

THE PRESERVATION OF THE REVIVAL ELEMENT
IN METHODISM.

—
CONCLUDING PAPER.
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AMONG those things tending to the preservation of the revival element among us may be mentioned, further:—

3. *The continuance in full force of the old conditions of admission into the ministry.* As the ministry is, perhaps, the most important part of any church, so its character and influence are most important. If it does not possess the revival spirit the church will not. It is not sufficient that here and there should be found one who possesses this gift. Such a state of things tends strongly to what, in my opinion, is very undesirable,—viz., professional revivalists. The right state of ministerial supply is one where the awakening power is quite general; and where with this exists an intense longing to have a constant state of revival. A minister who is not at home in a revival, who is at his wits' end to know what to do when it comes, and who possesses no power to guide the enquiring ones, is sadly defective in the very highest ministerial qualifications. For what is he an ambassador of Christ, if it is not to save souls? The more fully he possesses the power to turn sinners from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, the nearer he approaches the New Testament ideal. The power of sound exposition and of "confirming the disciples" need not and should not be the less present. Paul did all these.

The main conditions of admission into the ministry among the Methodists from the first were "gifts, graces, and fruit." We have always demanded the former, and have not been unmindful of their importance. The greater the gifts, both natural and acquired, the better. But these alone are an insufficient qualification for any ministry. To suit the Methodist requirement they must have "grace and fruit;" and from these, more particularly, arises the revival element in our ministry. Because they were present, revivals have been common among us; and when either of them shall be overlooked, the soul-saving power of the Methodist ministry will have declined or altogether departed. To continue this particular phase of our ministry is therefore necessary, in a very large degree, for the preservation of the revival element. It is not a thing to perpetuate itself by any natural law, but requires a most godly vigilance. It is possible to receive men into the ministry irreproachable in life, and with considerable or even great preaching power, who have no graces and who gather no fruit. Such men would have very little sympathy with our revival spirit. We must therefore continue to insist on these conditions, because they lead to or are ever connected with revival power. A doubt concerning the existence of either "grace" or "fruit" in a candidate for the ministry should be a very serious barrier to his admission.