

# **CONTINUOUS REVIVAL**

**BY**

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## PREFACE

These few pages are an attempt to describe a revolutionary experience in my own life, and in that of many others, of the way of continuous revival. I have known no other word from God which so simply and thoroughly reaches down to where ordinary folks live, and is found by us to be the secret of victorious living. By no means is it something which God has personally revealed to me. It has been the working secret which has been bringing continuous revival to thousands in East Central Africa over a period of sixteen years. It was the fact that there was such a thing as continuous revival which first caught my interest some years ago when I heard of this constant movement of the Spirit in the area of the Ruanda Medical Mission, a field of the Church Missionary Society, for I felt that was exactly what we, in the ranks of our own Society needed both at home and abroad. Various personal contacts with Africans and missionaries from the revival area deepened my conviction that God had given them the key we needed, for I saw some of our own staff transformed and quickened into marvellous newness of life and ministry through quite short contacts with them. Finally the door of opportunity was opened to me in 1950 to pay a short visit myself to Ruanda and Uganda. I had worked in Central Africa with C. T. Studd over a period of years and so had some understanding of African ways of life. What follows is an attempt to put into words what God taught me personally through that visit and what I have found to be a blessing to many others. First, it has meant a new discovery by me and many others of what we mean by "revival." When we come down to it in simplest form, it means the reviving of dead areas in our lives. I remember when I first heard two from Ruanda speaking very quietly and simply for two days in our London Headquarters to about ninety of our staff. At the last meeting, they very quietly opened the door for any present to say anything that was on their hearts. Very soon one and another were bringing to the light areas in their lives where they had come face to face with sin unobserved by them before and were bringing them to the cleansing blood. I got a real shock at the end when one of the two quietly said, "I don't know if you realise it friends, but this IS revival!"

The transforming truth of that statement took time to sink in and is still sinking in! It began to shake me out of the misconception of years, that revival could only come in great soul-shaking outpourings of the Spirit. Thank God for such when they do come; they have been the great and precious hurricanes of the Spirit in the history of the Church. But I saw the defeatism and almost hopelessness that so many of us had fallen into by thinking that we could do nothing about revival except pray, often rather unbelievably, and wait until the heavens rent and God came down. But now I see that "revival" in its truest sense in an everyday affair right down within the reach of everyday folk to be experienced in our hearts, homes and churches, and in our fields of service. When it does burst forth in greater and more public ways, thank God; but meanwhile we can see to it that we are being ourselves constantly revived persons, which of course also means that others are getting revived in our own circles. By this means God can have channels of revival by the thousands in all the churches of the world! And this is just what I found in Africa, and what I am attempting to describe in these pages; not, all glory and praise to God, just the passing on of a mere theory, but what has come to me by living with and seeing continuous revival in action among communities of hundreds in Africa; by experiencing the same working of the Spirit in my own life; by examining and grasping in some measure the Scriptural basis of this

continuous revival, and finally by seeing God move in revival in many others through the presentation of the message and testimony. It has been a matter of seeing, learning, experiencing and transmitting, and now endeavouring to outline in print.

The truth is that revival is really the Reviver in action, and He came two thousand years ago at Pentecost. Revival is not so much a vertical outpouring from heaven, for the Reviver is already here in His temple, the bodies of the redeemed; it is more a horizontal out-moving of the Reviver through these temples into the world. It is a horizontal, rather than a vertical movement, and the importance of this fact will be seen later.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### THE WALK

Now to go into the matter point by point. I learned first of a wholly new emphasis on the WALK of the Christian. I learned that in our evangelical and rightful zeal to bring sinners to the crisis of the new birth, and to lead the saints on to further crises of separation, consecration, sanctification, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, or whatever might be the special emphasis of our various Christian communities, we have often made too much of the crises and too little of the WALK. But the Scriptures leave us in no doubt of their emphasis. In almost every Epistle the Holy Spirit leads us on through the crises, the way into Christ, to the WALK with Him. Thus in Romans we are taught the way of justification and sanctification from Chapter 1 through 7, then in 8 it says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who WALK not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." In Galatians there is the battle of justification by faith as against works, and the Paul says, "This I say then, WALK in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." And later, "If we live (have come alive) in the Spirit, let us also WALK in the Spirit." In Ephesians he introduces us into our glorious union with the ascended Christ, and then says, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye WALK worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called;" and later, "WALK not as other Gentiles walk," "WALK in love... WALK as children of light...WALK circumspectly." In Colossians he says, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so WALK in Him," In Thessalonians he rejoices in the saving power of the gospel in the lives of the young converts, and then says, "As ye have received of us how you ought to WALK and to please God, so ye would abound more and more." Finally, to mention only one more, John in his epistle takes us to the very heights when he says we are to "WALK as He walked," for "as He is, so are we in the world;" indeed John does not even discuss how to be born again or how to abide in Christ, but, taking these for granted, now talks about the walk and life which is the outcome. (See also 2 John and 3 John).

Now to walk is a step-by-step activity. Given the main destination, all that matters is the next step. Christian living is concerned, therefore, just with the implications of the present moment, not with past or future. But we tend to live in the past and thus to avoid the keen edge of the challenge of the immediate moment. Thus, as things arise in our hearts and lives which are not consistent with our Christian testimony, we say, or imply, "Well, I know these things are not right, but anyhow I have been born again, I have been cleansed in His blood, I have received eternal life, Christ lives in me." Thus I circle around the raw facts of my immediate condition by leaning back on my past crises. We make too much of the past crises, but too little of the present walk. Thank God we are born again, and have received other impartations of grace, but now let us forget those, as it were; let us remember that all we are asked to do is to "WALK WITH JESUS," and that means simple concentration on things as they are with me just this moment, then the next, then the next, and so on.

There is something else also that much affects our Christian experience when we get confused between looking back to crises and just living moment by moment. One of Satan's favourite weapons is false condemnation. He loves to make us look back at our past failures, or into the future at our probably equal failures (so he says), and then

puts us into a tail-spin of despair or depression. “Look at your pride, coldness, sensuality, worldliness, fruitlessness. You say you were born again or sanctified. Look at yourself! And if you have been that in the past, believe me, you will be exactly the same in the future!” In other words, Satan likes to talk in long-term generalities, based indeed on an element of truth, but built up into a huge lie; for God does not look on His children in a general sense as proud, cold, fruitless, and so on. He sees them in Christ, being conformed to the image of His Son. The difference between Satan’s condemnations and God’s convictions is that where Satan uses generalities pointing back to the past or forward to the future, God sees past and future in Christ and just deals with the present, and deals specifically. We WALK moment by moment, step by step with Him, the past under the blood, the future in His keeping. We are in Jesus and He in us. Now then, if our walk at this moment is beclouded with the rising up of some motion of sin in us, then God just points to that. “There,” He says, “look at that, just that. Just get that right under the blood and then walk again with Me” So simple, so free from these condemnations from the past (or excuses through leaning back on the past crises), and from those fears for the future.

So now we have the first point in continuous revival. We “walk with Jesus.” We are concerned only with the step by step life. We live in the present; “Today, today, today,” as it says five times in Hebrews 3. We do not excuse the present by leaning back on past spiritual crises, nor do we get under false condemnation or fear through looking back at the past or forward into the future.

## CHAPTER TWO

### BROKENNESS

The next point is BROKENNESS. A picturesque word, a key word, indeed THE key word, in continuous revival. It is not a word that comes a great deal in Scripture, though more than we think, if we examine a concordance; but it comes enough to show that it is a picturesque, as well as true, way of describing the sinner's only and constant relationship to his Saviour. We first learn that salvation is only possible for lost men through a BROKEN Saviour: "This is my body which is BROKEN for you;" "Reproach hath BROKEN my heart." In Gethsemane He had a broken will, and on Calvary a broken fellowship even with His Father; for the One who is our Substitute and who was made sin for us had to take upon Himself the proud, unbroken ego of fallen man, and had to be broken at Calvary in his place. But man also has to be "broken." He sees his sinful condition before God, as he realises the coming judgment and wrath, and as he is pointed to the slain Lamb, he has to "break" at the foot of the Cross. The proud, self-justifying, self-reliant, self-seeking self has to come just as a lost, undone sinner, whose only hope is a justifying Saviour. David said it, when at the supreme moment of his own total brokenness, in Psalm 51, the Spirit caused him to comment, "The sacrifices of God are a BROKEN spirit, a BROKEN and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

Here we come to a crucial point concerning the way of brokenness, as indeed concerning all relationships of the Christian life. It is the most crucial point in this whole way of continuous revival; the point, as we shall see later, that has to be re-learned by twentieth-century Christians surrounded by all their respectability. It is this. All Christian relationships are two-way, not one-way. They are horizontal as well as vertical. That is to say, we are a two-way people. We are not just isolated units living in a vertical relationship with an isolated God; we are members of a human family also with whom we live in horizontal relationships, and our obligations are two-way all the time. We can not, for instance, say that we have become righteous before God through faith in Christ, yet continue unrighteous among men. The Bible says that would be living a lie. Equally we can not say we love God and hate our brother, for the Bible says, "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" This comes out particularly in John's first epistle, where the two-way fellowship is mentioned in the first chapter at verse three, two-way righteousness in the third chapter at verse seven, and a two-way love in the fourth chapter at verse twenty. But now this is true of the way of brokenness, that is, of repentance and faith. "The word of faith," we read in Romans 10:8-10, is a two-way, with the heart towards God and with the mouth before man. Indeed it takes it further and says that to experience in our hearts and lives the full benefit of our faith, we MUST express it both ways, for "with the heart man believes unto righteousness," that is to say, the heart-believer is accounted righteous before God; but it is "with the mouth" that "confession is made unto salvation," that is to say, we realise in our experience the joyful fact that we are saved. Confession before man does something in our hearts that heart-faith alone never does. There are many sincere believers, in churches where they are not taught to witness before men or to expect assurance of salvation, who truly trust in the mercies of God through Christ, yet do not even know for sure in their hearts that they are saved, and have none of the joy of the Lord, because there is no

mouth confession. But when we do the much more costly thing of telling men that Christ has become our Saviour, something happens in our own hearts. We are saved and know we are saved! Any soul-winner also knows that if a seeker were to say, "Yes, I'll accept Christ in secret, but don't let anybody know," we would say to him, "Brother, that's not a genuine faith or brokenness. If you really mean business and are really committed as a lost sinner to the mercies of your Saviour, the proof is that you are committed before men as well as God. If you don't confess before men, we may well doubt the genuineness of your faith and the reality of your salvation."

So saving faith, the attitude of brokenness, is a two-way activity, towards God and man, as are righteousness and love and indeed all the relationships of Christian living. Indeed, we can put it this way. We can liken a man to a house. It has a roof and walls. So also man in his fallen state has a roof on top of his sins between him and God; and he also has walls up, between him and his neighbour. But at salvation, when broken at the Cross, not only does the roof come off through faith in Christ, but the walls fall down flat, and the man's true condition as a sinner saved by grace is confessed before all men.

But the trouble soon begins again after conversion, and here lies the basic hindrance to continued revival. Continued revival is continued brokenness, but brokenness is two-way, and that means walls kept down as well as roof off. But man's most deep rooted and subtle sin is the subtle sin of pride: self-esteem and self-respect. Though hardly realising it, while we are careful to keep the roof off between ourselves and God through repentance and faith, we soon let those walls of respectability creep up again between ourselves and our brethren. We don't mind our brethren knowing about successes in our Christian living; they can know if we win a soul, if we lead a class, if we get a prayer answered, if we get good things from the Scriptures, because we too get a little reflected credit out of those things. But where we fail, in those many, many areas of our daily lives - that is a different question! If God has to deal with us over our impatience or temper in the home, over dishonesty in our business, over coldness or other sins, by no means do we easily bear testimony to our brethren of God's faithful and gracious dealings in such areas of failure. Why not? Just because of pride, self-esteem, although we would often more conveniently call it reserve! The fact is we love the praise of men as well as of God, and that is exactly what the Scriptures say stops the flow of confession before men (John 12:42-43).

But let us note that the key to the reality of the whole of the Scriptures is the openness of the men of the Bible. We know of God's most intimate dealings with them, their sins and failures every bit as much as their successes. How do we know the details of Abraham's false step with Hagar, of Jacob's tricks with Isaac and Esau, of Moses' private act of disobedience concerning speaking to the rock? Of Elijah's flight and God's secret rebuke, of the inner history of Jonah? How did the disciples know the inside story of Jesus' temptations to record for us? Only because they were all open before their contemporaries. They lived in the light with each other as with God.

All through history men have turned in their fears and sorrows and doubts to the Psalms. Why? Because they are the heart experiences of men in fear, and doubt, and guilt, and soul-hunger, describing how they had felt and how God had met them.

Why was David's repentance acceptable to God, and yet Saul's, for a much less apparently carnal sin of failing to slaughter all the Amalekites, unacceptable? The reason is plain. Both kings, when faced respectively by the accusing finger of the prophets Nathan and Samuel, admitted their guilt before God, and said, "I have sinned" (1 Samuel 15:24 and 2 Samuel 12:13); but Saul's repentance was demonstrated to be insincere because he desired that his sin be hidden from the people (1 Samuel 15:30), whereas the proof of David's utter brokenness was that he told the whole world in Psalm 51 what a sinner he was and that his only hope was in God's mercy. Openness before man is the genuine proof of sincerity before God, even as righteousness before man, and love to man are the genuine proofs of righteousness before God, and love to God.

Note also that hiding the truth about ourselves before men, pretending to be better than we really are, is the supreme sin which Jesus drove home to the Pharisees, the sin of hypocrisy, and was the direct cause of their crucifying Him. It was not the open harlot or publican, but the religious men who pretended to be holy, and covered their inner condition, who drove Jesus to the cross rather than have the truth about themselves exposed any more. Note also that the first sin judged in the early church was the sin of hiddenness before men, Ananias and Sapphira pretending before their brethren that they were making a bigger surrender than they really were. And finally note that in every dealing of the believer with God recorded in the Scriptures, every step taken in the walk of faith, the Scripture shows that that transaction of inner faith had to be expressed in the spoken word, the faith had to be confessed before men; it was the clinching act which sealed the faith and committed the believers. See it in the lives of all men of faith from Abraham right through to the apostles; what they had believed in their heart, they declared with the mouth as something God had said to them and which would assuredly come to pass.

So far then we have learned these two lessons: that continuous revival is the simple daily walking with Jesus, and also walking in a brokenness two-way which is expressed in the heart to God and by the mouth before men. We will see in a moment, in practical detail, how this works out more fully in the daily life.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **CUPS RUNNING OVER**

We will now turn to the first chapter of John's first epistle to lead us further in this walking. Verse 3 speaks at the beginning of a two-way fellowship, "that ye also may have fellowship with us," and "truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ." Then it goes on in verse 4 to say that he writes to us "that your joy may be full." Fullness of joy is to characterise this daily walk. Or as David said in Psalm 23, "My cup runneth over," not only full, but running over! And this brings us to our third major point. Walking with Jesus, brokenness, and now CUPS RUNNING OVER.

We all can recognise that as a beautiful description of the abiding presence of Jesus in the heart, His peace, joy and presence filling us to overflowing, with no shadow between. We can see the clear sparkling water of life welling up within and flowing over the thirsty souls around through look, and word, and deed. But here comes the point of it in this message of revival. We are to recognise that "cups running over" is the NORMAL daily experience of the believer walking with Jesus, not the abnormal or occasional, but the normal, continuous experience. But that just isn't so in the lives of practically all of us. Those cups running over get pretty muddled up; other things besides the joy of the Lord flow out of us. We are often much more conscious of emptiness, or dryness, or hardness, or disturbance, or fear, or worry than we are of the fullness of His presence and overflowing joy and peace. And now comes the point. What stops that moment-by-moment flow? The answer is only one - Sin. But we by no means usually accept or recognise that. We have many other more convenient names for those disturbances of heart. We say it is nerves that cause us to speak impatiently - not sin. We say it is tiredness that causes us to speak the sharp word at home - not sin. We say it is the pressure of work which causes us to lose our peace, get worried, act or speak hastily - not sin. We say it is our difficult or hurtful neighbour who causes us resentment or dislike, or even hate - but not sin. Anything but sin. We go to psychiatrists or psychologists to get inner problems unravelled - tension, strain, disquiet, dis-peace - but anything which causes the cups to cease running over is SIN.

What proof have we of that statement? Quite a simple one. What are "cups running over"? Of course, the Spirit witnessing to Jesus in the heart. He is our peace, joy, life, all, and it is the Spirit's work never to cease witnessing to Him within us. What then can stop the Spirit's witness? Can nerves, or tiredness, or pressure of circumstances, or difficult people? Paul's cry was, "Who or what can separate me from the love of God? Can tribulation or persecution or things present or things to come? No!" he says. Only one thing separates us from Him - "your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you." Thank God, the great separation has been replaced by reunion with Him at Calvary, but still the daily incursions of sin in the heart bring about the temporary separation from the sense of His presence; we all know that. The cups do not run over.

Now this is an exceedingly important point. By far the largest number of us, including myself, have not been accustomed to regard it as some form of sin if the cups cease to run over, and that is just why they do not quickly start running over again; for where

sin is seen to be sin and confessed as such, the blood is also seen to be the blood, praise God, ever cleansing from all unrighteousness; and where the blood cleanses the Spirit always witnesses - and the cups run over again. But the blood never cleanses excuses - sin called by some more polite name!

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CONVICTION, CONFESSION, CLEANSING

Here then are the three main points of the walk in continuous revival - Walking with Jesus, Brokenness, Cups Running Over. But when cups do not run over, which is very often - hen what? Only sin stops the inner witness. Then how are we to know what the sin is? The answer to that is to be found in reading on in this key chapter of 1 John 1. Verse 3 has spoken of two-way fellowship, and verse 4 of fullness of joy. Verse 5 gives a surprise. John says he is now going to give us the inner truth about Him with whom we walk. He is... love? No - "God is light." If it just said "love," that would be easy, for I might escape a too strict facing of sin by saying, "Well, anyhow He loves" - which is indeed what I have often said. But "this is the message... God is light." What then does that mean? Well, nothing could be more simple. The obvious main function of light is to reveal things as they are. The Scriptures themselves say that - "That which maketh manifest is light..." (Ephesians 5:13). Light is very silent, does not push or drive anyone, but is inescapable to any honest person. You can't lie to light. If you hit your toe against an object in the dark, you may mistakenly say that it is a table. But when the light is turned on in the room, you can no longer continue to say that it is a table if it really is a piano. Light just gives you the lie.

God is light. Silently, inexorably He shines on and in us, revealing things just as they are in His sight. Have you ever noticed the pivotal place given, even in salvation, to our response to light? In John 3, we are distinctly told that men are not lost because of their sins, for they have already been atoned for, but they are lost for refusing the light. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Light silently showed them exactly what they are in God's holy sight, but they won't take it. No, they will never "come to the light" and admit themselves to be what God says they are; but the only way any of us have been saved has been by responding to that light and saying about ourselves what God says. Thus our eternal destiny hangs on whether we love darkness or come to the light.

But even as this is true concerning the unsaved and the necessity of their "coming to the light," it is also true in 1 John 1 of the believer and the necessity of his "walking in the light." He also can walk in darkness (verse 6), if he wishes to do so. That is to say he can refuse to admit, concerning himself, what God says about hem; he can have other and more convenient names for his sins. Worse still, he can be either a deliberate hypocrite (saying he has fellowship with Him, but really walking in the darkness), or he can be self-deceived and not recognise that he is sinning when he is saying he has no sin (verse 8).

So it gets down to this. Sin is a revelation. It is God who graciously shows us sin, even if it is He who shows us the precious blood. Sin is only seen to be SIN - against God - when He reveals it; otherwise sin may just be known as a wrong against a brother, or an anti-social act, or an inconvenience, or a disability, or some such thing. Indeed that is often the extent of the message of a "social gospel," to be rid of sin as a hindrance to brotherhood, as an inconvenience to human progress; not as coming short of the glory of God. GOD shows us sin. We do not need to keep looking inside ourselves. This is

not a life of introspection or morbid self-examination. We do not walk with sin, we walk with Jesus; but, as we walk in childlike faith and fellowship with Him step by step, moment by moment, then if the cups cease to run over, He who is light, with whom we are walking, will clearly show us what the SIN is which is hindering, what its real name is in His sight, rather than the pseudonym, the excusing title, which we might find it more convenient to call it. Let us say again, it is so simple. God does not speak in terms of general condemnation leading to despair of past or fear of future. He speaks in simple specific terms of any actual sin in the present which is hindering the inner witness of His Spirit.

What do we do then? Well, that is obvious. 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins..." The word CONFESS is the word SAY with the preposition CON or WITH added. Three times over in those verses 5-10 man has said his own say (verses 6, 8, 10); but to confess is to say with another, to say what another says. To confess is to say about my sin what God says about it. "You say that is sin, Lord; so do I." That is confession, of course, with the desire to be rid of the sin and the actual ceasing to do the thing, or maintain the attitude, or whatever it is.

Then where there is this confession, we all know there is the word of promise, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." We may say the cleansing is almost automatic, where there is the confession. That light which shines so unchangingly on the sin, shines also on the blood. "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light," says John, "we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." When walking in the light, we read, both sin and the precious blood are seen, the one, praise God, cancelling out the other. And it is important to remember that confession of sin does not deliver by itself. It is THE BLOOD that cleanses, and we must always pass on from confession to faith and praise for THE BLOOD, believing that the blood alone is what glorifies God and delivers us. Folk often remain depressed and mournful and asking others to pray for them after confession of sin, when they ought to pass straight on by simple faith to the blood ever flowing and cleansing, in the words of the old hymn:

"The cleansing blood, I see, I see;  
I plunge, and oh, it cleanses me.  
It cleanses me, it cleanses me;  
Oh praise the Lord, it cleanses me."

Once again, where the blood cleanses, the Spirit witnesses, and where the Spirit witnesses, the cups always run over! So we are back again where we started - walking with Jesus step by step, brokenness, cups running over. When they stop running over, it is always sin. Sin is seen as sin in the light of God. As we walk in that light, we recognise and confess our sins; the blood cleanses; the Spirit witnesses; and the cups run over again!

## CHAPTER FIVE

### TESTIMONY

But that is not all. That is still leaving out the further step which is the missing link in our evangelical living, the very link which releases the revival in our hearts and others. Remember again that saving faith, the first act of brokenness, was a two-way faith. Remember that the costly part of that faith was not the heart-believing before God, but the mouth-confession before men. Remember that, while it cost more, it gave us more, for as we confessed before men, it was as if Jesus confessed us before God His Father in heaven, and the Spirit confessed the Saviour in our hearts. The joy of the Lord became our strength; we were saved. Finally remember that the mouth-committal horizontally was the real proof of the genuineness of the heart-committal before God.

Initial brokenness was roof off, walls down. But now in the daily life? Roof still off, but what about the walls? Continued brokenness in continued revival, and continued brokenness has implicit in it the continued two-way testimony. But here we want to watch carefully. The confession that matters in the Scripture, and which is most referred to, is the confession of CHRIST, rather than of sin (although there are such verses as 1 John 1:9 and James 5:16 where FAULTS is in the original SINS); and it is to the constant confession of Christ that I am called. That is my duty. That is my privilege. That is the way both to get blessing and to transmit it. Indeed, perhaps the word CONFESSION has become so misused through its use in the confessional, that it is better and clearer to use the word TESTIMONY. Testimony to Christ is our duty and privilege. Now the first testimony we make has no reserves about it. We were sinners and said so. Probably in many cases our sins were already known in our community, and the liquor addict, the gambler, the loose-liver, the proud, the self-righteous, the dishonest, gives open glory to God that he has been saved from these things through the power of the precious blood. The emphasis is not on the sin, although that may be mentioned, but on the Saviour from sin. It is not a morbid self-revelation, but a glorious magnification of Christ.

Now it is that form of daily testimony which is the missing note in our present-day Christianity. We were sinners and were saved. We gloried in saying so. But we still so often “come short of the glory of God” in daily life. No longer those old, deliberate, gross sins of the fallen days, or old false attitudes of pure self-centredness or pride; for if we are that, we are not saved. But we know too well we are still open to the assaults of Satan. The flesh still makes its appeal to us, and we respond, although our normal position in Christ is “not in the flesh, but in the Spirit” (Romans 8:9). Even those who have entered into a sanctified experience by faith, and the witness of the Spirit, as in my own case, making real in their experience such statements as in Acts 15:8-9; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 2:6, still know constant temptation. The cases must indeed be rare where Satan does not make actual inroads by some subtle form of sin, either by unbelief, fear, worry, depression, hardness towards a brother, dislike, self-pity, pride, coldness of heart, impatience, criticism, unkind thoughts, the sharp word, jealousy, envy, partiality, hypocrisy, strife, the lust of the eye, evil or impure thoughts, sloth, selfishness, and the like.

So now, as we entered the way of salvation by a two-way brokenness, we must

continue in the way in the daily walk. Something comes in which stops the flow if the Spirit. It is seen to be sin, however “small” we may like to call it (is any sin small which crucified my Lord?); it is confessed and forgiven. But brokenness is two-way. There is the testimony to give before men, as God gives the opening. Nothing need stop me giving it except that it would hurt my pride, my self-esteem. That is how I glorify God - by testifying, as occasion arises, to His fresh deliverances, the fresh experiences of the power of His cleansing blood in my life. Some would narrow this down and say, “should we not merely put a sin right with any against whom we might have committed it, such as hard words between husband and wife, and leave it at that?” Certainly the sin must be put right with those against whom it was committed, but the testimony to God’s deliverance belongs to the whole Church. For actually no sin is committed privately. None of us lives unto ourselves. Our faces, our attitudes, our very atmosphere is poisoning or blessing all those with whom we come in contact. A quarrel between husband and wife, for instance, reaches out in its effect far beyond those two. It affects the whole household. It affects visitors in the home, workmates in the business, and above all fellow-believers in the church. Remember it is not a question of confessing sin, but of praising for a deliverance, and giving others the chance of praising with us.

Daily testimony before men in this way is an ever fresh confession of a saving Christ; but to be honest testimony, it involves some account of what the deliverance is from. It is that which puts teeth into the testimony. It is also proof of our genuine repentance and genuine brokenness, just as confession before men at conversion was the proof of the reality of my new-found faith. To be really wide open before God and man is to be ready at all times to tell of His dealings with me.

It is yet more than that - and this is of utmost importance. We remember that it was the confession of Christ before men that made Him so real to our own hearts. It did something for us, which mere heart-faith did not. Now it is just the same concerning the daily walk. The real reason why we are usually so insensitive to the “little sins of our daily walk, and why we pass them over without much concern, is just because we are not too ashamed about them, or not too repentant, or even in some cases we have given up hope of any lasting deliverance. And why so? Because, while we only wait with the roof off and deal in secret with God alone about our daily affairs, we have the convenient sense of a God of great mercy, or a Christ who died for us, of our security in Him, of an easy-going forgiveness, and so frankly we do not get too concerned about our present inconsistencies! But if we start walking in the light with others about the Lord’s daily dealings with us, telling them when the shadow of sin has darkened our path and how God has dealt with us over it, we shall suddenly find two things: one, that we have an altogether new sense of shame for sin; and two, an altogether new sense of cleansing and liberation from the sin.

We just have to face the fact that we are very human, and our human relationships are usually more vivid to us than our fellowship with God. Thus we have a far more vivid sense of shame about a sin when we tell our brethren, than when we just tell God. It is a simple fact that this openness before men does something in us. It sharpens us up concerning daily sin as never before. It is part of the secret of daily revival. It is amazing how, when walking in the light with our brethren as well as with God, we begin to come alive to attitudes, or actions, of sin in our lives which we just never

noticed to be sin before, or perhaps we took for granted would always be part of our make-up.

With all this there is also the effect on others of this open testifying. We know that the way salvation is spread is by our telling the unsaved what the Lord has done for us; it does something in their hearts, quickening a desire for the same experience. So it is with testimony among God's people. The joy and praise leaps from one heart to another when we hear what the Lord has done for another. The more direct, open, and exact the testimony, the more we rejoice. It does yet more. It convicts. Our hearts are fashioned alike. The way the devil tempts you is almost certainly the way he tempts me. When I hear you tell of the Lord's dealings down where you really live in your home relationships, in your business, and so on, it surely reaches me on some spot where I need the same light and deliverance. That is exactly how great revivals break out and spread. The way is always the same. Sin is suddenly seen to be sin in some life. Someone breaks down (brokenness), and doesn't mind who is present; he can only see himself as a sinner needing renewed cleansing. So out he comes, maybe with tears; public reconciliations are made; the conviction spreads, till dozens are doing the same thing. "Revival has visited this church," we say with joy. So don't you see that when there is a continuous sensitiveness to the smallest sin that stops the cups running over, when there is recognition of the sin in the light, confession, forgiveness, and the thankful public testimony to the glory of God of what the Lord has done, there is a daily revival?

Yet one more point on this heart of the matter. Many of God's people, including the writer, know something of God's deliverances from sin; but there is some spot still in the life which may be given the name mentioned in Hebrews 12:1, "the sin which doth so easily beset us": and at this "weak spot" we really give up any idea that God can really, fully, and permanently deliver. It may not be some big thing, as the world calls big; perhaps it is so hidden that it is just a mere touch of sin known only to the person himself ("the garment spotted by the flesh") but hope of full deliverance is really given up. Then we enter into this revival walk in the light step by step. We are made sensitive as never before both to the reality and the shamefulness of sin. We find that as we walk brokenly with God and one another, sins which used to beset us easily lessen in their power and falls are fewer. Then it suddenly comes to us as light that this special spot of weakness, taken for granted through the years, can be dealt with and deliverance found, if recognised as sin to be faced and hated each time it arises; the emphasis not being so much on a once-for-all crisis deliverance, but on the daily and immediate dealing with the evil thing the moment it shows itself. Another discovery has been that the reason why besetting sin does not get dealt with is that we find a certain sweetness in the flesh; not in actual sin, of course, but on the outer edges of it, as it were. That sweetness has to be recognised as a manifestation of the flesh, and must be hated. Indeed, true repentance is hatred, and where there is hatred of sin, God's hatred in us (Hebrews 1:9), power for deliverance is found in the blood.

In this walking with one another in the light, careful distinction must also be made between temptation and sin. We think that many earnest souls continue in bondage and under false accusation because they are looking for the impossible - deliverance from even temptation; and also because they mistake temptation for sin, and accept condemnation, and a sense of defilement when they should not do so. It also makes

them confused about how far to go in open testimony and fellowship. The distinction between the two is clear. James 1:14-15 settles it for us. Temptation is continuous and will be while we are in this fallen world. Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are, and continuously - "Ye are they that have continued with me in my temptations," Temptation is the stimulation of our natural desires (the correct meaning of LUST in verse 14) whether physical appetites or the faculties of soul or spirit. Jesus was tempted in all these three realms on the Mount of Temptation. But the sudden impulse to think this wrong thought, or say this, or do that, the attraction of the eye in an unlawful direction, the first motion of fear, worry, resentment, and so on is temptation for which we are not held responsible as wilful sin. It is "when lust (desire) hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin." It is when we allow the temptation to find lodgement in us, when we continue the wrong thought, allow the resentment to remain, keep on looking, speak the hasty word, and so on, that temptation has become sin. Obviously, therefore, if we withstand the temptation as it arises, by abiding in Christ, we should not accept condemnation, and our testimony to His praise should be to His keeping power in the evil day.

Let us also be watchful to maintain liberty in testimony. How easily we can slip back to legalism, instead of walking in the glorious liberty of the sons of God. We can endeavour to walk by rule, instead of by the gentle but free compulsions of the Spirit who leads, not drives. Thus we can get into the bondage of thinking that we are under strict compulsion to testify to the Lord's dealings on all or on fixed occasions. Testimony of this kind can become as much a set form with one group as absence of any testimony is a set form with another! We must never allow ourselves to be driven. We are not mere human imitators, feeling compelled to say something just because our brother does, or because it is the usual thing on certain occasions. We "walk with Jesus" even in the matter of testimony. There is a divine compulsion, when we know from Him within by inner conviction that we must open our lips, and when we can draw power from Him to do so; that is quite a different thing from the drive of the law, or of imitation. Sometimes the best testimony might be to testify that God has given me nothing to say! "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage."

Equally we must avoid that subtle pressure on others to see the same as ourselves, and that subtle criticism of those who do not. Of course we want others to have any light God has given us; but it was God who GAVE it us in His own time and way. Let us, then, leave it to God to GIVE it to our brethren as He pleases. Our only job is humbly and joyfully to testify to what God shows us. It is impressive in the Gospel of John to see the rest of Jesus among fierce critics and opponents on the simple basis that people can only see and receive what God GIVES them to see.

Thus, this living in revival, personally and in our community, is the freedom of the Spirit. It is not a question of forming now sects or fellowships or cliques which cause divisions in churches and give an "I am holier than thou" impression. It is just to live in revival, in the light, in brokenness, in cleansing, in testimony, just as God leads, in the home, in the church, everywhere.

Questions are sometimes asked about to whom we should testify and if there should be any reservations in our testimony. Should we, for instance, tell unsaved people of the

Lord's personal dealings with us? Perhaps a simple answer, subject always to the individual guidance of the Spirit, would be that we should always testify even to the most opposed and indifferent if we have sinned in a way which was obvious to them, such as by heated words. It is to the glory of God that we humble ourselves before them and tell them of the Lord's gracious restoration, as we have repented. But if our testimony is concerning things in our lives about which the Lord has dealt with us unknown to our unsaved friends, then it may be that we would keep that testimony for our brethren in Christ.

As for reservations in testimony, one matter about which wisdom and restraint may be needed is those sins which have such a deep hold on all mankind and which take first place in all lists of sins in the Scriptures - uncleanness, lasciviousness, impure thoughts, fornication, adultery. God has put a barrier between the sexes which it is His will we preserve, and therefore in mixed meetings only veiled language can be used in referring to these things. Yet at the same time, of all temptations and sins this is the one which in one form or another eats most deeply into lives. Maybe the only way in which we can go to the bottom in the light with God and one another in this respect is when men get together among themselves, and women likewise. And there certainly is a need for this.

Perhaps no criticism is more strongly made against open fellowship than when someone speaks in the open unadvisedly on sex matters. It seems as if the human mind leaps to seize on this. We have all heard stories of such indiscretions, and sometimes they are used to discredit open fellowship. Certainly, as we have said, they should be avoided and discouraged, and I found that the maturing fellowships in Africa, where one might expect more "raw" testimonies from new believers come up from the grossness of heathendom, have learned to stop any such statements and to tell the speaker just to say that God had been dealing with him over the sins of impurity. But I would also say this. Why do we express such disgust when an unwisely open testimony is given? Here is some poor soul deep in the mire of these loathsome sins, but at last coming to the light, finding the glorious power of the blood, and not recognising, perhaps through the past defilement of his mind, that such things should not be talked about; in his zeal and new-found joy, or perhaps under deep conviction, he pours out the sewerage of his soul. Is God shocked? I reckon not. I reckon that the joy in heaven over a poor soul delivered and cleansed is more than distress at his unwise statements. Look how open the Bible is! So let us keep a balance in these things. Let us avoid saying things which could put unclean thoughts into the minds of others, or which are not seemly; but if such things are said in honesty, but with unwise zeal, let us not be over alarmed, but take an occasion for a quiet word in season concerning restraint on future occasions.

Brokenness is obedience; indeed revival is the simple outcome of obedience to the light. But for many of us the brokenness to which we are not referring, including openness before men, starts by being really costly. The reason is obvious. The walls of reserve and self-esteem have gone so high, probably without our ever realising it, and so the first step into this brokenness is probably a big one. It is the walls of Jericho which have to fall down flat! I certainly found that, and so have many others. In my own case I suddenly found myself face to face in Central Africa with a brother whom I had met and disliked in England! I had disliked him only because he was too open for my taste, although I had not at that time traced the real cause of my dislike; I was not

ready enough for the light in those days. But here I was in a revival company where dislike was only another word for hate which was faced and brought to the light as sin; and I was carefully pretending that I had brotherly love for a man whom in the white and black terms of 1 John, I “hated!” It was then I found how high those walls of pride are. I just could not bring myself to admit in public that I had the sin of dislike against him, and equally the sin of hypocrisy against all my brethren in pretending that I did like him. As a senior visiting missionary, I could not let on that I had such a “foolish” thing in my heart. But it was not foolish, it was sin which crucified my Lord. To say I could not bring it out was to deceive myself; I could, but I wouldn’t, that was all. I had to learn obedience to the light. At last, after two days, under the constant inner compulsion of the Spirit, I just took the step of cold-blooded obedience, brought it into the light before the brother and all, and of course the blood reached me at once; there was the cleansing, the love of God in my heart, and the joy of the whole company. I love and honour that brother today. That is why the first step into brokenness is probably a big break.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **EXHORTATION**

There remains one further stage in revival fellowship, and a most important one. We have seen: walking with Jesus step by step; two-way brokenness; cups running over, and when they don't run over; walking in the light, letting God show sin as sin; thus confession and cleansing in the blood; and finally, as God gives opportunity, giving glory to God by testifying to His dealings with sin and to the power of the blood, bringing liberation to the one who testifies, and joy and often conviction to the hearts of the hearers. The one remaining point is **MUTUAL EXHORTATION**.

The early church was first and foremost a fellowship. They "continued in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship." they broke bread from house to house. When they met in worship, it was the very opposite of our present church services, divided into the two categories of preacher and preached-to. It was a living fellowship-in-action. All took part, and there was such a flow of the Spirit through the believers that Paul had to write words of restraint. "How is it, brethren? When ye come together, **EVERY ONE OF YOU** hath a psalm, hath a doctrine..." Then he urged them to orderliness, and said that if while one was giving his word, another arose with a desire to say something, let the first sit down and give place to him, for "the spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets." But today we have to persuade people to say something, if occasionally we do have a time of open fellowship! Paul had to persuade them to keep silent and give the other fellow a chance! We have now replaced fellowshipping by preaching in our modern church life, and the reason is not hard to find. Fellowshipping necessitates a real flow of life in the fellowship, for each has to be ready to contribute his share of what the Lord is really saying to him; preaching is an easy way out for a not-too-living fellowship. Appoint the preacher and let him find the messages; we can sit still and take or leave what we hear, as we please! Probably the best balance was found in early Methodism, where John Wesley laid down that besides the preaching and teaching meetings, there must be a weekly class-meeting which was on a strictly fellowship basis, and all who attended were required to tell of the Lord's personal dealings that week, whether concerning sins, or answers to prayer, or opportunities of witness.

But in the Scriptures it is also obvious that in important part of this fellowshipping was to be mutual exhortation, not just public exhortation by a preacher, but one exhorting the other. In Hebrews it distinctly says that the reason for such exhortation is to keep each other from becoming "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (3:13), in other words lest cups should cease to run over and we should not even recognise it. And it was to be daily exhortation! The same is said in 10:24-25, about public gatherings. The phrase usually quoted as a summons to attend weekly preaching services, "not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together," is actually used, not of preaching, but of mutual exhortation, and "so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." In James also we are exhorted to mutual confession of sin, so that we may pray one for another.

In Africa I found these instructions being obeyed in all simplicity, and perhaps that one thing has contributed more than any other to the spread of revival. Those simple

revived believers use often unusual boldness in questioning into the lives of those they contact, as to what is their real spiritual condition and experience of daily victory. Of course, such boldness has also met with intense opposition, and often also criticism, where the questioning might not always have been wise, instead of thankfulness that a few are bold when most of the church is asleep! But it has certainly resulted in a marvellous spread of revival and salvation among saved and unsaved. It has had another healthy effect also. It allows the Spirit to have leadership, and not just some outstanding man. Having accepted among themselves this healthy principle of mutual exhortation, no man or leader is put on some pedestal where he can not be approached or questioned. All are brethren around one Father, and if the very chiefest among those brethren is seen by the spirit of discernment to be unwise in leadership or to be off colour spiritually, others will walk in the light with him.

In other words, the standard is that all want to be the best for Jesus, all recognise how easily deceived we are by Satan and the flesh, so all desire their brethren to “exhort” them, if things are seen in their walk which are not “the highest.” Such exhortations are not easy either to receive or give. To receive them with humility and a readiness to be constantly adjusted before God is one proof of continuing revival, for where we are not revived, we almost certainly resent such challenges and reveal hurt self. To give them in grace and faithfulness costs perhaps even more. We are so easily tempted to “let well’ sone,” or say, “It is not my business.” and so forth, because we recognise that to bring such a challenge might disturb the peace, or disrupt a friendship. But in revival we see we are our brother’s keeper, not for his sake, but for Jesus’ sake. When a brother is not on top spiritually, it wounds the Lord Jesus, it grieves Him, it hinders the working of His Spirit; therefore it is part of our duty to Him to be faithful to the brother. Not to be so is sin. Of course such challenging has to be deeply in the Spirit, that is to say, its source must be godly concern for the brother in question, and the subtle danger watched against using such a method to “put a brother right,” or even “to get our own back.” Thus, it can only proceed from brokenness in ourselves. Indeed often the only God-sealed approach may be, not the painting finger of accusation towards the brother, but back to ourselves, perhaps telling him of some reaction in ourselves caused by his conduct, which we have had to take to the cross, or perhaps telling him how on some other occasion God had to deal with us through another brother’s faithfulness. The golden rule, as it applies to challenging, is Matthew 7:12, “All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.”

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### REVIVAL

This completes what has been on my heart and mind to outline as God's way of continuous revival. I doubt that the use of much further actual illustration would add a great deal. I just mention a few points. I have learned in fellowship with others who have formed the habit of regularly testifying one to the other of God's immediate dealings in their lives. Many of these testimonies have told in simplest form of the first seed of some sin, such as worldly ambition, getting into their hearts, and how they have repented and been cleansed afresh in the blood. The thrill and value of such testimonies to me has been to see such sensitiveness to sin that when the first seeds are sown by Satan in the heart, they are recognised in God's light and dealt with. Whereas in so many of us we let such seeds lie and send down their roots, until ultimately they bear their evil fruit openly. I saw immediate sensitiveness to sin, as I had never seen it before.

In Africa, for instance, how used I had been to hearing about or seeing the tragedy of a fine young life, apparently fully dedicated to Christ and serving Him, suddenly switched off the service of the Lord through love of material gain, a much bigger salary, finer clothes, more possessions (with all these things now pouring into Africa) but how well I knew that that did not happen in a moment. There were seeds of covetousness long down in their hearts, roots taking hold downwards and finally bearing their evil fruit upwards, but no one ever knew they were there! The walls were up and nothing was ever said about the inner struggle which finally ended in defeat. But when there was, what a thrill it was to hear one and another get up to fellowship with all about "desires for progress" getting hold of their hearts that week, and that they had seen that to love anything more than Jesus was sin, and had brought it to the cleansing blood. Sin was dealt with in its seed form!

The same applies to the awful hold on lives of the sins of uncleanness. So many times nothing is seen or known till the public fall, fornication or adultery, has taken place, and disciplinary action by the church becomes necessary. But where revival is, and walls are down, the first motions of those sins in impure thoughts or unclean looks are recognised as sin, judged, confessed and brought to the cleansing blood - and it has never brought me embarrassment, but rather joy to hear a brother testify to the Lord's dealings with him that week in his thought life.

Then there is the constant flow of joy and praise which results from such testimonies. It is the very opposite to some morbid, depressing accounts of sins committed. Each testimony magnifies the precious blood; indeed I have never before seen the blood so praised and so precious, and hymns and choruses so much centring on "the fountain opened for uncleanness and sin," such as:

Glory, glory hallelujah,  
Glory, glory to the Lamb!  
Oh, the cleansing blood has reached me,  
Glory, glory to the Lamb!

One other point was the quickness with which many have learned to “break,” when conscious of sin. Whereas we so often remain unbroken and unrepentant for hours or days, too proud to break and witness, and thus we remain in darkness and heaviness of heart when we might come straight back into the light through the blood. In Africa again, in a formal Sunday morning service, I saw an interpreter who had been corrected in a mistaken interpretation by someone in the congregation, stand up five minutes later, as the service ended, to tell the whole congregation that God had dealt with him for having resentment and pride in his heart because he had been corrected. Not only did he have an immediate restoration of the joy of the Lord, instead of carrying about hardness and resentment perhaps for days, but the testimony released a moving of the Spirit among the people, who carried on testimony and praise meetings in groups outside the building.

One final word about the way revival starts. It begins by one person who sees from God what it is to walk in the light. But to walk with Jesus like this involves also walking in the light with one another, horizontally as well as vertically, and that means at least one other person with whom to walk in open fellowship. Of course, as one brother said to me, “One would naturally start walking like that with the person nearest to you - husband and wife, brother and sister, friend and friend.” In other words, revival starts with two people being revived, and starts at home!

The way to begin walking in the light in fellowship one with another in a more public sense is to do it. I have found it most helpful, after talking with a congregation on the subject, to suggest that we move straight on to a time of quiet open fellowship. There will be no pressure, no demands made on any, but just an opportunity given to any to say anything, if they know the Spirit is telling them to do so; if others have no special word from God in their hearts, they are right to keep silent. But revival comes through obedience. Indeed revival is really just obeying the Holy Ghost. Where He tells to “break” and to testify to the light shining on sin in our lives, and on the blood which cleanses from all sin, then let us obey, and we will find at once that the Spirit is loosed in revival in our own hearts, and is moving in revival in the company.

I have found it good to make this time of open fellowship a natural continuation of a meeting, rather than to ask folks to go into another room. We are not aiming at an after-meeting in the ordinary sense when folks are called upon to make some crisis decision, but rather to practise a season of fellowship in which folks can see and learn and share in walking in the light; for we are out, not for some sudden decisions, but to learn the way of walking in revival individually and as communities.

Yet let us keep always before us that we are learning a continuous walk with God and one another. Anything can so easily become formal and legalistic. Thus a set fellowship meeting can become the set time for open fellowship, whereas we are seeking to learn to walk all the time in the two-way fellowship, in the home, between husband and wife and children; in our church and social contacts; and in our business life: it is by this means that the revival will spread among saved and unsaved, when God has thousands walking in revival who can't help witnessing to the ways in which God is meeting them in the dusty walks of their daily lives.

With these rough outlines I close this small booklet. The blessed Holy Spirit can never

be systematised. The wind bloweth where it listeth. He is always original, and all our fresh springs are in Him. We can, however, at least give humble testimony to this His way which has been revealed to us in our day, even as Paul told the Corinthians that he was sending them Timothy to “bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ.” We write what we have seen and heard, and what we have tested by experience. May the Lord water the seed in hearts. God’s plan in these last days is revival in His world-wide church, and through the revived church the reaping of a final great harvest of souls. I believe that what is outlined in these pages is the way of the Spirit, within the reach of all believers, both to begin and continue such a revival.