

Our Contributors.

SOME CHANGES A GENUINE REVIVAL WOULD IMPLY.

BY KNOXIAN.

Nothing is more common than to hear good earnest Christian men say, "We need a revival." Ministers often preach on revivals, and nearly every earnest man who prays says somewhere in his prayer: "Oh, Lord, revive Thy work." Even those good conservative people who do not favour special or continuous services are all in favour of a revival of the right kind. Assuming that by revival is meant increased spiritual life, every good man is in favour of revival. There may be, in fact there are, great differences of opinion as to the best methods of promoting a revival, but as to the necessity and desirability of having increased spiritual life and power in our congregations, all earnest Christians are agreed.

And yet there is room to doubt whether many of those who speak most about revivals have ever seriously stopped to consider all that a genuine revival would imply. It is very easy to speak glibly enough about revivals, yet a real revival implies a great deal more than attending meetings every evening, singing hymns, listening to stirring addresses, and taking part in enquiry meetings. These exercises usually accompany a revival, and do much to promote it, but engaging in such exercises is but a small part of a genuine revival.

To begin with the individual, a revival implies that each man under its influence should make immediate war on his own besetting sins. His first duty is to find out what these sins are, and then begin to crucify them. If he is not willing to do this he is not ready for revival work. In fact, he does not want a real revival. He may be eager enough to attend continuous services, and may like to go with the crowd and enjoy the excitement, but if he is not willing and anxious to confess and forsake his own besetting sins he is not in favour of revival in the Scripture sense of the word.

Nor is it enough that he should be willing to abandon outward and gross sins. If anxious for revival he will be anxious to crucify such heart sins as envy, anger, pride, selfishness, jealousy, bitterness, and all that class of sins that rankle and fester in many souls. Anything more absurd or more audaciously wicked than a man professing to be in favour of revival or to carry on revival work when his own soul is bursting with conceit, or shrivelled up with envy or selfishness cannot well be imagined. And yet it does sometimes happen that the very man who talks most about revivals and whines most about the coldness of the Church is the most selfish, conceited man in the community—perhaps we might say in the Presbytery. However unctuous such a man may be in his talk, however much he may whine and groan and scold about spiritual deadness, he does not want a revival. He may need one badly enough, but he does not want one that begins on himself.

A genuine revival implies more than that each one anxious for it, or engaged in promoting it, should make war upon his own sins of heart and life; it implies that he should be willing to discharge his duties towards his neighbours. If a man is not ready to offer his hand to the neighbour he has not spoken to for years he is not ready for revival or revival work. He may need it but he is not ready for it. This is one of the very best tests. An unforgiving spirit and a desire for a revival of God's work are incompatible states of mind. In short, preparation for revival implies willingness to discharge every duty towards our fellow-men that the Scripture enjoins.

Passing from the individual to the Church, a real revival would make an entire revolution in many directions. It would heal old sores and put an end to the unseemly strife that so often wounds Christ in the house of His friends. Are all those who speak about revival ready to shake hands and be good friends? If not, they are not very anxious to have a revived Church.

A genuine revival would double, triple, perhaps quadruple, our contributions for every good purpose. It would send an increased number of missionaries to our foreign mission fields. It would send more preachers to Muskoka and the North-West. It would bring the Augmentation Fund up to a point that Mr.

Macdonnell never dared to dream of even in his most sanguine moments. It would wipe out that standing disgrace to Presbyterianism called by courtesy the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund. A revived Church would never look callously on while the aged and worn-out servants of Christ tried to eke out a precarious existence on two or three hundred dollars a year. Are the people who talk and pray about revival ready for the expenditure that a genuine revival would imply? If not, they are not ready for revival, in sober truth they do not want a real revival. A revival that does not go down into a man's pocket does not go deep enough by one half. Can anything be more absurd than the spectacle of a man singing at top of his voice?

Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my heart, my life, my all,

and at the very time he is making the building echo with *my all*, he is searching his pocket for a nickel cent to put in collection to send the Gospel to the heathen! A congregation was once described by a genial minister, who knew it well, as having been *revived to death*. It was so *revived* that the people would give little or nothing for any good purpose. Revivals of that kind disgust all honest, sensible men and make the very name of religion contemptible in the eyes of the world. A man whose heart has been moved by the power of the Spirit will always desire to send the Gospel to others; and just in proportion as he is *revived*, in the right sense of the word, will he desire to help on every good work.

A genuine revival would set the members of the Church to work. By work we don't mean merely attending meetings when special services are being held. Anybody can do that. We mean honest, quiet, persevering, persistent work—work often done *alone*; work that the crowd does not see; work that there is nothing said about in the newspapers. Are all who speak about revival ready for that class of work? A real revival would kill all the nibbling, carping criticism that abounds in too many churches. Are those who profess to desire revival ready to stop finding fault with everybody and everything?

A genuine revival would induce all those under its influence to attend the *ordinary* services of the Sanctuary. It would lead them to attend prayer meeting *all the year round*. A revival that makes a man condense a year's prayer meeting attendance into two weeks is a doubtful blessing for him.

Now, are all those of us who speak about revivals and pray for revivals ready for all that a genuine revival would imply? Are we ready for the self-examination, self sacrifice, self-crucifixion, increased work, and increased liberality that must accompany or flow from increased spiritual life?

A CANADIAN SYNOD FORTY-FIVE YEARS AGO.

BY REV. WILLIAM REID, D.D.

The first meeting of Synod, at which the writer was present, was held in Toronto, in 1840, in St. Andrew's Church, which, until a few years ago, stood on Church Street at the corner of Adelaide Street. At that time the means of communication and the facilities of travel were very different from those which we now enjoy. There were no railways in the country then, nor for many years after. Along the front, of course, one could travel by the steamers which, during the period of navigation, traversed our glorious chain of lake and river; but from the interior it was only by rough conveyances and rougher roads that the traveller could proceed. At the time to which we refer, there were on the roll of the Synod at its opening sixty ministers; but by an act of Synod sixteen were added to the number, these being the ministers previously forming the United Synod of Upper Canada. There were six Presbyteries, namely, those of Quebec, Glengarry, Bathurst, Kingston, Toronto and Hamilton. At the Synod of 1840 all these Presbyteries were represented, although the Presbytery of Quebec and that of Glengarry had each but two representatives. There were in all thirty-four ministers present and ten elders. [Among the elders, Mr. Justice McLean and Dr. Craigie, of Hamilton, were the most prominent as business men.] Of those who were actually present there are now only five alive, of whom all but one have retired from regular service in the Church.

There was not much public interest manifested in Synod meetings, and less was then done than now to promote the comfort of members in attendance. Most of the members were quartered at the North American Hotel, on Front Street, a little west of Church Street. This arrangement gave facility for much agreeable intercourse amongst the members, and I well remember a very pleasant gathering in the large dining room of the hotel one evening, when the Rev. W. Bell, of Perth, a pioneer minister of the Presbyterian Church, and father of Dr. Andrew Bell, who died at L'Original in 1865, and of Dr. George Bell, now residing at Kingston, gave a very interesting account of his labours in the early days of Presbyterianism. The business before the Synod was not so voluminous as in these days in our Supreme Court, and some of the evenings were set apart for preaching or other religious services. Still the time of the court was fully occupied, and the business was transacted with great care. Many of the leading ministers were admirable business men. Correspondence with other Churches and with the Government, especially with reference to the Clergy Reserves, bulked largely in the business of the Synod in early times. From the time that the Synod was organized, in 1831, attention was given to the subjects of Home Mission work and the education of young men for the ministry, and these subjects received due attention at this meeting. The subject of Foreign Missions was not lost sight of. There was an overture calling for deliberation and prayer in reference to the condition of the heathen world, and the best means for the extension of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. The overture was received, and in accordance with its suggestions, an evening sederunt was set apart for special exercises bearing on the subject of missions to the heathen; and further the Synod recommended to all sessions to appoint meetings for prayer in behalf of missions to the heathen, and to make collections in aid of the Missions of the Church of Scotland to India, or to the Jews, or any other missionary object approved of by the sessions.

It is somewhat interesting to note that several matters that are at present engaging public attention were taken into consideration by the Synod of 1840. Among these we may mention the subject of intemperance and the means of abating the evil, especially by subjecting the issue of tavern licenses to salutary and efficient restrictions; the subject of Presbyterial visitations; the matter of a printing establishment and book depository; the importance of a general registration of births, marriages and deaths. The subject of Psalmody was also considered, and the Moderator was instructed to correspond with the parent Church with the view of ascertaining if it was likely that any addition would be made to the Psalmody.

We have not mentioned all the matters that occupied the time of the Synod, which lasted from Thursday, 2nd of July, till Tuesday evening, 7th of July, when the meeting was closed. The Moderator, elected at the beginning of the meeting, as successor to the Rev. R. McGill, of Niagara, afterwards of St. Paul's Church, Montreal, was the Rev. Hugh Urquhart, of Cornwall. Both were ministers fitted to do honour to the position which they were called on to occupy, and each received afterwards the degree of D.D.

It will be seen that the ministers and elders, as judged of by the proceedings of the Synod, were not destitute of public spirit. They attended with due care to all matters connected with the internal administration of the Church, and they took a large and liberal interest in matters of a more public nature. The truth is there were in those days, both in the ministry and in the eldership, not a few men of superior endowments, men who would have attained distinction in any Church and at any period. It is the fashion with some in the present day to speak lightly of the ministers who came to the country in the earlier period of Presbyterianism, but in point of fact there were not a few who would bear comparison with any at the present day. Dr. Bayne, of Galt, was an intellectual giant, and his preaching had a power which has never been surpassed, and but rarely equalled. It would be easy to give a pretty long list of ministers who did a noble work in their day, and who, in any Church, would have commanded respect. Many of the Presbyterian ministers who came in early days to Canada were selected by professors, ministers or committees in the old country. Most of those who came after 1830 were sent out by the Glasgow Colonial Society, or