

WHAT IS REVIVAL?

"Wilt thou not revive us again?"—Ps. lxxxv. 6.
 "They shall revive as corn, and grow as the vine."—Hosea xiv. 7 (margin, *blossom*).
 "Blow upon my garden, that spices may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits."—Cant. iv. 16.

What is "Revival?" Solemn question! Let you and I, dear reader, consider what the word implies in its true sense, for there exists a mine of wealth in even words. To "revive" naturally presupposes that vitality at one period had certainly existed. Who would attempt to use this word with any sort of propriety to a stone, which is cold, barren, and unimpressible, and ever will be so? Nothing can give it life. Yet if we regard the dry bones in some decayed cemetery, we may apply the word revive in fullest assurance that one day those barren emblems of mortality will arise at the bidding of Him who called into being their wondrous mechanism, and they will be revived with the spirit of a new existence, and with fullness of life. It only awaits the will of an Almighty being to bring into shape and motion every separate piece, making a new and perfect body. This is, indeed, a work of Omnipotence. But there is a greater wonder still when the soul, once steeped in sin and forgetfulness of God, is made to exhibit every new grace, and becomes fruitful unto every good word and work. Both are stupendous works of Deity, but the latter is to work with an energy and unceasing love in the heart of man, which is, alas! leagued against itself with devils, until it revives from its previous ruin, and, with new power, turns unto God. But let us be wary in the application of the term "revive us," for this implies, as we said, some previous vitality in the soul; that it was not utterly without life. That it possessed still some distinctive characteristics of the true believer, and but awaited the dews of God's grace to flourish anew, and be as the sweet spices for fragrance. "A revival" clearly points to the awakened Church as it exists in Christ. "One shall be taken, another left." But we cannot call that a "revival" in individuals of whom there had previously been no life. Rather the very reverse. Deaf to all the pleadings of friends and faithful preachers, until awakened by the call of Him whose voice opened the tomb of Lazarus, the frightened soul asks "What shall I do to be saved?" And there is life! It is from thence we must date the revival of our graces. For if the soul really be aroused to a sense of its spiritual death, it will cry mightily, and that continually, "Lord, revive thy work." For it is the work of Omnipotence, from first to last, to new create, as well as maintain the life of the soul, God by his Spirit working in us to will and to do of his good pleasure! Herein lies the essence

of a "revival." The new heart, and with the new heart new tastes, desires, and aversions will spring as the necessary consequence of the "new birth." It will be a new birth unto holiness. "Behold I make all things new," saith the Lord of life, "Ye are henceforth bone of my bone, very members incorporate with my life—I the root, ye the branches." Can anything be plainer or more practical in its influences on the life and conversation of such as are renewed in the spirit of their minds?

We will examine this. Lest, while having "a name to live," we be yet dead, and, as in the living body, every member is obedient to walk or run, sit still, or be in motion, to the will of its living head, so in like manner should every member of Christ's mystical body be prompt to obey the hidden motions of His Spirit, who moves in all but those who on trial are found "REPROBATE," a word which cannot be sufficiently apprehended, for it implies having been "tried," and found wanting, cast out as "reprobate silver." No more renewal for such as these. Their day is only a filling up of woe-gathering against the great day of the Lord, when He cometh to judge the earth in righteousness. O! for words to express the great mercy of the Lord, who "reviveth" the spirit of the humble. With that humble-minded one the Lord delighteth to dwell, who can but smite upon his breast and cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner," while eight times in one chapter our merciful and gracious Saviour pronounces woe upon the uplifted, self-righteous, self-satisfied, self-seekers, who, deeming themselves "the righteous," have no charity for their neighbours, and upon such will descend the real woe, who, believing themselves safe in their own workings, find they had deluded themselves with "a name to live," yet, being dead, and, awaking too late from their profitless phantasies, find the soul lost, forgetting their Lord's warning, "How can ye believe, who have honour one of another." O, dear reader, think of these things. Be satisfied in your own mind. The Spirit witnessing with your spirit that you are a child of God, and then you will have confidence towards God, Christ being found in you, the hope of glory. Heaven will be within you; peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Do you ask what is a "revival?" This is it. It is God in us, already begun upon earth, the very spirit and peace of a believer, in foretaste of the life that shall be passed amidst the spirits of just men made perfect. What an exalted idea does this give us of the company of heaven! all justice, all peace; no divisions, no strife nothing of that temper which now rends Christendom with the strife of party, but like our benignant Lord, all there will be of one mind, in love made perfect. What a glorious liberty for the true worshippers of an ever-present God; no seeking Him in one place more than another, but God, Emmanuel, ever