

Messenger and Visitor

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THE WELSH REVIVAL

A remarkable work of grace is in progress in Wales. It promises to rival in power and continuance anything witnessed by the Whitfields and the Wesleys, by Finney and Moody. It differs from the revivals under such noted leaders in that no one person is the acknowledged leader. The young miner, Mr. Evan Roberts, who till a few months ago was working in the coal mine, is indeed a prominent factor, but the revival is in progress in many places which he has not visited and where he is not known. Baptists are taking a leading part in nearly all the missions that are being held, and very many of the largest gatherings are held in some of their churches.

The revival began in the evangelist's own home town, a good place to begin. The conversions are remarkable, old animosities are dissolved, and men and women who have not spoken to each other for years, are reconciled and are living in peace and harmony. Thousands have already ranged themselves on Christ's side, and the revival is spreading throughout the entire principality. The North is saying to the South 'give up,' and the South is saying to the North, 'Keep not back.' Prayer meetings are being held in coal mines. An annual town fair where hundreds usually go for drink and rowdiness, ended this year in a lively meeting in a large church. One Baptist church added to its roll of members more than 150 persons. There is no regular order in the services, they sometimes continue for many hours, and the largest buildings cannot contain the throngs which crowd for admittance. Above all, prayer, earnest, importunate, confident, specific, is being offered to God, and answered, for the conversion and renewal of souls. What God is doing in Wales, he is able and willing to do in any country. There is little formal preaching, but much testimony of personal experience. Emphasis is laid upon four principal points.

- (1) All known sin must be confessed.
- (2) There must be nothing doubtful left in the life which might form a cloud between the soul and God. Every body must be forgiven before the penitent can obtain forgiveness.
- (3) The Spirit must be obeyed with swift and unquestioning obedience.
- (4) There must be a public confession of Christ as Saviour.

An editorial in a Welsh secular newspaper, referring to the work and the conditions of many of the churches which prevailed prior to this movement says,

"So far the power of the Divine influence has been felt most forcibly in the mining districts where the mass of the people live, and where religion is in most danger from indifference and social corruption. The infidel world had become arrogant in these districts and the churches had come to believe that their first duty in these enlightened days was to provide entertainments for the natural man, incapable of enjoying spiritual things, in order not to lose him as a church attendant. The ministry was too much for pleasing men rather than awakening the conscience. In many instances our chapels have been turned to what appeared to be theatres more than anything else, and the musicals held in them were a mockery of religion, money and entertainment are all that have been demanded. This is a hard truth to publish, and it is hard because it is true. There have been no compunctions of conscience for turning the Sabbath over to pleasure, to politics and to socialistic meetings. Trade unionism insisted that it had a prerogative even on God's day. But the atmosphere has undergone a change. Concerts and theatrical meetings are giving way to religious meetings. In some places it is impossible to keep up the foot ball game because many of the players have experienced a change of heart." This testimony is all the more valuable because it comes from a secular journal, and the writer appears to know something of the conditions which prevail in some parts of the land at least. The change is remarkable. Its influence is permeating the whole social fabric, and men, who were profane and vile and wicked are now pure and clean and good. It is the Lord's doings and it is marvellous in our eyes. All true revivals are from God. May we all be heartened and pray yet more earnestly and believingly for ourselves, our families, our churches, our land and the world, 'O Lord, revive Thy Work.'

BAPTIST OUTLOOK IN THE WORLD.

In this week's issue there will be found brief sketches of the world-wide progress of Baptist work. For this the editor is largely indebted to *The Standard* of Chicago and *The Argus* of Louisville, Kentucky, for which we desire to make appropriate acknowledgments. It will be seen that no reference is made to the outlook in Great Britain, India, Canada, the United States and Mexico, for the reason that reference has already been made to Baptist work in these countries in recent issues of the paper. It is to be regretted that fuller reports could not have been given of the progress of the work in some of the countries referred to, but this was not possible because the sources of information were not available to the editor. We have done as well as we could with the material at hand and trust it may prove of some interest and profit to our readers. It is difficult to learn the exact condition of Baptist affairs either in Australia or New Zealand. We pray that this year 1905 may be marked as a year of unexampled prosperity and blessing to the cause of God in the world and especially to our Baptist Zion. We are looking forward to a consummation of a union with our Free Baptist brethren in these Maritime Provinces, with eagerness and hope, believing it to be for the glory of God and the best interests of the Kingdom.

Outlook in Europe.

RUSSIA

The work in Russia is in the initial stages, for it is only forty-five years old. When it is remembered what difficulties have had to be overcome, what obstacles surmounted, we need not be surprised because the progress has not been more marked.

Churches have been established in St. Petersburg, Warsaw and Odessa. These are in a difficult position, since they have no suitable buildings in which to meet. Rents are exorbitant, and the poverty of the members makes it impossible to "arise and build."

Mission work among the orthodox Russians is strictly forbidden. Regular work is carried on among five distinct nationalities; German, Lettes, Estonians, Czechs, and Poles. Work among the latter has only just begun. If means were forthcoming, the work would be pushed in the Caucasus and in Siberia. On account of the present war with Japan, the business depression is felt severely, and in consequence mission work suffers. There are at present in Russia 112 Baptist churches with a membership of 23662. For many years great efforts were made to crush all tendency to the adoption of evangelical faith. Religious toleration has been secured now to a greater extent than ever before and the churches are allowed to worship in peace.

DENMARK.

The Baptist cause is weak in this country. The prevailing religion is Lutheranism. But there has been some advance. At the annual meeting held in June last ninety-two baptisms were reported. The total membership is now nearly 4000. The spirit of beneficence is also making some progress.

A High school was established in 1899, which is crowded year by year. It is from this school that future workers must come. Both sexes are in attendance. This year there are 20 young men and 14 young women.

New work has been started in Aarhus and Odense, two cities next in size to Copenhagen. If the brethren had the means new ground would be broken elsewhere. There are many open doors in this little kingdom. The Am. Bap. Miss. Union is sending help to the cause, which is a source of encouragement to the faithful workers who have been so badly handicapped in the past through lack of men and of money.

SWEDEN AND NORWAY.

The work in Sweden is moving steadily forward. There has been advance every year of its history except four. The present membership is about 44,000.

In beneficence the churches are also making commendable progress. The church members are realizing their responsibilities in pushing the work so as to reach others who have not the same privileges which are possessed by themselves.

The educational work in general is carried on by the state. The Baptists have a Seminary for the training of young men for the ministry which is in a flourishing condition and is doing a fine work for the cause.

A most significant example of progress during the past year has been in the effort which has been made to organize the young people for active aggressive work. The Sunday Schools are in an especially satisfactory condition. The number of pupils in attendance being about 54,000, nearly 10,000 more than that of the church membership. It requires no prophet to tell what this means to the churches during the next ten years.

The work in Norway is only about 45 years old. The entire membership is about 3000. The country is divided into four associations, each with a missionary. Only one association is strong enough to support its own missionary.

There are only fifteen men giving their whole time to preaching the Gospel. There were as many fifteen years ago. The churches and members have doubled since that time, but not so the preachers. The emigration to America is sadly depleting the working forces. This is a gain to America but a serious loss to Norway.

The education of pastors and evangelists in the home land is one of the most important questions before the Norwegian Baptists. As is said by one of their number, "It is the very nerve of our mission." The work is advancing in all branches. The fields are ripe for the harvest, but the men and the means are lacking. Revival meetings are held in all the churches; the largest number of conversions is reported by the church in Christiana. There have been a large number of additions recently to churches north of the Arctic Circle. Both Sweden and Norway suffer from emigration.

GERMANY.

Here progress is noted. Baptists are growing in numbers and in spiritual power. The principles by which they are distinguished from other religious bodies are gaining ground. This is seen not simply among themselves in the fatherland, but among others to whom their faithful missionaries have gone with the gospel. The beginnings of Baptist work in all northern Europe are directly traceable to German workers. The last reports to hand show that the number baptized (last year) were 1846. The entire membership of the churches is 32,000. There are eight German associations. These have all held their conferences, at which the subjects for discussion claiming special attention were devoted to the work among young people and Sunday Schools.

The Baptist publishing work is a very important part of denominational enterprise, with headquarters at Cassel. It is giving special attention to the publication of Spurgeon's works. Besides this, steady advance is made in its periodical literature. The German Baptists believe in publishing their own literature and they also believe in patronizing it when published. There is a Baptist Seminary in Hamburg which will celebrate the 25th year of its existence during the present year. It is proposed to raise a jubilee fund in connection with the anniversary.

The Baptists of Germany, like all good Baptists the world over, are doing some foreign missionary work. A society has been organized with its headquarters in Berlin. It is taking up work among the Cameroons in Africa, which was given up by the English Baptists soon after the Germans took possession of the country. There are at present twelve missionaries at work. A Zezania Mission Society was organized in 1882 and is also located in Hamburg. It supports a number of Bible women on eight different fields under the supervision of Miss Clough of Ongolo, and Mr. Heinrichs of Ramapatam. While Baptists are free to carry on their work in most parts of the German Empire, they labor under some disabilities in other parts of this great country especially in Saxony and the Mecklenburgs.

FRANCE AND BELGIUM.

In France the outlook is encouraging. The additions to the churches are mainly from the Roman Catholics. Fifteen years ago there were not more than 100 Baptists in Paris, today there are over 600. These form three churches with five mission halls in different parts of the city and suburbs. In the provinces the progress is limited by lack of means. Altogether there are 2500 Baptists. There were 200 baptisms last year. Baptists have no schools or colleges. Education is provided by the state. The progress of education under the republic has been remarkable. Thirty-five years ago not more than 75 per cent. of the population could read and write, now the figure is over 96 per cent. The state schools do not teach any form of religion, prayer, or dogma of any kind. They are absolutely secular. The Romish schools are being closed by the new laws, though many are maintained by private subscriptions, but no monk or nun is allowed to teach in them.

The most remarkable sign of progress is the anti-clerical movement. This will result in the entire separation of church and state. The Government insists that the State, as such, has nothing to do with religion, this being a matter which concerns solely the individual conscience. This will open unbounded possibilities to all Protestant denominations and to none more than to the Baptists, if they are ready to enter the open door.

In Belgium, the work is attended with many difficulties. The opposition is of the bitterest kind. Work is carried on from a number of centres, notably from Charleroi, Ougru, Liege, Peruwelz and Bernissart. Baptisms are more or less frequent, but the laborers are all too few. The statistics of the work are not to hand.

ITALY AND SPAIN.

Work in Italy is carried on by the English Baptists and by the Southern Baptist Convention of the United States. For about 30 years all Baptists in Italy have worked together. In so doing they have not interfered with the others' views. By the 'basis' which was adopted each mission and every church was left to its autonomy. This has been a great help to the Baptist cause, by presenting a solid front toward all other denominations and has brought into sympathetic relations certain bodies more or less closely related in doctrine.

A monthly paper has been published, which has unfolded Baptist principles. An Orphans' and Widows Fund has been very useful and has now a considerable accumulated capital. There is also a Theological School which was reopened last autumn. It has six students in attendance.