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which were formulated by our own Reformers in the sixteenth century. Instead of triumphing over history, the Papacy is once more at the bar of history, waiting to receive sentence from some of those who have so long accepted it.

We cannot leave these burning questions without referring to Cardinal Newman. Though he has not been censured as yet, by name, yet a large part of his work is undoubtedly hit by the condemnations of the Decree; and it will be impossible for his name and some of his works to escape uncensured if the Papal policy be continued logically. Indeed, this is foreshadowed in the curious reservations which have been made in the official utterances about him. And how strange is Newman's present position and probable fate! He is an object certainly of suspicion to many Ultramontanes, and it is an open secret that he is disliked particularly by the theologian who is chiefly responsible for the latest Papal utterances. To the Modernists he is nothing less than a prophet, an inspirer. They all appeal to him, revere him, believe in him. How far he would have liked this liberal approval is a curious question, since his great battle was against Liberalism. Whatever damage Newman may have done to the Church of England, it may prove in the end that he has done infinitely more to the Church of Rome, or at any rate to the traditional Papacy.

In a following article it is proposed to examine Modernism and Vaticanism as they are exhibited by recent ecclesiastical events in France.



Revivals Past and Present.

BY THE REV. CANON W. HAY M. H. AITKEN, M.A.

THE wave of Revival that recently swept over a great part of the Principality of Wales may now be said to have subsided, leaving, however, according to the statements of many who are well qualified to judge, permanent results of a highly satisfactory character. As is always the case in such

movements, there has been a very considerable falling away; but there has also been much abiding fruit, and it would appear that, although the Revival gatherings mostly took place in chapels, the Church, as well as other bodies, has profited largely by the movement. The hope that this gracious visitation would be extended to other places, and that similar manifestations of the Divine influence would occur throughout the British Isles, has not so far been realized; but, on the other hand, those who are engaged in evangelizing work testify to an increased interest in things spiritual, and a greater responsiveness than existed in the closing years of the last century and the opening years of this.

Meanwhile we are hearing of very remarkable manifestations of the same Revival influence in various places where, perhaps, they might least have been expected. The great Revival movement in Japan, which excited so much interest some few years ago, is now being followed by a similar work of the Holy Spirit in Korea, where national and religious prejudices are breaking down before the advance of this extraordinary and indescribable spiritual force. And this is not the only place in the heathen world where the power of God has been thus specially displayed in the stirring of whole neighbourhoods, and the awakening and conversion of numbers of individual souls.

Movements of this character are amongst the most mysterious as well as the most interesting of the phenomena of the spiritual world. The laws of the action of the Spirit of God are even more recondite than those of the wind that "bloweth where it listeth." Such spiritual influences seem to come and go without our being able to explain them by any process of causation, save that which belongs to the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit. It is true that Revivals have often been attributed to the importunate prayers of some who have hungered for the souls of men; but probably it would be more correct to say that the pouring out of this "spirit of grace and supplication" is one of the most remarkable signs of a true Revival. It is the most impressive indication of all of the presence of some mysterious

spiritual pressure when men begin to pray as those who will not be denied. Mere curiosity may crowd a church, when once people are set talking about what is unusual, and sympathetic action may count for a great deal in inducing a disposition to yield to religious influences ; but intensity in prayer cannot be accounted for by such explanations, and when we find it existing in an extraordinary degree, we may well say, "This is the finger of God."

Let us not, however, suppose that there is really anything arbitrary or capricious in the action of the Holy Spirit in this or in any other respect. His action is no doubt regulated by the law of His own perfect wisdom, though we may not as yet be able to formulate the law of His action. This much only we can say—that there is a certain similarity between His dealings with the individual and His action upon the community. If we were able to recall the action of the Holy Spirit upon our hearts during the years in which our decision for Christ was not yet made, should we not find that this has never been uniform? There have been times in which we have been conscious of definite spiritual influences moving us more or less powerfully to yield ourselves to Him, and then, again, there have come long periods in which we seemed to have no consciousness of any such spiritual pressure ; then once more, after months or even years of utter lethargy and spiritual insensibility, the influence has made itself felt. Nor is it difficult to understand why this should be. A pressure that is uniform and continuous becomes a mere condition of our existence, and we accommodate ourselves to it, without its attracting any attention ; whereas a pressure that is occasional and variable at once claims our attention. Hence the Holy Spirit shows His interest in us as truly by the withdrawal or diminution of His influence at certain seasons as by His manifestation of it at other times ; for it is by adopting this method that the conscience is reached and aroused, and the heart won for Christ.

Now, if this be the Divine method in dealing with the individual, it seems reasonable to conclude that it will also be

His method in dealing with the aggregate of individuals that constitute human society. And if this be so, the originating cause of Revivals will be traceable to those counsels of love and mercy which run through all God's dealings with man. They will be due, not to human earnestness in interceding with God, but rather to Divine wisdom, shown in so ordering His dealings with man as to render them most conducive to the end at which they aim. At the same time, the surest sign of the approach of such a season of Revival is the disposition to pray for it, which, while it is itself the product of a Divine influence, may be regarded as the human response to God's call, which is the condition of the further extension of that spiritual influence. And the moral of this is that we should always hail with delight and encourage to the utmost of our ability any general inclination towards special intercessory prayer that we may discern amongst our people ; for this is a sign of Revival, and carries with it the gracious presage of further manifestations of spiritual power.

I am one of a fast diminishing number of living Christian labourers who took part in the great Revival movement of the latter fifties and the earlier sixties. All the more prominent figures in that great harvest-time have long since gone from us. Their very names are passing out of memory, and the present generation of earnest Christian people knows but little of Brownlow North, Reginald Radcliffe, Denham Smith, Hay Macdowall Grant, and many others who were leading helpers in that great work. But I have purposely used the word helpers, for the movement itself was not brought about by the efforts of a few earnest and gifted men. It was rather the movement itself that called forth the workers than the workers that brought about the movement. This was so much the case that I remember at one time in Scotland people used to speak of those affected as "taking the Revival," as though it were a sort of spiritual epidemic that spread as by a mysterious spiritual contagion. In Ireland, where it excited the largest amount of attention, the meetings were for the most part carried on by Christian people amongst

themselves, without any recognized leaders. Sometimes, however, the local clergy and ministers had the wisdom to throw themselves heartily into the work, and where they did not a few of them developed a marked evangelistic capacity. But the work in Ireland and in some parts of Scotland was marked by the same spontaneity that was so much commented upon in the Welsh Revival of our own time, and there was not even an Evans Roberts associated with it as its recognized leader.

It cannot be doubted that this great Revival, affecting as it did the English-speaking nations on both sides of the Atlantic, gave a wonderful impetus to the spiritual life of the time, and prepared the way for much that has occurred since in the form of evangelizing effort. The converts of those days remained in a large number of instances the very backbone of the various Churches in which they had been gathered in, and the collective influence of so many spiritually-minded Christian people added to the congregations became a powerful factor in both the religious and the national life.

It has always been my firm conviction that it was the great American Revival that sealed the fate of American slavery, just as the Evangelical Revival in the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries did the same for slavery in the British dominions. Public opinion in a Christian country, even where it is not itself definitely Christian, will always be affected by the depth and strength of Christian sentiment in those who profess to be Christians indeed. And it was the rising of public opinion, stimulated by this strong underlying Christian sentiment, that rendered the abolition of this abomination a political necessity, at whatever cost the end might be procured.

What strikes me most now in looking back on those early Revivalistic movements is the fact that all was at that time such a novelty. It is difficult for us to understand in these days of multiplied evangelistic agencies how grievously wanting in this respect was the religious life of that period. If the Church was cold and dead, Nonconformity was no improvement upon

her in this respect. Even Methodism seemed at that time to have lost much of the zeal for the Gospel that has for the most part so honourably distinguished that society during its history. In Scotland I should judge that things were even in a worse and more unspiritual condition than in England, as the opposition to the Revival subsequently offered by a very large proportion of the ministers plainly showed ; and I should not suppose that things were much better in the North of Ireland.

This utter unfamiliarity with evangelizing work was in some respects a great advantage. To multitudes of people in those days the Gospel was really news, and good news, and the novelty of the thing made it easy to get crowds together to hear preaching that often was neither eloquent nor powerful, and that yet did its work. There seemed to be in some places literally a hunger for the Gospel. I actually remember how in a town in the North of Scotland a young man came night after night to the meetings who had to walk no less than twelve miles each way.

To-day all this is changed, and it is now no longer easy to induce people to attend mission services, just because they have had so much of this kind of thing. But, if our work is rendered somewhat more difficult by the reluctance of those whom we seek to reach to put in an appearance at all, let us find some encouragement in the thought that this change is due not to the failure, but to the success, of this kind of work. I suppose that there never were so many really spiritual—shall I say truly converted?—people in our congregations as there are to-day, and this fact is largely due, either directly or indirectly, to the effect that Revival movements have had upon the religious life of the time. They have led in some instances to a more definite presentation of Gospel truth; they have brought about a more pointed and purposeful habit of dealing with individuals, especially with candidates for Confirmation; they have induced any number of evangelistic efforts; they have called into existence special evangelizing agencies, such as the Church Army, the Church Parochial Mission Society, and the Evangelization

Society; they have brought about the erection of numerous mission-rooms, where the poor and ignorant are reached by less formal ministrations than those which our churches offer.

We have, indeed, much reason to be thankful for what has been done during the last half-century in the way of pressing the Gospel upon the acceptance of the people, and for the measure of spiritual success that has attended the manifold evangelizing agencies that have been called into existence within that period. At the same time, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that familiarity with Gospel truth, where it does not bring about its acceptance, must of necessity exercise a distinctly injurious effect upon the human heart. Undoubtedly there are only too many to-day who might with some measure of truth be described as "Gospel-hardened." The familiar phrase points to a terrible possibility. When the good news comes to us as a novelty, a new and fresh revelation of the love of God, it naturally softens the hard heart, and where we receive the truth in the love of it, the moral sensibilities of the man, melted into tenderness, are ready to receive the impress of Divine love. But when we resist the influence of the Holy Spirit, the Gospel begins to lose its power to move us, just because we are familiar with it. The message of salvation becomes barren of spiritual results, and tedious as a twice-told tale. It is the old story, as old as the days of St. Paul: the preaching of the Gospel must be either the savour of life unto life or of death unto death.

This terrible possibility points to the conclusion that, to render evangelizing efforts successful now, there is greater need than ever for individual exertion, which should aim at bringing within reach of the preacher's voice those who have not been fatally affected by this familiarity with truth; and I am inclined to think that the success of mission efforts in the future will more and more depend upon the exertions of the rank and file of the spiritual army, and less than in times gone by upon the special gifts of a few favoured individuals.

I purpose presenting the reader with some few reminiscences of Revival work in a later issue.