

Our Contributors.

A REVIVAL ON OLD SCHOOL LINES

BY KNOXIAN.

Revival means increased life. Some life exists, and by revival the existing life is renewed and increased. A man lies half drowned on the beach. His friends roll him over, rub him and give him stimulants. He revives. The little life left in him has been increased. This definition and illustration of the word revival may not suit philosophers, or word brokers, or pedants, but they do well enough for sensible people.

A genuine revival in a congregation means an increase of spiritual life in the congregation. This kind of a revival all good men want, labour for and pray for. This kind of a revival all congregations need, and none need so much as those that think they do not need it at all.

Is there no way of increasing the spiritual life of a congregation without the aid of an evangelist, professional revivalist, or some worker of that class? Have such men a monopoly of the Spirit? Do they and they alone dispense reviving power? Is an increase of spiritual life possible on the lines on which they work and on these only? If so, the Church is in a most deplorable condition. All congregations do not want the services of a professional revivalist. Some of the gentlemen who have figured in that capacity in this country have not left very happy memories behind them. Some of them left their mark, but the mark was neither a thing of beauty nor of joy. Moody cannot be in every place. All congregations cannot have Sam Jones. A good many do not want him. Some of the minor evangelists occasionally stir up considerable life in a congregation, but it is sadly true that the life is not always spiritual. Is there no way of promoting a revival on old school lines? Some critical brother may say, "The employment of evangelists is not a new thing. There were evangelists and evangelistic services long ago." True, brother, we know all about that. By old school lines we mean the methods to which the Presbyterian Church has been most accustomed for a long time back, and to which the majority of her people take kindly. Every body cannot have Sam Jones, and any evangelist less peppery and pungent than Sam will perhaps find it difficult to make an impression this winter. How would it do if every member of the Church began to pray earnestly at home? Supposing all the Presbyterians and Methodists and Episcopalians, and all the other denominations, resolved never to allow a day pass without much earnest prayer. By prayer we mean prayer—not mere words, not a form, more or less hurried. Of course this revival work would be carried on in secret. There would be no reporter there to tell the world how the man went on his knees as they used to tell us how Sam Jones came on the platform. But prayer can be offered without the aid of the press. The press was not represented when Abraham offered his prayer for Sodom.

And then, supposing all the professing Christians would begin studying their Bibles. In a short time any Christian of average intelligence might, with earnest, prayerful study, know quite as much about the contents of the Bible as Sam Jones knows. Not many years ago we could have produced a dozen old Scotsmen, any one of whom knew as much of his Bible as the 6,000 people who listened to Sam Jones. It was once our happy privilege to know a Presbyterian Irishwoman who could build a better sermon on a good Gospel text than Sam Jones preached in Toronto. She would have left out a few things Mr. Jones put in, and could put in some rich truths that Mr. Jones may not yet have seen or felt. She preached in her own family, and if all Sam Jones' converts become half as good men and women as that family his visit to Toronto will be the greatest blessing Canada ever saw. If people would sit quietly down in their own homes, and study prayerfully the good old book, the Church would not need so many spurts to keep up her spiritual life.

How would it be if all our people would begin to attend the regular prayer meeting? We think we see about a thousand lips turned up with scorn at such a commonplace proposal. That will do, friends. We understand your case thoroughly. You don't want prayer. You don't want more spiritual life.

You don't want a revival in the proper sense of the word. What you want is a number of exciting meetings, with addresses from Sam Jones or some imitation of him, with singing to suit, and all the modern appliances to raise the excitement. That is what you are after. If you cared for prayer, or believed in prayer, or wished to promote the spiritual life of your congregation, you would go to prayer meeting every week unless prevented by Providence.

Would it not help to promote the spiritual life of congregations if the members and adherents attended public worship regularly? There is something particularly absurd in the conduct of a man who talks glibly about a revival, and then attends his place of worship about one service in four. It is very hard to believe that such a man really wants a revival. He needs it badly enough, but that is a different thing. Ask him why he does not go to church regularly, and if he told the honest truth he would say he had very little taste for religious services. By his conduct he says, "I want some Sam Jones to come along and operate on me. I know my duty, but don't feel inclined to do it. Mine is a special case. I am no ordinary kind of man. I want Sam Jones to talk to me, and then I want my case published in the newspapers." That man probably needs something more radical than revival. He needs regeneration. Regular attendance on the ordinary means of grace would soon increase the spiritual life and power of most congregations. The trouble is that many who profess to want Sam Jones are—in their own opinion—far above any such commonplace exercise as attending ordinary religious services.

It would mightily increase the spiritual life of our congregations if many of our people would double or treble or increase tenfold their contributions for religious purposes. A man may listen to Sam Jones or Moody every day for twenty years—neither of these men could probably hold out twenty months—but if he buttons up his pockets and refuses to give more than a cent to send the Gospel to the heathen he can have no revival in his soul. He may talk revival on the street-corners, or in the corner groceries; he may shout hallelujah until he raises the roof of the rink, but unless he gets beyond his cent he has no revival. This way of promoting revival by raising money for Christ's cause has never been popular.

We mention one other way of promoting a genuine revival. Let every converted man single out some careless, unconverted man, and resolve never to cease working with that man until he is brought to Christ, or at least to hear regularly the Gospel of Christ. The effort to bring the godless man to Christ will soon revive the other. He will not have tried very long until he feels the need of prayer, and the prayer along with the effort will help on the revival. Of course the work will be quiet. The *Globe* and *Mail* will not send a reporter to describe that kind of work. If they did, workers would abound. The effort to bring a godless neighbour to church is always quiet; but a man who will not work quietly for Christ does not wish a revival, however much he may long for Sam Jones.

THE CALL OF ABRAHAM FROM AMONG THE HEATHEN IDOLATERS.

One of the most wonderful events in the history of the human race is the call of Abraham from among the heathen to worship one almighty, living God. It is one of the greatest of all epochs in human history. It is not only immensely important as a truth, but its effect on human morality was, prior to the appearance of Christ (in the Old Testament dispensation), and has been since, of the greatest importance to human welfare. Nothing was so debasing to mankind in the old world as the worship of idols, bowing down to stocks and stones, sacrificing to devils, sacrificing even their poor children to imaginary gods who were even worse than the wicked men and women who so sacrificed. Every imaginable god was worshipped in Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Chaldea, Greece, Rome and Persia, and in Canaan, which was conquered by the Hebrews. One country had a certain set of gods and goddesses, and another a different set. Some of the above countries worshipped certain sacred animals, and one (Persia) worshipped the sun, a mere globe of electric light. An intelligent, personal, moral God, such as Abraham worshipped and his descendants believed in, and who appeared to Moses in the burn-

ing bush, was unknown, unworshipped by the people who lived in the countries above named and in many others then in the world less noted. About the time of the birth of Abraham his relatives appear to have been infected with the all-prevailing idolatry of the ancients.

Suddenly, as it were by a miracle, we find this great man singled out to leave his country and his kinsfolk to go into a land which many generations afterwards was to be given to his seed for an inheritance, and where the great Shiloh, the Ancient of Days, was finally to appear.

Now, nothing is more manifest than that a living God rules by His providential acts the destinies of men and nations. He rules privately the destinies of single human beings (we cannot see it unless we look over a long series of years), and much more does He rule the destinies of nations. This is one great proof that God is, and another proof is that God has put into the human soul the still, small voice of conscience. If man were a creature of mere chance he would have no conscience, and if God did not live he would never have had an Abraham to leave heathenism. We would never have had the great tracks Providence so manifestly displayed in the history of Joseph, the dwelling of the Hebrews in Egypt, the birth of Moses, his discovery in the bulrushes, his leading the Hebrews for forty years in the wilderness, the rise and prophecies of a noble set of men called the Jewish Prophets. We would never have had the great, poetical and deeply moral Book of Job, where one living God is so plainly spoken of and appealed to. Genesis xii. 1 says, "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, into a land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee, and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." He departed into the land of Canaan, and there built an altar to the living God. This is the first altar we have any account of after the Flood. On this altar he worshipped one God, and was guided by Him in this belief.

Like all the good men who have lived on the earth, Abraham had his faults and weakness, and he was governed to some extent by Eastern customs, but he had one virtue ever paramount in his soul: he acknowledged and worshipped one living and true God.

The universe around us is infinite, and the God who governs it must be equally infinite. One God is necessary to this end. How could the heathen deities (who were imaginary, and many in idolatrous imagination and limited in power), control the infinite universe? The heathen, in their corruption and blindness, thought they could, and in their lusts and vanities brought their gods down to their own level. Not so with Abraham, for he worshipped, loved and feared a great Spirit called God. Thus here we see the finger of God and His wise providence. This belief is the salt of the earth morally and was in Abraham's time. Banish God from man's mind, and the world would become a pandemonium. It is a curious fact that the Jews of antiquity were the only people who really adored, worshipped and feared one personal God. Heathens feared many gods, but did not adore them. The belief in a living, personal God is one thing, and the idol worship of many bad and good gods quite another. As the call of Abraham was a providence, so was the birth of Isaac, so was his attempted sacrifice on the funeral fire. As the journey of Abraham to Canaan was a providence, so was the sojourn of the Hebrews in Egypt for 400 years until led out by Moses and Aaron. The burning bush was an emblem to Moses that God was one, and lived.

Exodus iii. 2: "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him (Moses) in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And God called to Moses and said, Moses, Moses." (This reminds us of what Christ said out of the cloud of glory to Paul, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?") "And God said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And God said unto Moses, I Am that I Am." By this living God he was in after life guided in all his acts. How different were the then dumb, miserable gods of Egypt!

Oh, what a precious thought it is to us to know that