

We may be prepared to put forth special efforts for the up-building of all the churches represented in this Association, "in righteousness and true holiness," and in an extensive and general revival of the work of God.

While we have occasion to look up to Heaven in gratitude of heart for the increase of numbers and graces which have characterized some of the churches in this Association during the past year, yet, considered as a whole, it is to be feared that we are not in such a condition of religious prosperity as ought to distinguish a people so highly exalted as ourselves, in point of privileges and opportunities for usefulness.

Thus far, ever since the day of Pentecost, the Baptists have, under God, been largely indebted to Revivals of Religion for whatever of individual and associated prosperity has attended them. In every place, wherever they have hitherto obtained a standing and a name, it has been the result of the Revival of the work of God. As a people, to the praise of God be it spoken, they have ever cherished a love for and participated in the spirit of Revivals. So that if the entire history of the Baptists could be fully written out, it will be a history of continuous Revivals, from about the year of our Lord 33, to the year of our Lord, 1858. True, there have been seasons of declension and heart-wanderings from God. But never, in all their history, have they been suffered to decline in any community of which we have heard, so far, as to ignore the spirit of revivals. No! no! When here and there, for the sins we have committed, the Almighty has "in a little wrath hid His face from us for a moment." His everlasting kindness has soon poured in upon us, and His own work has been revived in His own time and way. Many times, during the past, in different sections, has God seemed to "hide his face from us," but soon, "with great mercies has he gathered us." And these gathering seasons have generally,—I don't know but in truth I may say—invariably, been in the midst and by means of Revivals.

But it may not be improper to raise the question in this connection. What have been the leading and most strongly marked characteristics in these revivals of religion among the Baptists, during the past? I answer.—Deep self-abasement, heart brokenness in the sight of God and man; earnest fastings and prayers; the unshrinking presentation and application of the great doctrinal and practical truths of the gospel; relating to the sinner's heart, and conscience, and life, being all sinful, and dangerous, and destructive. His utter inability to save himself; his lost and ruined condition; the absolute necessity of regeneration which has its only life and manifestations by the Sovereign Spirit of the Almighty, begetting within the human soul a living faith in the atoning merits of a crucified Redeemer; making salvation, "by grace through faith," guiding the souls of the redeem-

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