

ON THE NEED OF A REVIVAL IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CANADA.

[FOR THE CANADIAN CHRISTIAN EXAMINER.]

Many of the duties of Ministers, as the servants of Christ, and watchmen in the spiritual Zion, vary with the particular form which the opposition of Satan to the cause of truth presents. When false teachers, privily or openly, introduce erroneous doctrines, and attempt to imbue men with them, and so withdraw them from the Saviour, faithful ministers are called on to expose the error, and to warn men against its contagion. When the church forgets her duty to reprove the wickedness of the world, and to endeavor to bring men to submit to the gracious yoke of the Saviour, they must study to arouse her to the great duty of laboring and praying for the world's conversion; and as this failure on the part of the church in exhibiting the light of divine truth to the world is symptomatic of declension on her part, the true servants of the Lord Jesus, must in this case also, endeavor to awaken her to a sense of her own spiritual maladies, and so preserve her from sinking into utter spiritual death.

We have seen within these few years the Church of Scotland contending against men who attempted to introduce false doctrines, under the cloak of specious pretension to exalted piety. And we believe that she was enabled to be faithful in witnessing against them by the writings of many of her ministers, and in deposing from the ministerial office a few who were inveterate in maintaining and propagating heresy. Since the commencement of the present century, which is eminently the era of the revival of missionary zeal, many of her ministers have done their part towards urging the duty of diffusing divine truth, both by the living preacher and also by the Holy Scriptures, and written expositions of them. And more recently the church in her corporate capacity, has entered in the missionary enterprise, and through the blessing of God, is pursuing it with some measure of ardor and success. Every step in well-doing tends to a further advancement. And thus the exertions of Home and Foreign Missions, which the Church of Scotland has been making, are leading her to seek a more thorough internal reformation. The hideous corruption of Patronage has been to a great extent destroyed, by the admission of the members of the church to a veto on the appointment of the

Patron. And though several Patrons are resisting the enactment of the General Assembly, in this matter, and have obtained the sanction of the civil law to an unrestricted exercise of Patronage, the great majority of ministers and elders are yet making a stand against this evil of such a determined kind, that it is itself auspicious of success as well as of other improvements in the church. The work of reformation indeed is not confined to the removal of some of the grosser corruptions which have attached to her discipline and government: a spiritual revival in the life and power of religion amongst her members, and in an increased energy in administering the word and sacraments is earnestly sought for by many, and is, we trust, in the way of being realized. There have been one or two great eras of revival in the Church of Scotland, since the days of Knox; and at different periods there have been partial revivals; such as those of the Kirk of Shotts, Cambuslang and Moulin; and it cannot but be viewed as a hopeful token for her, that now—when the signs of the times and the intimations of prophecy, do alike indicate the approach of perils,—the spirit of God seems as though he would descend upon her, to invigorate her. May God grant that in the possession and exhibition of divine truth, she may become “fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.”

The movements in the Church of Scotland, towards a revival, cannot be viewed with indifference by us; our connection with her, the filial-like regard which we cherish towards her, will, we trust, dispose us to imitate her in seeking the effusion of the Holy Spirit. It may well humble us, that while we have heard so much of revivals in the adjacent states, we have, in consequence of political estrangement and other similar causes, regarded them with indifference or suspicion. May not this be one reason that we ourselves see so little of any thing like a revival amongst ourselves? Of all the works of God, that of his Holy Spirit in the church, is the one which it is the most perilous to undervalue or slight. The state of religion in the United States has been made the subject of keen discussion in Britain, as both the friends and foes of religious establishments there, have