

Christian Messenger

HALIFAX, JULY 4, 1866.

"GENUINE AND SPURIOUS REVIVALS."

An analysis of Revivals of religion and a distinction between the spurious and the genuine is no light task, and yet it is of the very first importance that we should not confound the latter with the former. We must not conclude because we meet with some counterfeit coins, that all are therefore base metal. There may be good imitations, but the false will surely appear sooner or later in glowing contrast with the true. He would be a fool who should reject all the current coin of the realm lest he might find a portion of it only a worthless imitation. From the days of Pentecost till now, the church of Christ has been indebted to revivals for its greatest triumphs and successes. He who should set up a barrier against all unusual manifestations of religious interest would surely be found fighting against God, and resisting the influences of the Holy Spirit. The Churches of Christ in this land are greatly indebted to revivals of religion for the progress of the gospel. The work in some instances may have had spots, and the hopes raised on behalf of individuals may have been disappointed; but in the aggregate, we believe these works of God, when fairly tested, and a just judgement given, may be pronounced, like those of the first creation, as "very good." Evils have doubtless been associated with the good, and the glory of the work has been often marred by human and satanic instrumentality. Whilst some of our churches have been visited with revival influences, and are continuing to regard heavenly things with a more than ordinary interest, and feel deeply concerned for the condition of those around them who have no hope in Christ, there are many others, who have no such feelings, and who are living without seeing the results which should attend christian life and labor. They need an advancing wave to bring them up to a higher level. They live in a state of coldness, and perhaps retrogression, and are not fully enjoying religion for themselves, or being the media of conveying it to others. The reviving influences of the Spirit are needed, the light which they should be "holding forth" is comparatively hid, but with these shed down it will shine forth and lead many of those who are standing around Zion to flee to the Saviour, press forward, and enter her gates. We have been led to these thoughts by the perusal of a sermon preached the Rev. W. S. McKenzie before the Rhode Island, Baptist State Convention, April 24 1866, and printed by special request. The preacher has taken the text "And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good," as the foundation of his discourse.

"Revivals of religion," he remarks, "such as the Spirit of God brings forth in the hour of His special presence and power, do not need, and do not ask, any defence from the pulpit and the press. Whenever and wherever they occur they defend themselves. The negations and hostility of an obstinate unbelief are overthrown or suppressed, if at all, by the same Power that inaugurates and conducts the revival. That Awakening which must be vindicated by the arguments of man is, to say the least, of a questionable character, and may not be worth the labor of a vindication. But be that as it may, we need not concern ourselves with the opposition which sceptics and scoffers may array against the reviving and mighty energy of the DIVINE SPIRIT. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision. He will speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. He will break them with a rod of iron; He will dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

"When a cold, sluggish and slumbering church, or individual Christian, is aroused to seek the Lord and a revival of his work, by earnest and agonizing prayer, already has the Spirit come down—already has the revival begun. It is an earnest of a larger and more glorious display of the Spirit's sovereign and quickening energy. That is a critical moment. We may grieve or quench the Spirit, when He comes in. A sinner may reject or neglect God's grace, being guilty upon his soul, and deservedly perish in his sins, but he cannot merit or procure the Divine favor by his prayers and struggles; salvation is purely of grace—as is a Revival. When it comes, every soul has reason to fall in to the dust, and humbly adore the riches of Sovereign Grace. And where there is a genuine Revival, a work of the Holy Spirit, such a sense of humility and of adoring gratitude will be witnessed. The very contrary is manifest in those awakenings which are the product of self-excitation. Much is said of the 'MEANS OF GRACE, and little of the GOD OF GRACE.' After noticing the evils associated with spurious revivals and which sometimes appear as pernicious elements even in the genuine, the preacher gives the following as the remedy which should be applied, and which will prevent our revivals from being spurious. That remedy, he states, is found in clear, full and faithful proclamation of the cardinal and vital truths of the Gospel, as the divinely ordained means of arousing the unregenerate from their carnal security, and as the only safe and sure test of avowed conversions. Examining the records of those revival epochs, which are regarded by the Christian world as the product of Divine power; in which the work wrought was most deep, thorough, solemn and permanent; the convictions of sin that anteceded and followed the new birth of the soul were most scriptural and pungent; the conversions, most marked and unquestionable; the fruits garnered into the churches, most precious and enduring, and you will observe this one fact, standing forth with commanding and instructive prominence, viz.: that the ministers gave special attention and energy to their commission to preach the Gospel, and that they dwelt with peculiar emphasis, if not almost exclusively, upon what are called "the distinguishing doctrines of grace"—those doctrines "which, to use the language of one, 'stain all the pride of human glory, and exalt God as an absolute Sovereign.'" The total depravity of the human heart; the exceeding sinfulness of sin; the utter inability of the unregenerate, by anything they can do, to procure the Divine favor, or to make any change in their condition; the justice of God in the everlasting condemnation of the sinner; the sovereign will of God in the salvation of those renewed by the Spirit; eternal and electing grace the only sure guaranty of hope that any soul will be saved; the duty of immediate repentance; the inexorable guilt incurred by deferring the calls and claims of the gospel; the necessity and the nature of regeneration; justification in the legal and imputed righteousness of Christ, secured through faith in Him as the substitute and surety of His elect people; discriminating and searching admonitions against taking refuge in some of the many false hiding places, which Satan is sure to open up before the minds of the awakened;—these topics, in their various branchings, constituted the substance of the public and private ministrations of those pastors, who, in a former generation, and in seasons of special religious awakenings, labored for the conversion of souls and the upbuilding of the Church of Christ. With plainness and boldness they unfolded and pressed these doctrines, always so repugnant to unrenewed men, while they were content to leave the consequences with Him, from whom they felt they had received their commission, and to whom they expected to answer for the manner in which they had conducted their ministry. They despised no conversions, and sought for no additions to the ranks of the church, but such as could be gained by a simple proclamation of the doctrines of the word of God, made effectual by the omnipotent and sovereign agency of the Holy Spirit."

and this sweetener was in the form of abolition entering her house. B. then and other means, a preparative work was going on, which ultimately brought her to all that distinctive position which it seems to me, and not me only, was Jehovah's will the sacred duty.

"We must, dear brethren, seek for the old paths. It is said, 'the times are changed.' Yes, they are changed, mournfully changed, widely and fearfully changed. Hence the discussion of the theme of this discourse. But the depravity of our race has not changed. The gospel has not changed. Christ has not changed. The terms of submission to the sovereign will of God have not changed. Then let us seek for the old paths. In this we may appear eccentric, and become unpopular. But 'if God be for us, who can be against us?' 'If we judge correctly of the signs of the times, a grand revival epoch is near at hand; God alone knows. We utter no prediction; we hope. Some are fearing that our land is going to be completely wrapt in the brilliant but baleful flames of a spurious awakening, from which the churches are to be crowded with an unconverted membership, and our pulpits to be filled with an unregenerated ministry, to be followed by a glorious REFORMATION, which will separate the genuine from the false, and restore the desolate heritage of the Lord. What has been, may be. History is ever repeating itself. But we will not take that terrible fear to our bosom. The cause is God's, and precious in His sight.' 'Have respect unto the covenant. Arise, O God, plead thine own cause.'"

Adult Bible Classes.

In a late issue we gave some account of a large Bible Class conducted by a Mrs. Bartlett in connection with Mr. Spurgeon's church in London.

The *Sword and Trowel* gives some interesting particulars respecting the early history of this remarkable Bible Class: The lady whose name appears at the head of this paper, has become the servant of the largest church in Christendom; and now occupies a unique and most interesting position in the yet unwritten history of woman's work.

EARLY DAYS.—In some respects, Mrs. Bartlett is a remarkable woman. Converted with her whole heart to God before arriving at her teens, she early manifested an irrepressible desire to seek the soul-goods of others. While engaged, at twelve years of age, as a Sabbath-school teacher, her infantile exertions were marvellously seconded by God. She was a spiritual mother even then, and many souls were brought by her to the Saviour. Since the days of her youthful evangelistic labors, this lady has been tattered in the school of affliction, out of which she came as gold well purified. It for the Master's service. By that most virulent form of epidemic known as Asiatic cholera, she lost the partner of her life. "But though her cup seemed filled with gall, A something secret sweetened all."

A CLASS OF THREE PERSONS.

About six or seven years ago, there was a small class of senior scholars in connection with New Park-street Chapel, Southwark. It may seem strange that, whilst God was so marvellously blessing the ministrations of our beloved pastor in this building, so few senior females were associated together for the purpose of instruction on a Sabbath afternoon; but there were other classes in action, and this one had apparently fallen into the rear. So it was that, when Mr. Thomas Olney, the venerable treasurer of the church, invited Mrs. Bartlett to conduct the Bible-class in question for one afternoon, there were only three persons present. It was with some expressions of fear that she undertook this duty for one month, for it is necessary to state that, in consequence of heart-disease, the duration of her life was problematical, even as it is now. In dependence on her Master, the duties were accepted, and at the end of the month there were fourteen regular attendants. It was then proposed that Mrs. Bartlett should become a duly-recognized teacher of the school. Her opinion as to that matter was expressed in these characteristic words: "If the Lord has given me strength for one month's labor, He will be sure to give me strength for another month." Being in the happy habit of taking God at his word, she was assured that, as her days so would be her strength; and to his praise be it said, all the promises of the Almighty are almighty. The class increased in numbers, so that it became necessary to obtain a larger room in one of the almshouses adjoining the chapel. The spirit of prayer seemed here to animate the little band, and such an outpouring of the Holy Spirit took place that supplication to God for continued and increased blessings, became the common practice of all its members. One afternoon, when the teacher called on a sister to engage in prayer, no fewer than eight others followed without intermission!

INCREASE TO SEVEN HUNDRED.—At the opening of the Metropolitan Tabernacle five years ago, the class which then numbered fifty, assembled in one of the many small rooms in the rear of that edifice. A more capacious apartment was, however, soon required, and one holding eighty persons was obtained. Still the numbers came. What was to be done? The members of the class resorted to all-powerful prayer. The answer soon came, for 'next Sabbath the Bible-class occupied the lecture hall (which would contain upwards of 900 persons) At the end of a few months, there were 300 attendants; at the end of twelve, 500. Since that time—two years ago—it has increased in numbers, until the average attendance has now become 700, which sometimes swells to an additional 100 or so. The major portion consists of women between the ages of thirty and seventy, and indeed many of Mrs. Bartlett's spiritual children are considerably older than herself.

There are, we believe, many wide fields of usefulness in this kind of christian labor open to devoted men and women in the Church of Christ. There are but few localities where classes of a similar character, not of course so large as the above, but larger than many might suppose, might not be gathered, and much good done. The great difficulty is in finding persons suitable for conducting them, but it should be borne in mind that even those who have been most successful had a beginning, and were then perhaps less able than many who have not attempted such labors. We would invite serious attention to this subject, and hope to hear that in many places good has been done by this means.

CONGREGATIONAL.—We perceive that another attempt is to be made to establish a Congregationalist Church in Halifax. Salem Chapel, belonging to that body, has been occupied by the Episcopal Bishop of Nova Scotia for a number of years past; but in a few months, as soon as the new Trinity Church is finished, it will be vacated. The Rev. W. P. Dothie, of Surrey, England, is advertised as appointed to Halifax; we presume by the Colonial Missionary Society belonging to that body.

The Rev. James Howell, late of Liverpool, N. S., has accepted a call to the Congregational Church at St. John's Newfoundland, and is about removing thither. In addition to the above changes we learn that the Rev. F. Hastings, of Woodbridge, England, is shortly expected at St. John, N. B., and the Rev. J. G. Manly, of Dublin, Ireland, is about removing to Toronto.

PRESBYTERIAN.—The Synod of the Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces met in the Rev. Mr. Bennet's Church, King Street, St. John, N. B., on Wednesday last. About one hundred ministers and others were present. The opening Sermon was preached by the Rev. George Christie, of Yarmouth, N. S. We learn from one of the St. John papers that "the sermon was directed chiefly against innovations in the church, musical instruments receiving special attention."

The Rev. Dr. Payne was elected Moderator for the ensuing year.

The Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Nova Brunswick met in the same day at St. David's, the Rev. Mr. McKay's church. The opening Sermon was preached by the Rev. Mr. Jack, of Springfield. The Rev. James Gray, of Norton, was chosen Moderator.

The latter is, we believe, very much the smaller body, and propose uniting with the former—the name of which was adopted with that object in view.

The Synod of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island in connection with the Church of Scotland met in New Glasgow on Tuesday, the 26th ult. Rev. G. M. Grant preached the opening sermon.

WESLEYAN.—The Conference of Eastern British America commenced its annual session on Wednesday last at St. John, N. B. About one hundred and twenty ministers, besides 15 or 20 lay representatives were present in the city.

After the devotional exercises on Wednesday, by the Rev. J. McMurray, he vacated the President's chair, which was filled by the Rev. Dr. Scott, by appointment from the British Conference. The Rev. J. England is the Co-Delegate.

A delegation from Canada is in attendance to meet with this Conference, and submit a proposal of uniting with the Canada Conference.

EPISCOPALIAN.—The clergy of the Church of England are holding meetings in Halifax during the present week in connection with the Diocesan Synod. A large number of clergymen are in the city for the purpose of attending these meetings.

On Monday was the Anniversary of the Diocesan Church Society.

On Tuesday, Cathedral service and Visitation Sermon in the morning, and in the afternoon the Bishop's Charge.

On Wednesday (this day) the Session of the Diocesan Synod is to commence at 9 a. m., and continue each day through the week.

There are services every evening in the Cathedral (St. Luke's), on the Office and the Work of the ministry, in the following order:

- Monday—Work of Missions, Rev. G. Hill.
Tuesday—Work of Preaching, Rev. D. Brecknan.
Wednesday—Work of the Sanctuary, Rev. Can. Hensley.
Thursday—Work in the Parish, Rev. D. Moore.
Friday—Work of the Holy Spirit, Rev. C. Shreve.
Saturday—Work and its Wages, Rev. E. B. Nichols.

KINGS COLLEGE.—At the late Eucenia at Windsor, the following Degrees were conferred:—D. D. on Rev. Richard Uniacke, M. A., of Oxford; and Rev. Thomas White, Rector of Shelburne. B. A. on Messrs. Primrose, Chandler, Black, Haire, Cox, Payzant, and J. Chandler.

The following prize certificates were granted:—French Mr. Wheelright; Welshford Testimonial, Mr. Bowman; Chemistry, Mr. Bowman; Dr. Duncanson's Geology Prize, Mr. Geo. King; First School Exhibition, Master Shreve; Second do., Master Harding.

Dr. SKINNER, whose card appears in another column, has been very successful in his treatment of diseases of the Eye and Ear.

The National Division of the Sons of Temperance.

THIS supreme head of the Order of Sons of Temperance of North America held its 22nd session in Montreal on the 21st ult., and following days. At the opening there were 118 representatives of Grand Divisions present. The following are the names of the representatives from Nova Scotia:—Rev. J. M. Cramp, D. D. Wolfville; Avar Longley, Esq., Halifax; Dr. W. E. McRoberts, Great Village, Londonderry; P. Monaghan, G. S., Halifax; Edward Morrison, Halifax; Henry A. Taylor, G. W. P., Halifax; William Murray, G. W. A., Halifax.

The Most Worthy Patriarch, J. W. Bradford, Esq., of Kentucky, presided, and read a highly interesting report of the position and prospects of the Order. The Most Worthy Scribe, S. W. Hodges, of Boston, gave a full account of the statistics of the body. The National Division embraces thirty-five Grand Divisions in thirty-two States and Provinces, having 1,003 subordinate divisions in active operation, containing 54,762 members, and 54,203 lady visitors. During the past year 29,279 members have been admitted, and 7,750 expelled for various causes. Of lady visitors 14,605 were admitted during the year, mostly in Massachusetts, Maine, Ohio, and Canada West. Massachusetts contains the largest number of lady visitors, being nearly one-third of the whole number. Canada West exhibits the largest number of subordinate divisions—two hundred and one