

Some men in London, who had returned from India, gave a dinner party. Among others who were invited were a wealthy merchant, who was a skeptic, and a foreign missionary. During the dinner party they brought up the question of native converts, and the English merchant turned up his nose, and said:

"I have lived in India for twenty years, but I have heard more about native converts in London than I ever heard in India. I never saw one native convert all the years I was there."

The guests looked for a reply from the foreign missionary, but he said nothing until later in the evening, when he turned to this man and said:

"Did you ever see any tigers in India?"

The merchant's face lit up at once.

"Oh, yes," he said, "I have not only seen them, but I have shot a good many."

"That is strange," said the missionary, "I have been in India for twenty years, and I have never seen a tiger."

One had been looking for tigers and the other for converts. You generally get what you look for.

I was on the Pacific coast for six months, and I didn't go to a place where I didn't meet people who had been converted in Boston, in the Hippodrome in New York, and in Agricultural Hall or Haymarket Theatre or Campbell Hall in London. Everywhere I found ministers, deacons, elders, or Sunday-school workers, who had been converted in places where I had been. I could doubt my existence as easily as I could doubt that GOD not only converts, but keeps.

Some people have an idea that where a great number are brought out at one time they are not so healthy.

I don't believe a word of it. If one or two come into the church the minister never thinks of preparing a whole sermon for them. But let him take in one hundred young converts. and he will get up sermon after sermon to build up those young converts in the faith. Not only that, but it will make such a stir that every member of the church will be interested in helping them.

OUR NEED OF A REVIVAL

I come to another point, and that is our need.

When GOD has revived His work there has always been great need; it is darkest just before the dawn. I think it is getting very dark, but don't think for a moment that I am a pessimist. If I

should live ten thousand years I couldn't be a pessimist. I haven't any more doubt about the final outcome of things than I have of my existence. I believe JESUS is going to sway His sceptre to the ends of the earth, that the time is coming when GOD's will is to be done on earth as it is done in Heaven, and when man's voice will be only the echo of GOD's. I believe the time is coming when every knee will bow and every tongue confess CHRIST.

I am no pessimist, and I am not under the juniper tree, either. If I look on the dark side it is to stir you up and get you to fighting. But it is getting dark; there is no doubt about that. Paul says in his second letter to Timothy:

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves."

Is not that true to-day? Lovers of their own selves.

Deny it if you can. Look at the men who are selfishly piling up their millions. I am a young man yet, and I can remember when we had hardly a millionaire in this country. When a man got his million he had enough. But now, two, three or five hundred million don't satisfy.

"Covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy." Now listen. "Without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good."

For a year that saying has been ringing through the nation, "Remember the Maine." Less than three hundred men lost their lives on the Maine, but every twenty-four hours three hundred men go down to drunkards' graves in this country. **"Without natural affection."** I would rather have a son kill me outright than take five years to kill me by drinking. That is what is going on in this country all the time.

Instead of crying, "Remember the Maine," I think you would better cry, "Remember whiskey," and rise up and put down the devilish traffic. In four years there were 38,511 murders in the United States, and in the same length of time England had less than 600. Lynching is unknown in the old country, and we are having lynchings by the scores and hundreds. Last year we had 25,000 divorces. See how Sabbath-breaking is increasing, and dishonesty in business. Look at the bank presidents and cashiers who are in our jails and prisons.

Do we not need a reformation? Hasn't the time come for the children of GOD to cry out, O GOD, revive Thy work!

"Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." I was bearing down on the bicycle here to the students a few weeks ago, setting forth that one of the great temptations they were going to have was the bicycle. There is no doubt it is a blessing; but all these blessings may become a curse if you don't look out. I told the students they would be tempted to take their bicycles and go out into the country and neglect their souls, neglect the church of GOD, neglect Sunday-schools, neglect Bible classes.

One of my Christian friends thought I was making a mistake, but he has been away the last few

weeks, and he said to me last night:

"I want to tell you I made a mistake. I have seen something that has made my heart ache."

I don't believe anyone can see the vast throng of young men in our cities - and I am sorry to say, bad women, too - on their bicycles going off into the country and fields and woods to spend the Sabbath, and trampling the law of GOD into the dust, filling their pockets with Sunday newspapers - and these are their Bibles - it wouldn't have been tolerated a few years ago!

It wouldn't have been countenanced in Chicago a few years ago that they should have their theaters open Sunday afternoon and night, but that is the case.

A bill went into the New York Legislature recently to allow the theaters to open on Sunday in New York City; and I said to one of the prominent politicians:

"I hope you will put your heel on that bill, and do all you can to kill it."

"No," he said, "I believe in it. that is what we want. I go to mass Sunday morning, but I think our Lord meant us to have the rest of the day for recreation."

Serving the God of the Hebrews in the morning, and Baal in the afternoon and evening! The curse of the age is people want two altars, one for Baal and one for JEHOVAH. You cannot do it; there must be separation! We need a revival to clear the air.

THE GOSPEL AND ITS COUNTERFEITS

Another idea that is very prevalent, is that people will not hear the old Gospel, and that *the old Gospel has lost some of its power.*

I don't believe one word of it. There is a lot of stuff that men call the gospel that has no more gospel in it than there is wheat in sawdust; but some people don't seem to know the difference. I heard some time ago of a young wife who had a certain amount given her every week, from which she was to pay all the household bills and keep an account. After a few months the husband said:

"Darling, I will stay at home this evening, and we will look over the accounts and see how we are getting along."

They looked them over carefully, and he saw that every week she had balanced her accounts by charging something to "G. K. W."

The husband began to wonder who this man was, and asked:

"Who is this G. K. W.?"

She explained that she could never balance the account, so she always put something down to "Goodness knows what."

When we hear some people preach, we have to put it down, "G. K. W. - goodness knows what."

I honestly say that I have heard some able men preach, and I didn't know what they were talking about. I suppose I am about the average; and if I couldn't understand, what about the rest? I want to say, if you put the old Gospel straight and square, it has as much effect as it ever had.

It is a false idea that people want a new kind of gospel, and that the preaching has lost its power. Man is the same as he has been for six thousand years. Sin leaped into the world full grown. The first born of woman was a murderer. We are a bad lot; and what you want is to tell men so - not flatter them, and tell them how angelic they are because they have some education.

An educated rascal is the meanest kind of a rascal.

A FAIR TEST

Last winter, when I was out on the Pacific coast, I read in a paper that a minister said my preaching no longer had the same effect it used to. I said to myself, Is that so? I began to wake up, and said, Well, now, I will take note.

The next Sunday I was preaching to the Mormons in Salt Lake City; there were probably seven thousand people there. I commenced on sin. I believe Mormons are just as much sinners as the rest of us. I bore down as hard as I could on sin; and when I got through, I said:

"You have heard this. Do you want to break with sin? Are you tired and sick of sin?" I said, "Take time to consider; don't act on the impulse, but just consider. If there is one in this house that wants to break with sin, I am going to ask you to rise and stand while I pray."

I put it fair and square, and gave them perhaps five minutes before I brought them to a decision, and do you know, almost the whole crowd rose! Tears rolled down their cheeks.

Now, I preached a few years ago in Salt Lake City, and I didn't get the result I did right then and there.

The next Sunday I was preaching in Detroit, and I had a meeting for men in one of the largest churches there Sunday afternoon. I preached on the same subject - sin - and when I got through, I said:

"You know whether you want to break with sin or not. Now face the issue." I took some time just to explain so they wouldn't act just because others did. "Now," I said, "I don't want a man in this house to get up because someone else does. If you want to break with sin, I am going to ask you to rise while I pray for you."

That audience of two thousand young men, cashiers of banks, clerks, merchants, rose in a mass. I preached in Detroit years ago, and I never got such a result as that. It was the first Sunday I was there, and the first time I ever met that audience, too; but they were like clay in the hands of the potter.

I thought I would make this a little more personal, so I said, "If you men after prayer really mean this, stay and let us talk with you." Over two hundred young men stayed; they were tired and sick of sin.

The next Sunday I was preaching at Yale. You can't tell much about the first service in the college chapel, because the students are obliged to attend, whether they want to or not. I took the same subject, sin. I didn't spare them. In the evening it was optional with them whether they came or not, but we had a hall crowded, and when I put the question I found there were more inquirers in Yale than I had ever seen.

I have been going there for twenty years, and I have never had such results as I had right then and there.

The fourth Sunday I preached in the Maryland penitentiary. There is a new kind of audience: Mormons, merchants and clerks, students in Yale, and then penitentiary men. Now I was in Baltimore for six months in 1878-9, and preached every Sunday morning in the penitentiary. When I preached there twenty years ago, I preached four or five Sundays before I dared to ask for any expression, but last Spring when I got through preaching the same sermon against sin, all over that audience men were weeping and asking to be prayed for.

Four Sundays, four different kinds of people, but the same results throughout! Don't tell me that the Gospel hasn't the same power it had of old! Don't tell me that men need any different kind of preaching. What we should do is to cry down sin and lift up JESUS CHRIST, GOD's remedy for sin.

There is as much power to-day to save men as there ever has been, and men are the same-human nature hasn't changed one whit, and the quicker we find that out, the better. I believe that you can go into almost any audience in America, and ask those that have been converted in the time of a revival to rise, and four-fifths of the church members will stand up. I have tried it over and over again all over this country, and I have yet to find one place where it wasn't so.

A HUSH FROM HEAVEN

Another thing that encourages me to believe that there are hopeful signs is that there has come a hush on the meetings during the last six months that I haven't seen for a number of years.

I preached last Sunday in Dr. Storrs' church, in Brooklyn. I have been going to Brooklyn and New York for twenty or thirty years; Mr. Sankey has been with me at different meetings. I venture to say he cannot get up and contradict this statement, that there was a hush in that meeting, and a power, that we have seldom had for twenty or thirty years, from the time it began until we got through. It was a hot day in July, when people think nothing can be done, but that audience was just as if it was held by some unseen power, and it seemed as if GOD Almighty was speaking to the people.

GOD is coming very near us. I believe we are on the eve of a mighty work if we will just rise and claim it.

THE DEMAND FOR BIBLES AND BIBLE TEACHING

And another hopeful sign is that there has never been such a demand for Bibles in the history of this world as there has been during the last few years; never. One of the New York editors said to me when I was in New York some time ago, "Mr. Moody, is there any demand for Bibles now?" I said, "Any demand for Bibles! Man, where did you come from? Why, there has never been such a demand for Bibles in the history of the world as there is at present."

He replied, laughingly, "If you had said that to me a few months ago, I never would have believed it; but the question came up in our office that the Bible was becoming a back number and the Sunday newspaper taking its place, and we were going to write up an editorial. I sent out to some of the book-stores to see if there was any demand for Bibles, and to my great amazement they reported that there never had been such a demand for Bibles as there had been in the last three years. I couldn't understand it."

"Where did you go?" I asked.

He sent to a few of the stores and the Bible Societies.

I said, "You didn't go quite far enough. If you had gone to some of these department stores, you would have found they sell Bibles by the ton."

There is one department store in Philadelphia that has sold more books than ten of the leading publishing houses. They take a Bible like this that I have always paid seven or eight dollars for - not quite so good paper, and not quite so well bound, but same size and same type - and they sell it for seventy cents; think of it! There never has been such competition in selling the Word of GOD.

It is said, of Martin Luther's day, that his books and pamphlets and the truth of his preaching dropped down on the nations, and were scattered by the angels. It seems as if the angels of GOD were just moving in a marvelous way, and people were going back to the old Book.

I used to say to the superintendent of our Bible Institute in Chicago that I wished we could have classes in the evening. We have had now for ten years a Bible lecture at nine o'clock in the morning and another at eleven o'clock, right in the heart of Chicago. I wanted to have classes in the evening.

"Well," he said, "the churches work their members pretty well. They have the Epworth League, and the Young People's meetings, and the Christian Endeavor; they have the Young Men's Christian Association, and weekly prayer-meetings. I don't know that we can make it work, but we will try it."

And so two years ago last winter we had one evening lecture, and the average attendance right through the course was five hundred, and there was no attraction that came to Chicago that could draw those people away. It was so successful that some city ministers said, "Can't we have classes in our churches?"

Nothing suited me any better, and so next winter similar lectures were given in five sections in Chicago, and the average attendance for the whole season was twenty-seven hundred. Last winter the demand was stronger than ever, and the average attendance from October to May was about six thousand people, meeting every week to study the Word of GOD.

I believe when GOD revives His work, people will go back to His Book. People are tired and sick of this awful controversy. Sam Jones' motto has been, "Quit your meanness." I hope the motto of the ministers of this country will be, "Quit your fighting and go to work, and preach the simple Gospel!"

Now the question is, shall we have a great and mighty harvest, or shall we go on discussing our differences? As far as I am concerned, I am terribly tired of it, and I would like before I go hence to see the whole church of GOD quickened as it was in 1857, and a wave going from Maine to California that shall sweep thousands into the kingdom of GOD.

Why not?

Talk about this work not lasting; Pentecost isn't over yet! The revival of 1857 isn't over yet by a good deal. Some of the best men we have in our churches were brought out in 1857. Why shouldn't we have now at the close of this old century a great shaking up and a mighty wave from Heaven? Are you doing anything to hinder it?

~ end of book ~