

Contributed.

A GENERAL REVIVAL OF RELIGION THE GREAT NEED OF OUR TIMES.

By L. L. Nash, D. D.

The statistics of Southern Methodism show a decrease of 8,000 members for the year 1898, as far as compiled. This is a sad summing up and should fill every heart among us with deep concern. It is not pessimism to look at facts and inquire into the cause of failure. By this means we may be able to amend our methods, and, if need be, our lives as well. I shall not endeavor to give the cause of our decline in numerical strength, but simply accept the fact, that we have lost members, and are not numerically as strong as we were a year ago by more than 8,000 souls. Many reasons for this sad condition occur to me, but let us see how we can mend our grip and set out on a year that shall bring such results as shall overbalance our losses and leave the cause of failure undiscussed. The way to get the darkness out is to turn on the light. Let us see, if we can, how to secure better results. The first thing needed is a general revival of religion. How shall we proceed to secure this? We answer—

1. Let us all begin to live for it. A genuine revival always begins by a deep hungering and thirsting after righteousness in the souls of the ministers and members of the church. It is a mistake to give our time to thinking, talking, and writing about the short comings of others, and the hindrances in the way of any work we propose to do. When we are determined to do anything the best way is to prepare ourselves for the task before us. Let everyone look down into his own soul, and see if he is properly adjusted to the great revival Agent, the Holy Spirit. Wait not for others to move, but get right with God, and then move forward, and a revival will spring up, or come down, wherever we may be; and when a genuine work of grace begins, there is no telling when its influence will reach its limit. John Wesley did not concern himself about what others did, while he was seeking to know God in the forgiveness of his own sins; neither did he ever dream of the effect that would follow the strange warning of his own heart in that little Fetter Lane prayer meeting.

To live for a revival is to make it the business of our lives to bring about, as much as lies within us, this gracious work in ourselves and others. Let us think about a revival. Keep the great object before us all the time; and use every means in our power to have the true revival spirit in us all the time.

2. Let us work for a revival. To do this wisely we should study the conditions that confront us, and labor to overcome every obstacle in the way. If there are any among us who have been overtaken in a fault, let us prayerfully endeavor to restore them in the spirit of meekness; in the meantime, considering ourselves, lest we also be tempted. Proper effort on the part of all of us who sincerely love God, and desire the salvation of men will accomplish much. We can with ease increase the attendance at church and prayer meeting services. Kindly invite non-church goers to go with us to the house of prayer. We can cultivate the spirit of kindness, and let the unsaved around us know that we are in sympathy with them. We should labor to forget self, and be diligent to do something to bless others. A selfish church member, who instead of trying to be helpful to his church and pastor, has to be nursed, and visited, and petted to keep him in the church at all, is a sad sight indeed. Such a church member has not learned the alphabet of Christianity.

To grow in grace, we must work for the salvation of others, and the advancement of the kingdom of God.

3. We must pray for a revival. There is no such thing as a great spiritual work without earnest prayer. We must have power from on high, and prayer is our only means to get it. Let the church observe seasons of fasting and prayer. The preacher who will leave off a meal or two, and shut himself up in his room with his Bible, and God, and pray all over the room will come out of it with a power the world cannot resist. When he does this the revival will begin in his own soul, and others will feel its power. These suggestions are worthy of consideration. The devil will join battle with any man, or any church who uses them, and get vanquished every time. If we neglect to use them we will soon find ourselves at ease in Zion, and the threatened war will come upon us. No faithful soldier of the cross need expect a truce in this war while he lives. The devil delights to assault us if he finds us inactive, and our only safety is to be found in an aggressive Christian campaign. Christianity is an aggressive power, or it is nothing. It is not the de-

sign of our Lord that the church should seek a fortress from the enemy and wait his attacks. The militant host must carry on an offensive warfare. Founded on the Rock of Ages, her Captain commands her to go forward, with the assurance that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. The world must be taken for Christ. The plan of battle was published at Pentecost. The arms to accomplish this work are stored in the arsenal of heaven. Let us line up, and make requisition on the King for the sword of the Spirit, and the power from on high, and there will speedily be heard the sound of a mighty rushing wind, and the results will follow. And there will be added unto the church daily such as are saved.

A GLANCE AT OTHER DAYS.

By Rev. J. W. Twilley.

There is a paper well worn by age and much handling now in the possession of Mrs. G. G. Dailey, of Caswell county, N. C. So far as she knows the first part of the paper was written by Spencer Hatchett, for many years a leading Methodist and prominent steward. Since the paper was given to Mrs. Dailey, she has continued the record. The paper is headed: "A list of the preachers who have travelled Caswell and Yanceyville Circuit since its formation in 1783." The list is complete from that day to this. The charge was called for many years the Caswell Circuit, and was a part of the Virginia Conference. As other charges afterwards took part of Caswell county this one took the name of the county seat, Yanceyville. What a history it has had! I give a few names and facts that will be of interest to some of your readers.

The organizers were Peter Moriarty and Jesse Lee in 1783. Peter Moriarty had been in the itinerancy but two years, and this was the year that the wise and witty Jesse Lee was received on trial in the Virginia Conference. In 1791 Enoch George, afterwards one of the Bishops of the Methodist Church, and Henry Hill, were on the work. A noticeable thing about 1797 is the fact that they had four preachers that year, viz: William Wilkerson, William Brittain, Ed. Ellis, and H. Jones. In 1810 John Early, afterward Bishop, and Ethelbert Drake were here.

For the first time in the history of the charge there was in 1816 only one preacher here. But, as that one was Lewis Skidmore, there was power in the pulpit. In 1812 William H. Starr, the worthy father of the present brilliant pastor of Broad Street church, Richmond, broke the bread of life to this people. The First Presiding Elder here was Lewis Skidmore. That was 1822. In 1828 Benton Field and Abram Penn were here. The descendants of Abram Penn are among the most influential Methodists in Virginia. They are men of merit. In 1834, the inimitable Moses Brock was Presiding Elder. In 1837, Peter Doub (his influence still lingers) was in charge, and the next year he was the Presiding Elder of the district that contained this charge. In 1838-'39 John Hank, the first to remain two years, was here. He also remained here two years longer as supernumerary. From three to seven years old, it is quite likely that the magnetic minister at Onancock played over the old Caswell hills. In 1844 Alfred Norman, a man of striking physique and strong character, the father of W. C. Norman, one of the most prominent and popular pastors in the North Carolina Conference, and N. H. D. Wilson, a man of great intellect, and father of a young man in this Conference that worthily bears the name of his sire, were here. In 1849-'50 James Ried, the father of Dr. N. F. Ried and the grandfather of Dr. Frank Ried, was in charge. In 1855 John Tillet, the father of Rev. W. F. Tillet, of Vanderbilt, was the Presiding Elder. In 1861-'62 T. Page Ricard, who joined the Virginia Conference in Norfolk 1841, who, though old and infirm, still lingers, one of the purest and the best of men, declared to this people the councils of God. In November last Rev. J. A. Cunningham rounded out his eight years as the Presiding Elder of the district containing this charge. He served it two terms, and then the sweet and gentle soul quietly laid down the pangs of earth for the pangs of glory.

You remember the old saying about preachers' boys being bad. Look over a partial list of the preachers that have touched this charge. What a lesson! How many of the sons caught and worthily wore the mantle of the ascending father! Bishop Early has a son in the ministry. A granddaughter of the old hero, Mrs. Vaughan, showed to this writer, three years ago kindness worthy of the noble blood that courses her veins. It would be hard to find a more acceptable or so talented a man as W. G. Starr. He was born and reared in the itinerancy. Two sons of Jehu Hank were in the

work; but a failure of health drove one from his beloved employ. The other is still as faithful to his calling as any other man. A grandson is in the Baltimore Conference. I think Moses Brock had two sons in the local ministry. The sons of Alfred Norman and N. H. D. Wilson are an honor to any father. There were three generations of Rieds preachers, and they were giants. John Tillet was strong; but his son is more polished and stronger. You cannot find, pro rata, in any other calling or business so many men that have produced so many worthy sons. In toils and deprivations, in sorrows and poverty they planted. Bishop Fitzgerald and others, that wear the robe of righteousness on earth or in heaven, show the character of work done. They while sowing for eternity, planted in their own homes a matchless moral manhood.

A SAD WARNING.

(By W.)

A man who was a stranger in Wilmington, N. C., was recently in that city and engaged in such foolish remarks as the "no one went to heaven but infants and preachers," and that as for his soul "he was going to hell or some other seaport town and was going to run an engine." He swore to such an extent that an aged Christian gentleman gently rebuked him for it. Finally he embarked upon a steamer, and was cursing to such an extent that he was remonstrated with and informed that ministers were aboard, when, it is said, that he remarked he would rather be in hell than go on that boat with a lot of preachers. In an hour or so he fell overboard and was drowned. What a warning.

EXAMPLE OF TEACHERS AND PREACHERS.

(Rev. A. D. Betts.)

God wants boys to be hearty and strong. He surely does not wish them to use cigarettes. Thousands of anxious mothers wish their sons to avoid their use.

I do not want my grandsons to see their teachers and preachers smoking. A boy, ruined by their example, would be tempted to curse their memory.

Correspondence.

THE EPWORTH LEAGUE'S GREATEST NEED.

The season is very near at hand when many of the young people all over our great church will meet in their annual conferences of Epworth League work.

And just at this time it is proper to consider the greatest need of the Epworth League. Before the month of April has passed away the Epworth Leagues of our two conferences in North Carolina will have held their annual sessions. And what should be the crowning feature of both these conferences? Spirituality, of course, and if they are not marked by this, if the young people who meet in New Berne and Goldsboro do not leave these places more spiritual than they were when they came, if they are not drawn closer to Him and have not in their hearts a greater desire to work for Him awakened "Failure" is the only word which can properly be inscribed upon the banners of both conferences. Let us pray earnestly that this reflection need not be cast at either conference.

The Epworth League is a triangular institution, but in many, and so far as we can learn, in most instances, one side of the triangle has been and is sadly neglected. If the Epworth League has failed in anything it is in the development of spiritual life. The motto of the organization is "All for Christ," and if we work in the spirit of these words we dare not neglect the spiritual side of the League. God stay the time which seems to be coming upon us when this organization shall represent merely a literary and social club.

The soul saving idea seems to be fast dying out of the League, and a more dangerous sign could not appear in our midst. There is too much tendency to make the Epworth League a mere substitute for the world to our young people when it should be regarded as a higher and holier organization—and should be such—than any the world offers.

The literary and social features when used in moderation are all right, but when we see a League in which more attention is given to any other feature than the spiritual we may without the least fear of contradiction, or of making a mistake, mark that League as one in which the spiritual life is at a low ebb. Spiritual life like any other phase of life will be active and we need to pray for a great awakening of spiritual life among the young people of our churches, and especially among those of our Leagues.

We need and must have more of the "surrendered life" in order to have more power in this work of saving souls. Young people have an influence which older persons have not in winning young people to Christ and the church, but in order to use this influence aright they must have hearts filled with the happiness and love of working for Christ; they must be burdened for the salvation of souls and must be known by their daily walk and conversation as living "all for Christ." Pay careful attention to reports of Epworth Leagues in all parts of our church and note how few are the references to the spiritual work of the Leagues.

This should not be, for if the Epworth League ever becomes what it should it will be the means of saving souls, its meetings will mark the birth of immortal souls into the kingdom of God.

May our two Epworth League conferences in this State be known as great meetings spiritually. Let Christ be the centre theme and they will be. If they are not the fault is ours and not God's, who stands willing and eager to bless.

There is a great tide of worldliness sweeping up against the church, and especially against the young people. This can be met and the work of destruction stayed in but one way, and that not by so much preaching offensive, but defensive. Preach Christ and get Him in the hearts of young people and the all sufficient armor is worn, for where He reigns sin has no power.

MAMIE BAYS.

MODERN DANCING VERSUS BIBLE DANCING—(NO. 1.)

Dear Editor: With your permission, I will furnish a series of short articles on Modern Dancing vs. Bible Dancing.

I do this because the Bible is often quoted to justify the modern dance. A long time ago, before as yet I made any pretensions to religion, I heard a youth discoursing this subject with a preacher from a Bible standpoint. Without joining in the discussion I found in my heart this rebuke: Young man, if you will serve the devil, do so, but don't quote the Word of God as your authority for so doing, for that makes it a tenfold more greater sin. I think so still. The first instance of Bible dancing is recorded in Ex. 32. Notice facts. Moses delays upon the mountain. The people become impatient. They think he has gone to stay. They demand of Aaron gods to go before them back into Egypt. Aaron takes gold—jewelry furnished him—and makes a calf. The people proclaim this golden calf their god, and having stripped themselves naked they dance before the calf. The calf did not resent the insult. It was a golden calf. A genuine calf may not have had any better sense then, but a calf that would tolerate such a thing now ought to be sold to the first butcher that came along. Aaron apologized for this conduct by saying to Moses: "Thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief." I can see how an idolater, or anyone whose heart is set on mischief" can pattern after these Israelites, but how anyone who pretends to be a Christian can copy after them is a mystery. Some of the very people who object to the Bible account of such things as indelicate, can witness a scene far more degrading and pretend to see no harm in it. A man half drunk and a woman half naked, whirling and bouncing over the floor like a chicken with its head cut off. No harm in that? Well, there are some things that if they have to be done at all, they ought to be done in private. But I promised short articles. Remember that while the Bible records the instance given above it does not fail to condemn it. Three thousand of these dancers were slain as a punishment for their sin.

Faithfully,
D. L. EARNHARDT.

THINGS I WOULD NOT CHOOSE.

I should not choose a bob-tailed cow in the summer time, nor a servant with a score of masters, nor a minister with half a dozen ignorant tyrants for stewards, nor a man who lives with his mother-in-law, nor should I like to try the truth of the old saying:

"Two cats and one mouse,
Two women in one house,
Two dogs to one bone,
Will not agree long.

I had rather not be a dog with a tin kettle tied to his tail, nor a worm on a fisherman's hook, nor an eel being skinned alive, nor a husband with a vixen for his wife.

A great man is he who, in the midst of a great crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of his character—Emerson.

Sensible men don't marry a wardrobe or a bonnet box, they want a woman of sense, and those who dress sensibly.

MEXICAN SUPERSTITIONS.

The Nahoa Indians had singularly materialistic views in regard to death. They believed that Mictlan (literally hell) was reached by the dead after a long and painful journey. Their hieroglyphics indicate that the dead must first cross the Apanohuaya River, and to do this it was necessary to have the aid of a little yellow dog (techichi) with a cotton string tied around his neck, which was placed in the hands of the dead. Dogs of no other color could be used, as neither white nor black dogs could cross the river. The white ones would say, "I have been washed;" while the black ones rejoined, "I have been stained." These dogs were reared by the natives for this special purpose, and the techichi is that well-known favorite now called the Chihuahau dog.

After crossing the river, the dog led his master, devoid of clothing, between two mountains that were constantly clashing together, then over one covered with jagged rocks, and then over eight hills upon which snow was ever falling, on through eight deserts where the winds were as sharp as knives. After this he led him through paths where arrows were flying continually; and, worst of all, he encountered a tiger that ate out of his heart, when he fell into a deep, dashing foaming river filled with lizards, after which he appeared before the king of Mictlan, when his tortuous journey was ended and his identity ceased.

It was also a belief that when the body began the journey it must have been buried for a period of four years. In this belief it was not the soul, but the body in actuality, that made the mysterious journey.

For those who enjoy euphonious names, I will state that the name of the last stopping place was "Izmictlanapoccalocca, on which the alligator Xochitonal is encountered; the alligator is the earth's symbol and Xochitonal the last day of the year, which shows that the body here reached the last stage of its existence and became dust of the earth."

When the two are united we readily see the connecting link in their ideas—that at the end of a certain time the body is converted into dust, and the dead are finished forever.

The Milk Tree for Dead Children embodies another superstitious tradition of the Nahoa Indians, which was the existence of a mansion where children were after death. This was called Chihaucauhco, from a tree which was supposed to grow there, from the branches of which milk dropped to nourish the children which clung to them. It was believed that these children would return to populate the world after the race which then inhabited it had passed away. The superstitions of today among the Mexican lower classes, though without the post-mortem materialism, are quite as strong and closely adhered to.—Farr Chambers Gooch, in "Face to Face With the Mexicans."

ST. PATRICK'S HOLOCAUST.

The burning of the Windsor Hotel in New York on last Friday sent through the hearts of the American people a thrill of horror comparable to that felt on that memorable morning when the battleship Maine had been blown up in Havana harbor.

It was a holocaust for St. Patrick's day. Fifth Avenue was crowded with people watching the parade. The windows and balconies of the Windsor, a large seven story building, were filled with spectators. A man carelessly threw a lighted match in some window drapery and in thirty minutes the magnificent building was in ruins, twelve persons had been burned to death and fully fifty injured. About fifty are still missing.

The fire was a sadly spectacular event. Connected with it were deeds of heroism on the part of firemen and private individuals worthy to live in history and song.

The Windsor was a "fire-proof" building. After this the one who uses the term "fire-proof" in connection with any of the large buildings of our cities, will be laughed at. What occurred in the case of the Windsor is liable to occur in any of our large buildings.

A little girl of Los Angeles, whose family was about to move to Arizona and who heard that country spoken of as a forlorn and particularly God-forsaken place, was saying her prayers at her mother's knee the night before their intended departure. She said all she had been taught, and then, with a peculiar emphasis, she said: "Now, good-bye God, for tomorrow we are going to Arizona."

Taking Jesus into life partnership means that the firm of Self, Satan & Co. has dissolved partnership.—H. W. Bowman.