

MAY WE HOPE FOR A GREAT REVIVAL?

WITHIN the last twelve months (1867) the Church of Christ in America has been visited with an extraordinary quickening. For once the embankments by which religious matter is shut out from the channels of secular intelligence were broken in; and even daily papers teemed with accounts of revivals and conversions. This great event has not been without its effect upon ourselves. Aspirations after a similar work of grace which existed before have been awakened afresh. On every hand good men may be heard asking one another, "May we hope for a great revival?" Some, it is true, not less desirous of the extension of Christ's kingdom than others, shrink from the idea of a revival, lest it should be attended with extravagance, and bring forth none but ephemeral fruit.

Some months ago two Ministers of the Gospel met on the top of an omnibus within a few miles of this city. Their conversation soon turned upon the remarkable news weekly coming from the religious bodies of America; and one of them expressed a hope that we might witness something similar amongst ourselves. The other replied, "I have no faith in revivals; they do not leave any permanent results. Many years ago in the city of E—I witnessed what appeared for the time to be a very powerful revival, but in a little while all the fruit of it had passed away." "In the city of E—?" rejoined his friend. "Several years ago,—was it about the time of the first visitation of the cholera?" He learned that it was. "And all the fruits disappeared?" "Completely," was the reply. "It's strange," he said, "that in a distant mission field I knew two Missionaries, both of whom had been converted in that revival."

What do we understand by a great revival?

Why should we desire it?

Why may we hope for it?

1. WHAT DO WE UNDERSTAND BY A GREAT REVIVAL?

Through God's mercy to this country it has been blessed with a great revival in each of the last three centuries. In the sixteenth, when Christianity was almost dead, a Divine breath passed over the land, and then arose that great revival of doctrine and life which we call the Reformation; the indirect effects of which touch every department of our social and moral life, and its permanent embodied result

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