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REVIVAL
IN
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OUTLINE
OF A
WORK OF GRACE
IN
NEW BRUNSWICK.

OUTLINE
OF A
WORK OF GRACE
IN THE
PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION
AT
NEW BRUNSWICK, N. J.,
DURING THE YEAR 1837.

Wilmington
BY JOSEPH H. JONES,
Pastor of the Sixth Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia.

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TO THE MEMBERS OF
THE PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION IN NEW BRUNSWICK,
THIS IMPERFECT SKETCH OF A WORK OF GRACE,
IN WHICH
WE WERE PERMITTED TO LABOUR AND REJOICE TOGETHER,
IS INSCRIBED,
WITH THE HOPE THAT THEY WILL KINDLY REGARD IT
AS A TESTIMONIAL
THAT THEY ARE STILL REMEMBERED
WITH THE LIVELIEST AND MOST TENDER AFFECTION,
BY THEIR LATE PASTOR.

THE suggestion which led to the present publication was made by a friend, whose kind counsel is contained in the following letter.

—

Princeton, January 30, 1839.

REV. AND DEAR BROTHER,

Will you forgive me for again repeating a request in which I feel no small interest, and which I know to be interesting to many others. You will remember that I have, heretofore, more than once, urged you to give to the public some account of

the happy and precious revival of religion which occurred under your ministry, at New Brunswick, in 1837. No particular account, so far as I know, of that memorable display of the power and grace of God has ever yet been given. Why has it been withheld? Is not a full and faithful record of it highly desirable? Nay, is it not really a debt due to yourself, to the Church of which you were so long the pastor, and, above all, to the cause of vital religion there and elsewhere? I scarcely know, as I have already told you, how to justify the omission of this duty for so long a time. It is possible, indeed, that some advantages may result from having delayed until now the preparation of the proposed history. That fervour of feeling which the occasion

generated, has, in a good measure, passed away, and left all parties in that calm state which is favourable to an impartial exhibition of the subject. Sufficient time has also elapsed to enable you to make a more accurate estimate of the genuine fruits of the revival in question, than would have been, perhaps, practicable eighteen months ago. But I do hope you will no longer delay the performance of a service which appears to me so obviously demanded, and so likely to be solidly useful.

There is one question which you may, possibly be better able to answer now, than you were during the delightful excitement of that memorable scene. And that is, whether the solemn dispensations of Providence, experienced by the in-

habitants of New Brunswick some time before, had any perceptible connexion with the spiritual benefit then enjoyed? I refer to the severe visit of *cholera* which you suffered in 1832, and the tremendous *tornado*, which did so much mischief in 1835. I have for many years taken much interest in the inquiry, whether seasons of great sickness and mortality, and other extraordinary and overwhelming seasons of temporal calamity, are ordinarily employed by a sovereign God as a means of reviving religion. Every new fact, either for or against the affirmative of this question, is highly interesting to me.

By the way, a few days ago, I was conversing with an intelligent and pious friend on a subject which led us to advert to the wonderful and destructive tornado

above alluded to. He wished some account of it. I could only describe it very imperfectly; and was obliged to say, that I knew of no satisfactory or well-drawn history of that awful event. Is it right to permit the memory of such things to perish, or to be preserved in no other record than that of imperfect and uncertain tradition? I do not feel prepared, my dear sir, to suggest a plan; but if you should give some account of the blessed season of "refreshing from the presence of the Lord" with which you were favoured, could you not, either in some preliminary pages, or, perhaps, still better, in some *appendix*, to the special narrative, which will be your *primary object*, annex such an account of the awful dispensations alluded to, as would enable your

readers to judge of their character and of their connexion, if any, with the subsequent blessing?

I hope you will not put a negative upon this request. I know by experience the unceasing demands upon every moment presented by a city charge. But I am persuaded that, by redeeming time enough to prepare a little volume which shall contain what I have suggested, you will gratify many friends, both in New Brunswick as well as elsewhere; and, I think I may add, none more than

Your sincere friend

And brother in Christ,

SAMUEL MILLER.

To the Rev. JOSEPH H. JONES, }
Philadelphia. }

O U T L I N E .

I.

THE ensuing narrative of a work of grace in New Brunswick, is little more than a transcript of notes which were made during its progress, and which have been hitherto withheld for reasons that will readily occur to every judicious friend of revivals. If to some the delay may seem long, it has been from a desire to avoid the more common error of being premature.

The earliest evidence to any of the pastors of the churches in the city that there was such an increased desire of religious instruction as to call for a multiplication of the means, was noticed in the latter part of April, 1837. A series of meetings then commenced in the Baptist Church,

which in their progress were accompanied with attestations of the presence of the Spirit in no ordinary measure.

Previous to this, however, for months, there had been in many of the churches encouraging "tokens for good." These were recognized in the thickening of the religious assembly, and especially of the more private and social meetings during the week; and in the manifest increase of solemn devotional feeling as evinced, not only by the countenances, but in the prayers of the worshipers. The impression on the public mind was evidently becoming wider and deeper every day; and now the hopes of the devout of different denominations were sanguine that their prayers for a general blessing were to be answered. The religious meetings among the Baptists were continued more than three weeks, and were blessed to many of other congregations as well as their own. Conversions were now daily

reported, without limitation to the members of either, and so blended is the work in many of its characteristics, that it is a task of scarcely less difficulty than delicacy to furnish a narrative of a part without interweaving some things which might more properly be reported by others. That the present record, therefore, is restricted principally to what the Spirit wrought in a single denomination, is not because it was more signal in its character or its results, than in others. But, while we sympathized in the joys of sister churches, had the privilege of sharing with them the blessings of the revival, and bear cheerful testimony to their zeal and untiring labours during its progress, yet, we think it proper that the details of the work among the respective congregations should be left to themselves.

At the regular meeting of the Presbytery of New Brunswick, which was held in April at Boundbrook, a village about

six miles from New Brunswick, the reports of the churches concerning their spiritual condition, were peculiarly unfavourable.* The aggregate increase of the year had not been sufficient to counterbalance the decrease; a fact which was regarded with some proper manifestation of sensibility. It was a rebuke from the Great Head of the church too marked and significant to be overlooked or to be left unheeded.

It was solemnly resolved, therefore, after suitable deliberation, that, as a Presbytery we would seek by repentance, humiliation, and prayer, a removal of the cause of the divine displeasure; and, as a proper means to this end, a day of fasting and prayer was appointed to be observed by them as a Presbytery, at the city of New Brunswick, in the early part of June.

This information was received with lively interest by the church with whom

* Appendix A.

it was proposed to meet, and furnished a new motive for self-examination, watchfulness, and prayer, as a means of preparation to receive such a visit with advantage. But before the time for this meeting had arrived, the desire to "hear the word," had so much increased, that it was deemed expedient to have another public service. Our first experiment made it plain that the amount of feeling in the congregation had been underrated. The house in which we thought it best to commence, though large enough to hold from three to four hundred, was found too small to receive more than three fourths of those who were anxious to hear.

The time had now manifestly come for opening the church, which was entered shortly after, when a series of meetings was instituted. These, during the first four days were held three times on each, and afterwards only in the evening, when a sermon was preached, which was some-

times, though not invariably, followed by a short address.

By means of the assistance which was very kindly rendered to the pastor in such an exigency, these evening exercises were sustained without intermission until the month of September. Other congregations in the mean time were not less diligent in labour, which was crowned with the most encouraging success. Scenes were witnessed from day to day both in private families and in our public assemblies, which were the cause of rejoicing in heaven as well as on earth. No pen or tongue can adequately describe the marvels which were wrought by the Spirit in changes that then occurred, and which we have thus far increasing reasons to believe were radical and unfeigned.

And while it has been my desire to prepare such a record of this great event as shall give the Christian community a cor-

rectly drawn outline; yet, none but those who were present mingling in the assemblies and partaking in the divine influences that pervaded them, can form any proper conception of what was wrought by God in the *revival at New Brunswick*. To give a full account of all that might be narrated which is suited to interest the Christian public, would require an extended volume. In the present account nothing more will be attempted than to describe some of the prominent features of this work, which have continued hitherto, and which we may confidently hope will prove to be permanent.

And the first which may properly be noticed, is, *its extent*. It was not confined to any one church or denomination, but its influences were felt more or less by nearly all.

Like Nineveh and Samaria, the whole population seemed for a season to be moved; so that it was comparatively rare

to find an individual who was not prepared to listen with interest to the subject of personal religion. Even some who affected great indifference, and like the skeptics on the day of Pentecost, were willing to ascribe the "no small stir" in our city to natural causes, betrayed more disquietude to others than they supposed themselves to feel.

Repeated instances occurred in which the scorner was rebuked by his companion, and before the close of the work scores became its subjects who treated it with much levity at the beginning. "These people are sincere," said one to a very thoughtless associate who had made some irreverent remark, "and I hope that it may be as well with us hereafter, as I believe it will be with them."

At the close of the exercises on a Sabbath afternoon, the writer took notice that a well informed young man, apparently 18 or 20 years of age, lingered near

the door of the church, as if desirous of making himself known. On coming out of the pulpit he approached and requested the privilege of a short conversation. "I wish to tell you," said he, "what God has done for my soul. Last Wednesday I was invited to attend a meeting for prayer which was conducted by young men. Up to that time I had been for years a disbeliever in the Christian religion. I did not, however, refuse to attend the meeting, thinking that I should find some entertainment in its novelty. But on entering the room the spectacle of such a number kneeling devoutly, while one in a solemn and subdued voice was the organ of the assembly, caused emotions which I never felt before, and which I am unable to describe. I am now resolved that so long as God shall spare my life, it shall be devoted to the service of that Saviour whom I have hitherto dishonoured and rejected."

At another time an intelligent educated man of about five and twenty, called at my house, in the deepest distress of mind, which was manifested by his countenance and tears, as well as conversation. The change in his feelings was not less surprising to himself than to every body else. There was something in his character and temperament and habits which was suited to produce a common opinion that few persons in society were less liable to religious impression than he. On entering the room he was greatly agitated, and with difficult utterance he observed that a day or two before he had gone to the church with the strongest feelings of opposition, and for the express purpose of making merry at what he should see and hear. But upon entering the house, the whole current of his thoughts and exercises became changed. The preacher seemed clothed with the dignity and authority of an angel of God, and his words

came home to his conscience with power. Never before had his eyes been opened to see his true condition as a sinner, and now he feared that the discovery was made too late. At a subsequent visit, however, not many days after, I saw his face animated and cheerful—his burden had been removed—he trusted he had become a partaker of the hopes of a Christian, which in due time was proclaimed by him in a public profession.

These two cases are mentioned as specimens of many not less striking, which occurred within the writer's personal observation, illustrating the change which was wrought upon those who were known to have regarded the revival at first with incredulity and scorn.

Another feature of this work of grace which is worthy of notice, was, the *prevailing manner* in which the Spirit operated. Its descent upon the people was like dew. Our daily assemblies both so-

cial and public, exhibited all the stillness and staid devotion of an ordinary Sabbath-day congregation. There were no audible sighings nor exclamations, no demonstrations of grief, or of transport that could not be controlled, nothing irregular or extravagant, but every eye seemed fixed upon the preacher, the countenance solemn, evincing the powerful workings of the spirit within. Sometimes, however, the emotions of the newly-awakened sinner, as well as of the new convert, seemed too strong to be repressed on retiring to their home. Tears both of sorrow and of joy were profusely shed; and in the intensity of their feeling they could not sleep, and forgot to eat their bread.

At a late hour one evening the writer was solicited to visit a household, in circumstances so peculiar, as to overcome their reluctance to make this request at so unseasonable a time.

The night was clear and calm and

pleasant ; scarcely another footstep was heard in the street ; and a lighted window only here and there, showed that most had retired to rest. The scene which was exhibited on entering the door, I do not attempt to portray. Salvation had come to this house, and two of its members were weeping immoderately for joy, a joy which was utterable only by tears. The time of the visit, the cause, the novelty, the solemnity, the passionate exclamations of delight, accompanied with sobbings that were almost convulsive, combined to produce emotions which it is impossible to describe.

In most cases the visible change was gradual, though more or less rapid in its progress. Some were able to refer to the very moment when they supposed themselves to have passed from death unto life, while many others, whose evidences of grace were not less satisfactory, could on-

ly say, "whereas we were blind, now we see." In very many there was at this time only the reviving and maturing of convictions which they had first felt many years before. The good seed of the word had been sown and nurtured by the ordinary means, but it "lacked moisture" to make it spring up and vegetate.

Another characteristic of the work deserving of attention is the *class of persons who were chiefly its subjects*.

And while it comprehended some of every age, from childhood up to three score years and ten, yet by far the greater number were gathered from the young. Twelve were from a female Bible-class, leaving two or three only, out of forty, who did not entertain the Christian hope. The impression on the children of the Sabbath school was general. Nearly all were more or less affected, for a season, by the truth: and although their religion, in many cases, proved too much like Ephraim's

“goodness,”* it was not so in all. Quite a number furnished satisfactory evidence of a thorough spiritual change, which has been evinced ever since by their devout and consistent life. A few among them of maturer mind and years were admitted to the communion of the church; nor is it presumptuous to believe that in process of time these faded impressions will be revived, and the incipient work of the Spirit in their heart be perfected. About one-fourth of those who united with the church were heads of families; one-third, perhaps, were males, and the medium of age is supposed to be not far from twenty years.

In some instances all the members of a family were thought to be converted; and in one, the subjects of grace were two daughters, a son, two apprentices, and three relations from abroad, who were then on a transient visit. Indeed

* Hos. vi, 4.

the cases of hopeful change in those strangers who were providentially in our city at this interesting time, were numerous. Among these was a young lady from a wealthy family in the remote part of the country, who had come from her distant home full of gaiety and love of worldly pleasure; others from the cities of New York and Trenton, and the villages and surrounding country. Of the sixty-five or seventy young men who belonged to the college, almost every individual for a season was more or less impressed; a good proportion retain to the present an humble confidence that they were at this time the subjects of renewing grace, and some have since entered upon a course of theological study.

Another feature of this gracious work, too distinguishing to be overlooked, was its *astonishing power as displayed in many cases of conversion of peculiar interest*. To publish a circumstantial ac-

count of these, however, would lead me into details of such a nature as might occasion pain. It would lift the veil from what is deemed by some too sacred and personal to be so publicly proclaimed. For this reason I shall venture to give only such a general description of three or four, as exemplifications of that signal grace to which I refer, and which it is presumed will offend the delicacy of none.

Among the first attendants on our meetings for early prayer was one who, from his advanced age and many infirmities, had been accustomed to spend his mornings till a very late hour in bed, and the remnant of the day in idleness. Without occupation or even a desire to be useful, this aged man was living without hope and without God, until this visit of mercy to our city. And now these indolent habits were at once reformed, and whether the hour of assembling was at five or later, none were more habitually present or

more devotional. But for almost half a century few men in society had wandered further from the path of rectitude than he; a man of intellect and well endowed for usefulness, but whose sad perversion of his powers had caused the keenest sorrow in the hearts of friends, and well nigh extinguished all hope of his conversion. And yet among the trophies of the Holy Spirit was this very man. But without entering into the particulars of his case or describing all the steps of his progress, it is enough to observe that no one could furnish more convincing proof of having passed from death to life than he. And although the exercise of proper Christian prudence, and a suitable regard for public opinion required that the probation of such a convert should be somewhat prolonged, yet in due time he was admitted to the fellowship of the saints on earth, and not long after removed, I doubt not, to the

communion of "the just made perfect" in heaven.

Another case of surpassing interest which it may be proper to notice more particularly, was, the conversion of one who, though sustaining the character of a moral man and a useful citizen, had, nevertheless, lived till the meridian of life without manifesting a regard for religion or its institutions. Till within a short period before the revival, he had been almost as regularly *absent* from the house of God as his family had been *present*. But in all this time, as he observed afterwards, "he had not supposed himself to be in such a sinful state as to give him the slightest alarm." He imagined that he was quite as good without so much church going and so many religious forms as others were with them; nor was he ever disturbed by any apprehensions of evil to come.

The first evidence of an impression on

this man's conscience was noticed in the church by some who sat near him, and who apprehended that he was unwell, perhaps oppressed with the heat or sultriness of the weather. But on going home, the same peculiarity in his countenance and manner was perceived by the family, who inquired with some concern about his health, to whom he returned such an answer as to disclose at once the true cause of his apparent indisposition.

At the meeting of inquirers that evening, I discovered him as he entered the room under the influence of very strong emotions which he endeavoured in vain to conceal or suppress. On taking him by the hand he simply observed with confused articulation, "I cannot converse with you now;" and I replied that I would see him on the ensuing day. At this time his sense of sin was deep and pungent, but by the succeeding morning his exercises had become so ab-

sorbing and intense that his mind could no longer be fixed on his business, and he retired to his house and waited with increasing impatience the fulfilment of the promise made at the meeting the evening before. A slight attack of disease rendered it necessary to defer the call till towards the close of the day, when he was found traversing his room in the deepest anguish of spirit, full of apprehension that his case was so peculiar as to admit of no relief.

“Hitherto,” said he, “I have been a stranger to myself. I have had no conception of the depravity of my heart, or of the sinfulness of my conduct in the sight of a holy God. I feel the burden of innumerable sins, for which he is justly offended with me. I am wretched beyond the power of language to express; nor can I imagine how it can ever be otherwise with me either in this world or in the world to come.”

Never in all the writer's acquaintance with the operations of grace has he witnessed a more lively illustration of that destruction of hope or of "life" by the "coming of the commandment" as described by the apostle in Romans vii. 9, 10, 11. Here was a person with his eyes for the first time opened to see the *law*—its spirituality and claim—with his face at the same time averted from the relief of the gospel. According to another representation of the apostle, here was a prisoner convicted of capital crime, having received and acquiesced in his righteous sentence, and now "concluded" or kept under the bolts and bars and prison-door of the law—"shut up unto" the time when he should be released by the key of evangelical faith. And have you looked into the Bible, said I, to see whether it has not some instruction for persons in such distressing exigencies as yours? "No," he replied. "I have not been ac-

customed to read it ; I am a stranger to its contents, and at present I feel myself too sinful, too unworthy to attempt it." Have you then made confession of your sins and asked God to forgive them ? " No. I have not felt myself worthy ; I am too much an enemy of God to use this liberty." Shall I then take the Bible for you and read a few paragraphs and then unite with you in prayer ? Then turning to that part of our Saviour's discourse in John xvi. where he sets forth the offices of the Comforter in convicting of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment, he was asked whether he was not himself " convinced of sin ?" " That I am," said he. " I have a view of the number and greatness of my sins which I want words to utter." And are you not as fully convinced, likewise, that you have no " righteousness" of your own ; that your best works have been imperfect and deserving of condemnation, and that in order to be saved you need a better

righteousness than your own? "Most certainly I am," was his answer. And have you any doubt of a "*judgment*" to come; that there will be a day of judgment, when you and all the world shall be judged, and when the wrath of God shall be righteously revealed and executed upon all who continue to the end of life as you have lived hitherto? "No, none," said he. "I have no excuse to offer. I have sinned wilfully and under light; and if there is a just Being in the heavens he ought to punish, and must punish, all who are so deserving of his displeasure as I am." It would appear, then, that you have some evidence of such exercises in relation to sin as are produced by the Holy Spirit. "I do not know but I have, yet I had not thought of it before." Is not this, then, encouraging and comforting? This is what you have anxiously desired—is it not? to be assured that you have not been abandoned of God, and that you have

not grieved nor quenched his Spirit by your sins. Why, then, will you not open at once your heart to the Saviour, who has begun to prepare the way for his coming by sending the Spirit to convince you of your need of him. Can you not unite with me in prayer for it? "I think I can."

We then kneeled together in offering a few petitions, when on rising he immediately exclaimed, "I feel better—the load is gone." The change was visible in his countenance. The clouds had given place to sunshine, and the transition was as "life from the dead." Never did I experience such mingled emotions of joy and abasement; of pleasure combined with awe. The Lord was in that place, and the display of his sovereign power and grace in this immediate answer of prayer was exceedingly affecting. Like Peter falling at the feet of Jesus, after witnessing one of his miracles, and exclaiming "depart from

me for I am a sinful man, O Lord," so we all felt the place and the time to be rendered awful by a scene of so much solemnity.

I will only add that the lapse of time, from that memorable hour to the present, has furnished increasing testimony that the change which I have thus described, was wrought by the power of God.

I annex but a single example more of this marvellous grace in the case of one who had been spared in his career of sin for more than three-score years. The vigour of his manhood had been spent on the ocean, during which time he had unreservedly indulged in those sins which the displays of God's greatness and power in the deep should have caused him to forsake. For many years this man had been the commander of a ship, for which his nautical skill and his knowledge, both theoretical and practical, rendered him amply qualified. The task of governing a vessel,

however, was one of less difficulty than that of controlling himself. So fierce and tremendous was his anger, when aroused, that he was a terror to all around him. For many years he had been a slave to intemperance, an open despiser of the Bible, its friends and institutions, and had hardly been known, from his youth up, to enter a house of public worship. Few persons in society could be more obdurate and reckless; and yet "is anything too hard for the Lord?" This leopard was made to change his spots. Where sin abounded, grace abounded the more. From a state of the most desperate wickedness this extraordinary sinner was reclaimed and brought to his right mind: and although bending and tottering under the weight of much infirmity and many years, his mind is still vigorous, while his new disposition, new deportment, and the new spirit which he exhibits in his daily intercourse with those around,

afford convincing testimony that "a man can be born again when he is old." What things were once gain to him he now counts loss for Christ. Whenever his health and his multiplied infirmities will permit, he is found at the house of God on the Sabbath; and at the appointed seasons he sits down, clothed and in his right mind, at the table of the Lord. Other illustrations might be mentioned of the surprising power of God in the work of conversion, in the reformation of the desperately wicked, in restoring peace to distracted families, where there had long been confusion and tumult, incessant debate and an occasional separation of its members. Nor are the instances few in which the rejoicing wife who had been unequally yoked for years, dates the beginning of her domestic happiness, within the time of this revival. Not individuals only, but families are

now habitual worshipers in the religious assembly on the Sabbath, who were wont before to spend this day at the rendezvous of kindred spirits, in forgetting God and despising his commandments.

With respect to the *means* which were blessed in carrying the work forward it will be inferred from the foregoing account that they were not peculiar; that they differed from the means of advancing religion in ordinary times, only in frequency. Our meetings for instruction both public and private, as well as those for prayer, were multiplied as the occasion required. The public service in the evening was preceded thrice in a week by a meeting for inquirers, which was numerously attended and which proved to be an auxiliary to the work of exceeding importance. So soon as the subjects of conviction had become so numerous that they could not be visited at their own dwellings, there

was no other expedient to meet the emergency but this. It was the dictate of necessity. It served, moreover, to secure the good which has been so often ascribed to the calling out of the awakened to some appointed seat in the public assembly, without the attending evils. The invitation from the pulpit for all those who were desirous of special instruction, to meet the session at the house of the pastor, was often heard with great interest. It immediately caused the inquiry in many a disquieted bosom, "Is this addressed to me?" "Am I desirous of particular religious instruction?" "Is it right for me to attend?" "Would it not be presumptuous to decline?" The mere announcing of such an opportunity not unfrequently stirred up a conflict between fear and desire, a sense of duty and of shame, which rendered the bosom of the disturbed sinner, a theatre of agonizing strife, until grace triumphed and the soul was brought into captivity to the obe.

dience of Christ. At these assemblies, however, every thing was conducted with perfect order and sobriety. It was like a social religious meeting of friends and familiar acquaintances, where all felt free from embarrassment to converse, but exclusively upon the interests of the soul. The meeting was attended generally by the pastor and elders, assisted by such clergymen as were providentially among us. After a few words of conversation with each individual, enough to ascertain the posture of his mind and the character of its exercises, the services were concluded with a short address, followed with singing and prayer. Such cases, however, as demanded particular attention, were noted, and the individuals visited afterwards at their respective dwellings. In connexion with these public exercises there was much private, domestic and social prayer. Individuals of congenial taste had their appointed seasons for as-

sembling, without noise or ostentation. The young converts, likewise, both male and female, had their stated meetings for prayer. And even the children, it was soon discovered, were accustomed to come together to pray; sometimes in the presence of an adult Christian, and often without it; and always with that solemnity and decorum which the occasion demanded. The elders of the church for a season felt constrained to forego their secular occupations, and gave themselves wholly to the duties prescribed by the times. Individual members, moreover, were diligently engaged in visiting from house to house, for prayer and religious conversation.

But perhaps in all the history of grace, there has not been a similar work in which its sovereignty was more conspicuous; in which it was more manifest to every beholder that it was not accom-

plished by the mere efficacy of means. In producing every result, it was easy to discover the power of God preceding and opening the way. The pillar of cloud moved first.

Let it be remembered that there was nothing in the habits or the temperament or tendencies of the people of New Brunswick to predispose them, so to speak, to such a state as has been described. It was not known to the oldest citizen, that the place had ever enjoyed a similar season of spiritual prosperity ; and to many, a revival of religion was known only by name. Indeed, the reproachful remark had almost become a proverb that "a revival of religion could never pass beyond the Raritan." Some, it is known, were secretly incredulous in relation to the subject itself ; and had been heard to express sentiments which promised neither cooperation nor sympathy. But in spite of all this apathy and unbelief, the Holy Spirit

came, not led on by a train of extraordinary means or a series of exciting exercises ; but, as has been already remarked, these did not go before the Spirit, but they followed. At other times the church had set apart successive days for religious worship, had held "protracted meetings," which were attended by no special testimonials of divine favour ; but, when as at this time, the descending Comforter had prepared the hearts of the people like the moistening and mellowing of the earth by rain, to receive the seed, then these continuous services were rendered eminently useful. Every preacher seemed to have an effectual message, and every sermon was like an arrow guided by a strong unerring hand. The truths dispensed from day to day, were those which proved to be the power of God as once preached by Peter and his fellow apostles. I mean the ruin of man by the

fall, the total alienation of his heart from God by nature, his utter inability to recover himself, and his dependence upon the Spirit of God, the duty of immediate repentance, and perfect and perpetual obedience to the law, as a rule of moral conduct, of justification by faith in the righteousness of a crucified Redeemer, and the sufficiency of his atonement for all whose hearts are inclined to accept the proffered mercy of the gospel.

I annex but a single feature more of this extraordinary work, viz: that there was *little open opposition*.

So manifest were the workings of some mighty influence among the people, so mysterious and unaccountable the changes which were continually passing before the eyes of the unbelieving that even the most obdurate stood appalled and silent. They could only say in mute surprise, "Men and brethren, what meaneth this?"

Here were strange things not provided for in their philosophy. These sudden transformations, not in feeling and opinion only, but in life; these transitions from open vice and irreligion, to virtuous and holy living; were too great and too manifest to be denied or to be ascribed to any ordinary moral causes. Here was no machinery, no attempt to practise upon men's fears or sensibilities, nothing wild or fanatical, or bordering on enthusiasm; but all was orderly and grave and dignified and devotional. Thus as the evening bell gave the signal for the gathering of the people, and the many joined in the throng that were moving towards the house of God, those who stood still as they were passing, looked on with mixed emotions, but they rarely mocked. Sometimes, however, if the jest or profane fling was heard, it was rebuked by some bystander, who, it was supposed, would have laughed and commended. "Take

care what you say," replied one who appeared to be but little affected himself, "Take care how you speak," said he to one who had just uttered an unbecoming jeer, "this is something altogether too serious to be trifled with."

That there was much opposition of heart and of secret unbelief which was not revealed to others, we cannot for a moment doubt, while we record this persuasion of our mind with sorrow. But that any could remain unmoved or unconcerned, much less have withstood the appeals to their hearts, which were made at this time by the word and the Spirit and the providence of God, is evidence of an obduracy that savours strongly of the condition of which God has said "let it alone." But may that same Almighty energy which caused so many "hearts of stone to relent," still be exerted on them, and may none be permitted to die under the accumulated guilt of having

beheld such displays of renewing grace, and wondered, been almost persuaded, and perished.

Such then is an outline of part of the marvellous work which God wrought during the summer of 1837 in the city of New Brunswick. In glancing the eye upon what has been written, the author regrets the repeated introduction of himself. Could the facts have been given without much awkward circumlocution in the third person, there would not have been the frequent recurrence of the first. It has been the writer's aim "to be conscientiously exact in relating things according to the naked truth," without colouring or exaggeration; and although in the reported conversations with the inquiring, there has been in some instances, a change in the mode of expression, yet there has not been, so far as is recollected, any misrepresentation of their sentiments or feelings. It may perhaps be

proper to mention that it was not my purpose originally to publish at all, presuming that the most material facts concerning the revival would eventually become sufficiently proclaimed and diffused. The commonness of such narratives, the doubtful utility of many, and the prevailing incredulity of the public, would have precluded this, but for the strong and repeated solicitations of those whose counsel it was thought presumptuous to disregard.

The whole number received into the communion of the Presbyterian church was 149. The aggregate of admission into all of the churches about 600. And while in review the results of this glorious work have transcended our anticipations in the consistent persevering godliness of most, our fears have been realized in relation to some. But with very few exceptions, the subsequent course of the converts has corresponded to its auspi-

cious beginning. We wonder not that we erred in our judgment of some, but that we were not deceived in relation to more. The lapse of time has been attended with many of those changes which too often follow these seasons of refreshing; but with regard to those dominant features of the revival which have been described, we have had no occasion to alter the opinion which we formed in the beginning. It is true that the love of the brethren and their zeal have become less fervent, and there is less apparent concern for the salvation of souls. Yet we trust that the knowledge acquired, and the good, both imparted and received, will be lasting as eternity. What skill in numbers can compute the worth of one soul? Then who but the Redeemer of souls can comprehend and appreciate the products of such a revival? The scenes of this memorable year are still fresh in the recollections of most of those who wit-

nessed them. They need no such memorial as this to preserve them from oblivion. Our prayer is, that it may be blessed to the the spiritual welfare of others; to the encouragement of the desponding, and to the removing of the unreasonable prejudices and the salvation of many. May this be but the beginning of a series of revivals in that favoured city, which shall multiply and magnify in succeeding years, as the harbingers of those days of Zion's prosperity, when the love and the zeal of her sons and daughters shall no more remit, but she shall live in the light and joy and glory of a perpetuated Revival.*

* At the solicitation of the writer, the foregoing narrative has been read in our hearing, with the request that as we were joint labourers in that glorious harvest to which it refers, it might be given to the public with our common endorsement. We therefore cheerfully unite with our late pastor in bearing this public testimony, that so far as we can recollect, the facts in relation to the revival of religion during the summer of 1837, in the congrega-

tion of which we are members, are correctly represented in the above "outline." In attestation of which we subjoin our names.

SAMUEL HOLCOMB,

SAMUEL BAKER,

D. W. VAIL,

PETER DAYTON,

F. RICHMOND,

} Ruling Elders.

II.

“WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT!”

THE favours shown by God to the people of Israel were so marked, that even the wicked Balaam could not but notice them. Successful as had been his necromancy against others, his hand “forgot its cunning” when preparing evil against them. In vain, therefore, had he come so far, and tried so faithfully to curse a nation whom God had resolved to bless. The repeated failure of his experiments had now convinced him fully that there was “no enchantment against Jacob, neither any divination against Israel;”

at the same time he clearly foresaw that their history would "encourage the faith and inspire the praises of future ages," who, with devout admiration would exclaim, "What hath God wrought!"

To procure a similar tribute to the grace and power of God has been the ascendant motive, it is hoped, in preparing the preceding sketch. None who "read and understand" will doubt that a glorious monument has been raised in that highly blessed city, on which no inscription could be more appropriate than the words of this unhappy prophet. That the scenes through which we have passed have been strikingly significant and furnish an important moral, none, I think, will question. Very few have watched the progress of events unmoved or unconcerned; nor can any that have known their extraordinary character be without some interest to learn the probable results. The glowing reports of what zealous good men some-

times presume God to have wrought, have so often proved to be premature, that the present publication has been deferred until time and reflexion, and a return to the ordinary occupations and temptations of life should afford opportunity for all that was merely physical excitement, to subside; until the mature judgment of the religious community might safely pronounce who were changed radically, and who superficially; what was the offspring of impulse, and what of religious principle. To those who are apprised of the various theories of Christians in the present day, on the subject of "revivals," and their corresponding diversity of practice in conducting them, every ray of light which may lead to the truth is welcome.

To some of the professed friends of religion, it is well known, that the very name has often been an offence. They have been accustomed to unite it in their associations with speculative errors in opinion,

and with deeds of fanatical extravagance ; and have been backward to believe that a “ revival ” could have any other legitimate connexion. But to have mingled in the scenes which have been thus imperfectly described, and not to notice “ the finger of God,” would evince an obtuseness of moral discernment more desperate than that of the magicians of Egypt. Here was enough to convince the most incredulous before, that a revival of religion is a reality ; that it is not the figment of a pious imagination ; not the mushroom product of misjudging zeal ; but that it is something whose effects are good, and in which good men may be rationally and profitably engaged.

From the preceding narrative, it will be easily inferred, that among the results of such an event, in New Brunswick, has been a marked and extensive change in public opinion on this so much disputed subject ; an enlarging of the public and

social religious assemblies, and an increased attention to the means of grace ; that the general aspect of society has been softened and materially improved ; the amount of happiness, both personal and domestic, has been greatly increased : and most desirable of all, the sincere and humble disciples of the Saviour have been surprisingly multiplied.

Such are among the characteristic and most palpable fruits of the Spirit in the visit of mercy to which we refer. It becomes, then, an inquiry not second in importance to any connected with this work, *who is, indeed, its author?* Has it been wrought by the influences of the Spirit, or by the devices and efforts of man? Leaving, then, the further details of what has been done, I proceed to mention some of the evidences that it has been wrought by God.

And to this conclusion we should have been naturally led from reflecting on the

strange opinions and wild speculations of some who have endeavoured to account for it on natural principles, or ascribe it to secondary causes.

They are amongst the best arguments in support of the truth which they were used to assail. Thus numerous peals were rung, as usual, upon those convenient terms, "*excitement,*" "*sympathy,*" "*animal feeling,*" &c. But the gospel had been preached, and appeals had been made to the hopes, and fears, and "sympathies" of the hearer, by successive pastors, from Gilbert Tennent's ministry, commencing in 1726; and that the success of labour now was so much greater in appearance could not be ascribed to its novelty or better adaptation. But by recurring to the Narrative, it will be seen that the "feeling" preceded; that the sensibilities of the people were kindled before the special means of "excitement," as they are called, were

increased. Thus our assemblies were not multiplied, nor our houses of worship thrown open, till the opened ears and awakened interests of the people demanded it. We went from the private room to the public; from the session house to the church, only as we were urged by the throng of interested hearers. No doubt the preaching of the truth to the crowded assembly; the increased zeal and faith of the church, as manifested in their conversation and prayers; the great and sudden changes wrought in many, as witnessed from day to day, all combined to help the progress of the work, but they did not begin it. As well might we say that the short and cold days of winter cause the sun to linger below the horizon, as that the cause of this revival was in the means, or that the hearts of the people were originally prepared, their taste rectified, and their "sympathies" excited by any movements or machinery of men. The true

cause was back of all these, as really as the cause of sight is behind the organ of vision. No, we had never witnessed those astonishing displays of mercy and power, had not some mighty agent gone before and prepared the way to give a disposition to use the means of grace, as well as to render them effectual. In the progress of this work we have seen the hearer not excited merely, but converted ; not changed in mind only, but renewed in heart.

Again, we have been referred for the causes to *the saddening influence of public calamity, our gloomy prospects, commercial embarrassments, the reverses and straits that were more or less felt by all.** A blessed improvement, truly, of this chastening Providence, had there been a disposition in men to make it. But if this

* The revival occurred in New Brunswick during the time of that extraordinary pecuniary pressure which proved so calamitous in its consequences.

temporal affliction was so fruitful in good to us, why was it not equally productive in other places, where the rod was felt more severely? Other cities have suffered the "pressure," and why have they not enjoyed a similar benefit? And why did not the pestilence at one time, and the destructive tempest* at another, produce a revival then, and thus anticipate the blessings which some would connect with the trouble of the present?

But I pass from such attempted expositions of the cause of this joyous event; which have been noticed thus far only to exhibit the truth in bolder relief. As we argue the correctness of the cosmogony of Moses from the egregious inconsistencies and folly of all those systems of philosophy which endeavour to furnish another, or, as we infer the candour and veracity of an honest witness, from the

* Appendix B.

quibblings and evasions, and self-contradictions of a false one, so we may safely assert, as we ponder the delightful events of the past, behold "what hath God wrought!" while we see how much they are embarrassed who attempt to account for them by any other agency than his.

Again, we infer that the hand of God is in these changes, from *the concurrent testimony that is furnished in the history of grace*. I mean from their exact resemblance to the fruits of his Spirit in those seasons of refreshing, by which he has answered the prayers of his people in all past ages. In every period of the world the marks of a work of the Spirit have been essentially alike. In the change experienced by each new convert in his passing from death unto life, his sorrow for sin, and subsequent peace and holiness of living, we have witnessed nothing which the Scriptures do not warrant us to expect; nothing which was unknown

to Enoch before the flood, and to Noah, and to Abraham, and to every regenerated individual since. The experience of each is the same, and it is only the multiplication of these units sufficiently which constitutes what is called a revival. Such manifestations of his special grace as were enjoyed in the days of the good kings Hezekiah and Josiah; with which he blessed Samaria, under the ministry of Philip the Evangelist; and which, according to the Prophet Joel, we have reason to believe will continue to be repeated and multiplied as the harbingers of the day of Christ's universal triumph. It is a lamentable error, therefore, to identify these mercies with this age of excitement, or with ourselves as a peculiar nation, because of our comparative youth and supposed want of stability and fixedness of character. On the other hand, some of the brightest pages of the history of the church, in other lands, are the records of

just such glorious events as we have narrated. In an anonymous work, ascribed to the excellent Robert Fleming, published about one hundred and fifty years ago—a time, it will be recollected from the date, of great turmoil and distress in the church—there are preserved the accounts of revivals in Scotland and Protestant Ireland, which were scarcely exceeded in the days of the Apostles. I refer to the times of Dickson, and of Welsh, and Forbes, and Rutherford, and Bruce, and Livingston, an ancestor of the venerable patriarch whose latter days were spent in the city of which we speak. Yes, the late Dr. Livingston was a worthy descendant of one of whom it is recorded by our author, “that being unexpectedly called to preach on the Monday following the solemn communion, in the Kirk of Schots, 21st of June, 1630, such were the presence and power of the Spirit to bless, that nearly five hundred had at that

very time a discernible change wrought on them, most of whom proved lively Christians afterwards. And this work was the sowing of the seed through Clidesdeal, so as many most eminent Christians in that country could date either conversion or some remarkable confirmation in their case from that day."

And what were the prominent features of these works of God as described by him? Precisely such, I answer, as were witnessed under the ministry of the Apostles; as were seen in various parts of Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; as marked the revivals under the labours of Whitefield, Davies, Samuel Blair, Edwards, and the Tennents; as have been developed in every genuine revival of religion since, and such as we have been endeavouring to record. "Would you debate the efficacious power," says Fleming, "of that which should melt and

dissolve the hardest stone? And may you not wonder what a power this must be which will make men melt and dissolve in tears, who through their life were known to be most obdured and stupid? Some were called in youth, and even at a tender age, little beyond their infancy; and others in their old age, who were made to confess, after seventy years resisting of the gospel, that for the first time they had felt its saving power." And of such rare trophies of grace, as Fleming calls them, may I not turn to the fruits of the Spirit in New Brunswick, and say, in the language of Paul to the Corinthians, "and such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."*

My last testimonial to the agency of

* 1 Cor. vi. 11.

God in this work is *the experience of those who profess to be its subjects.*

“We speak what we do know and testify what we have” felt, is the language of many, touching this work of the Spirit. And if the mouths of two or three competent witnesses are usually deemed sufficient to establish the truth of a contested matter in a court of justice, in the case before us we have the testimony of hundreds. I grant that the heart is deceitful, and that some may have mistaken the stirrings of passion for the operations of grace. But can it be so with all? Can any sober-minded unbeliever in that city persuade either himself or others, that these five or six hundred souls who unite in ascribing their change to the power of God, are either hypocrites or self-deceivers? In some, the reformation of their life, of their deportment and conversation; the change in their reading, associations,

and habits, is as obvious as the difference between midnight and noon.

They tell us that they are so changed in conduct, because they are not less changed in their feelings, their taste, and their principles: that the vices which they once loved they now hate, and the virtues which they once hated they now love: that all this has been wrought in them, not by the persuasion of men, but the power of God: that they have new views of his character, of his word, and of his ordinances: and shall we charge them with misrepresentation? They tell us, moreover, that they have a sense of the evil of sin, of the corruption of their hearts, which could not be the result of meditation, of reading, or the mere instructions of men. To convince them of the contrary would be to persuade them out of their consciousness.

And while to the eye of sense the outward change in some is less marked on account of their previous habits of virtue,

yet in very many others it has been like the Ethiopian changing his skin, like the transforming of the lion to the lamb. And whatever may be the opinions of others, for myself, I could as easily renounce my belief of the existence of the Holy Spirit, as to doubt that these new creatures have been made the subjects of his renovation. I could as well doubt that the heavens above us are "the work of God's fingers," as that the changes which I have witnessed in this revival of religion have been wrought by God.

Pausing, then, at this point in our remarks, to avoid prolixity, may we not hope that enough has been written to furnish some instructive hints in relation to revivals of religion.

First, with respect to *their true nature*. That they are not among the inventions of the day, mere commotions among the people, in which a little religion looms large and fills a wide space in the public

eye without resulting in much positive good. Such an impression, I hope, does not remain on the mind of any after all that God has been doing to remove it. I have endeavoured to show that such events are not peculiar to any age of the church, not even to the economy of the gospel, but were known before it. And if through human infirmity they have sometimes been attended with excesses of feeling, and departures from sobriety and good order, at which the wicked have mocked, as they did on the day of Pentecost, ascribing the operations of the Spirit to the excitement of wine, yet "what is the chaff to the wheat?" What is this small incidental evil, to counterbalance so much direct and positive good? True religion is the same in every age, in every individual, in all places, and among all nations. It comes from the same author, and operates in the same way. The only difference between that which results from a

revival, and that produced by the Spirit at other times, consists in the amount, not the quality; like that between the harvest of a husbandman who gathers thirty fold at one time, and a hundred fold of the same kind of grain at another. So far, therefore, as any person desires to have religion promoted at all, he must desire a revival. The same love for souls which would lead him to pray for the conversion of a few, would constrain him to pray for the conversion of many. We conclude, then, that revivals of religion can have in reality no enemies in Christendom, or in the world, but such as are enemies to religion itself.

Another useful hint furnished by the review we have taken, *has reference to the means.*

If the product of a revival be the same in its nature as are the fruits of the Spirit at other and ordinary times, then it is easy to infer that there is room for no

other than the same means or agencies in both; that there is no such difference between these Pentecostal ingatherings and others, that each calls for measures peculiar to itself; or that the kind of evangelical effort which is requisite in the one case, will not be suitable in the other. But as I observed, in relation to the homogeneous nature of true religion itself, that it is the same at all times and under all circumstances, so I may say of the means for promoting it. These likewise, in all ages of the church, have been essentially the same; and whether the spiritual harvest be small or great, depends, under God, not upon changing the mode or the kind of our culture, so much as upon the amount. As the apostle would express the sentiment, He that soweth sparingly, must expect to reap sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully may hope for a bountiful reward.*

* 2 Cor. ix. 6.

A sovereign Providence, it is true, sometimes withholds the blessing and frustrates the labours of the most industrious and faithful husbandman. The success of the apostles themselves, was not in all places equal; being received with kindness and their ministry highly honoured of the Spirit in one city, while they suffered a repulse and persecution in another. And thus, while the Holy Spirit was coming down like copious showers, and every drop seemed pregnant with fertility, we found no occasion for any new methods of preparing the ground to receive them. We saw nothing to cause a change in our views of the scriptural doctrines of the utter inability of the sinner to renew himself, and of his dependence on the Spirit of God; nothing in the most efficient and best directed efforts of men, to make us think more highly of human agency and less of divine. On the other hand, every successive conver-

sion was a new confirmation of what was found to be no less true in the days of Paul; that after our most diligent planting and watering, the increase must come from God. In all that occurred during this season of mercy, we were only gathering fresh testimony from day to day; that "the sword of the Spirit is the word of God," and that "by the foolishness of preaching he saves them that believe." And thus the only *visible* engine of power was the gospel as exhibited from the pulpit, in the social assembly, in the meeting of inquiry, and from house to house. On each, and on all these methods of imparting his truth, its great author set the seal of his manifest approbation. The public preaching of the word was eminently blessed. The faithful and affectionate conversation of Christians in private, was also greatly subservient to the carrying forward of this glorious work.

But among the subordinate agencies, I

feel myself called upon specially to notice the meeting for inquirers: a means of advancing a revival of religion which, I am aware, like the thing itself, has been obnoxious to suspicion and reproach from its perversion and injudicious use. But so has the ministry been abused, so have the sacraments, so has almost every good institution, civil, as well as religious. But with us, the meeting for inquirers grew out of our exigencies. As in a time of a raging epidemic, when the number of patients is too great or too widely scattered to enable the physician to visit each in person at his own house, they are brought together to receive that counsel, which he wants time to give them in private, so in the season of a revival, when scores have become awakened to a sense of their spiritual maladies, and all need the same instruction, I know of nothing I confess, in the common expedient of inviting all such to convene and hear the

gospel in a private social assembly, which ought to excite the apprehensions of the friends of good order and good doctrine, or of the good "old ways" of dispensing it. And yet here is the whole theory of a meeting for inquirers. All that is right or wrong, sound or unsound, is comprehended in what I have written, and with respect to such meetings among ourselves, I add, that they were signally blessed. They were one efficient method of calling out and introducing to the pastor and session of the church from day to day, those who had been struggling with their convictions in secret, and who needed only the humble agency of some spiritual helper, to point them to the only Refuge from sin. But if, after all, there should be deemed any thing dubious in the character and tendency of such means, I am perfectly willing to let the tree be judged by its fruits; to stake their reputation

upon their results, wherever they have been judiciously tried.

Again, we have seen in what God wrought in this city, *the happy effects of a revival of religion upon the church*. And how much are such seasons to be desired for the sake of Christians themselves! What surprising changes it effects in them, their feelings, their enjoyment, their living! How their religious sensibilities are kindled, their gifts called into exercise, and their usefulness promoted! How manifest the difference now between a Christian sleeping, and a Christian awake; between a lamp neglected, and a lamp trimmed! What siftings of experience, self-scrutiny! What carefulness, what clearing of themselves, yea, what indignation against sin, yea, what fear of committing it, yea, what vehement desire for usefulness, yea, what zeal, yea, what holy revenge!* What a season for

* 2 Cor. vii. 11.

distinguishing between the wise virgins and the foolish, between professors of religion and its possessors! Now the "bushel" is taken off, and their light put upon a candlestick, and it *so* shines before men, that God is glorified in the eyes of all who see it. Now there is a reviving of personal, domestic, and public religion. That timidity and fear of man, which operated like a palsy on their moral powers are now overcome, and every man discovers that he has his own "proper gift" of God, and can turn it to some good account: that if he is too ignorant, and too weak, and too wicked to do any thing of himself, God can do much by him. If he cannot say in his own name, "Ephphatha"* to the deaf, God can nevertheless speak it by him. In a word, there is no season like a revival of religion to expound to church officers and church members, the

* Mark, vii. 34.

meaning of the emblematic agency of Aaron and Hur, in assisting Moses in the conflict with Amalek. They now become the most efficient helpers to the ministry, by their sympathies, their prayers, their co-operation, their visits among the inquiring, their admonition of the careless, and more especially by their godly example. Such, then, are the author and some of the results of the late revival in New Brunswick. The review would easily suggest many monitions to be offered by one who has sustained the relation of the writer to those for whom this sketch has been prepared.

In view of the heart's deceitfulness, it is hard to suppress the fear that some may be still unchanged in character, though changed in their relation; that they may have mistaken sympathy with others for distress on account of themselves, that they may have "gone to warfare at their own charges." On such then, as indulge

the hope that they have been renewed, he would affectionately enjoin the closest watchfulness and self-examination, not at this time only, but habitually till the end of their life. Remember, moreover, that if you fall, professor of religion, like Achan the son of Zerah, you “perish not alone in your iniquity.” Your relapse will cause dismay and disaster in proportion to your influence. The cause of religion is concerned, the honour of your Saviour, the reputation of revivals, as well as your own, are all more or less involved. And God only knows how deep and lasting the wound on the body of the Saviour, which is caused by the going back of a single individual. Be “watchful then, be sober, be vigilant,” and always abounding in the use of those means of grace, through which you may be upheld from falling. Let those enemies of the cross be disappointed who have predicted your disgrace, and who have

said in their hearts, "Aha, aha, so would we have it." Thus, while you feel the peril of your own souls, have compassion on the souls of others, and instead of strengthening the hands of the wicked, (already too strong) and encouraging their hearts, see to it, young convert, that while you live, you adorn your profession and exhibit with increasing lustre, the glory of that grace, of which you trust you have been made a monument.

But are there not numbers, who have passed through these scenes of mercy and power unblessed? My remarks would be left unfinished, if I omitted the admonition which it administers to them. And while many stout and lofty hearts have been humbled, theirs remain like the nether millstone still. While some who were their companions in unbelief have turned, and their faces are now towards Zion; these are moving onward in the same broad way, only with accelerated pro-

gress. Perhaps, too, their example and society may have helped to support the quailing hearts of others, or they may have done more and worse than this,— may have used direct effort to hedge up their way and oppose them.

When they discovered in the solemn countenance, perhaps of a wife, or of a child, or of a husband or friend, a starting tear, or some symptoms of incipient repentance, they passed it lightly by as a matter of jest; made themselves merry at that which made their friends so sorrowful. These wished to go to the place of prayer, but were discouraged. The cry of “wildfire,” and “fanaticism,” and “extravagance,” was raised, and they were thereby prevented. It was an afflictive trial at first, but they yielded. Perhaps they were overawed, or the peace of the household rendered it necessary.

Now their convictions have subsided, and the opposer has the awful satisfaction

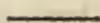
of finding them just as unconcerned, and insensible to their danger as he is himself. And suppose, that here their religious career terminates. The Holy Spirit withdraws finally and for ever. Both spend the remnant of their life, and pass to the judgment seat, in the same condition of heart in which this revival has left them. And what a prospect for sinners who have trampled upon the blood of the covenant, and done despite to the Spirit of grace! And what a retribution is before them! The one has permitted himself to be scoffed or menaced out of his seriousness, and the other has been the cruel instrument of doing it.

And now, as their reward for being thus united in rejecting the mercy of the Saviour, should they persevere, they have the miserable consolation of not being divided in perdition. That troubled companion was floating and struggling, and was making towards the life-boat that

was let down and set in motion to save them both from destruction; but the one would neither enter it himself, nor suffer the other, and now they enjoy the dreadful satisfaction of sinking and perishing together. And among my readers, are there any whose case I have been describing, and whose conscience should render the service of a Nathan, and apply this representation? I could desire that there were none, I could hope there are none. But should there be a single individual, whose sin has been thus set before him, may this admonition, much more painful to give than to receive, be made the Spirit's instrument to reach his heart. That you have been spared in all this daring opposition to God, is a token that he is waiting to be gracious. To have resisted all the influences and motives and means which are combined and press upon the conscience in such a revival of religion, evinces an obduracy of heart which

alarms your friends, if it do not disturb yourself. But the grace of God which has been bringing salvation to so many, may yet appear unto you. Your sin is exceeding great, but I trust it is not too great to be forgiven. You have done much to bring upon yourself swift destruction; but you are still in the land of means, and of hope, and of promise. You might have well provoked the Holy Spirit to withdraw from you for ever, and then your perdition had been certain. We trust that you have not done this yet. He has left you for a season; but he may return. Then call on him for help without delay. For as there is no other name whereby you may be saved, than the name of Jesus; so is there no other influence but the Spirit's, which can change your heart, overcome its obduracy, and bring you to Jesus for salvation.

III.



“WHY SHOULD THE WORK CEASE?”

THE opinion has widely obtained, that the condition of a church in the time of a revival is forced and unnatural; rather a state of feverish heat than of healthy, natural warmth; that her efforts in those seasons are, so to speak, more spasmodic than voluntary, and though they may result in some good, they are likewise the occasion of much incidental evil; and hence it is that many regard the short duration of a revival as one of its most desirable attributes.

It becomes a question then of serious import—is this opinion correct?—are the causes by which a work of grace is so

often arrested, of such a nature, that they are not to be counteracted or removed?

In the remarks that follow, it is intended to offer a few suggestions to those professed friends of revivals, who entertain sentiments on this subject by which their agency in these interesting seasons is often materially embarrassed. And should a revival cease, I would ask, *because as some imagine every such work is in its nature short-lived or ephemeral?* I readily concede that there are certain adjuncts or concomitants of a revival, which must of necessity soon pass away. There is a stirring up of the animal feelings, in which we always find a mixture more or less of the carnal with the spiritual. There is now a concurrence of new circumstances all which combine to excite and exalt the man above himself, and from which elevation there is a constant gravitating tendency that will sooner or later bring him down to his natural or consti-

tutional level. And again, there are changes in the habits and engagements of many of its zealous promoters, which must continue but for a time; as for example, a partial suspension of their ordinary business, or a temporary withdrawing from their secular callings. When the Spirit is shed down with power, and the harvest becomes so plenteous that the labourers are too few to gather it, it is not a time to confer with flesh and blood, and coolly to calculate consequences. The revived Christian will obey the impulse of his awakened heart, and leave his farm, and shop, and profession, no matter how urgent or lucrative, and if the emergency require it, will give his time and capacities to the work of the Lord. He can no more resist the importunity of the times, than he could refuse to render help to the drowning. But that such a man should persevere long in these Levitical labours, to the entire neglect of his worldly affairs,

while like Israel in the desert, he should rely upon God to provide for his family, would not be an exercise of faith. Some simple-hearted excellent men, supposing themselves called to the work of evangelists, have made the experiment, but the Lord did not supply them with quails, nor did the heavens rain bread. No, in the progress of such a work among a people, there may be, and must be, an eventual relaxation of a certain species of extraordinary effort, but the question arises, must the work itself therefore cease? Is there such a connexion between its advancement, and this particular kind or amount of exertion, that like the wheel and the water, when the one ceases to flow, the other cannot revolve? Does this follow from any known law of Divine Providence? Is it fixed by any secret decree? Is it sanctioned by experience? Or is there any solid foundation for the prevailing sentiment, that such seasons

must be followed by apathy, inactivity, and declension? "Why not aim," says Dr. Alexander, "at having a continuous, lively state of piety, and an unceasing progress in the conversion of the impenitent, without these dreadful seasons of deadness, and indifference? Why may we not hope for such a state of increasing prosperity in the church, that revivals shall be no longer needed, or if you prefer the expression, when there shall be a perpetual revival? Richard Baxter's congregation seems for many years to have approximated to what is here supposed, and perhaps that of John Brown of Haddington, and that of Dr. Romaine of London." Such moreover has been the delightful state of a few congregations in our own country; that of the late Dr. Payson of Portland, for example, who in answer to a letter of inquiry on this subject from a friend, observes—"I have been connected with this society about

thirteen years ; we have had no general revival, but there has been some religious attention during the whole period of my ministry ; the smallest number added to the church in any one year is eighteen, the largest eighty-four ; annual average—forty.” This, in the acceptation of the writer just quoted, might well be called “a perpetual revival.” May not the same happy state of continued prosperity be enjoyed by others, and if such a work be wrought by God, and not by man, is it not presumptuous, and almost profane, to limit its duration or prescribe our own laws ; to say that it must have its ebb and flow like the tide ? And is it not time that this mistake should be corrected ? Have not many in the church been quite too ready to adopt a sentiment which suits so well their sinful love of repose ? And while some of the agencies which seem to have been blessed in advancing it may be suspended, yet should the church, in the

exercise of strong faith still continue that amount of effort which her imperative duty requires, is it presumptuous to believe, that the Spirit would not be withdrawn? If his special influences did not "come down as showers," they might distil as dew, and the hill of Zion be preserved in perpetual verdure.

Or is theirs a better solution, who resolve the ceasing of a work of grace *into the sovereignty of God*; who imagine that the hinderance to its farther progress is on his part, and the way hedged up by a secret decree? Beyond a doubt the sovereignty of God is concerned in every event that is occurring in the universe, in overruling evil, as well as in causing good, in permitting a revival to cease, as in carrying it onward. But can any one believe, that in both of these cases, he is in the same sense the primary cause of the result? A bright meridian sun, shedding down its rays upon a garden of roses, and a pool

of stagnant water, in the former case, calls forth exhalations which fill the air with the sweetest perfume, and in the latter impregnates it with pestilence and death. Is the sun therefore in the same sense the cause of them both ?

“I went by the field of the slothful,” and found it just as Solomon describes it, “all grown over with thorns, the nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.”* From surveying the desolations without I entered his mean and dilapidated dwelling to inquire the cause—why his fields were so unproductive, his estate gone to decay, his children squalid, and sordid, and half famished for food ? Alas ! he responds as he turns himself upon his bed, it is the sovereignty of God ; it is all the result of a mysterious Providence ; the fulfilment of his righteous decrees. “It is vain to

* Prov. xxiv. 30, 31.

rise up early, to sit up late, and to eat the bread"* of economy, if the Lord has not decreed to add his blessing. And all this is very true; this sluggard's doctrine is sound, he is orthodox in theory, his mistake is only in the application; he makes one use of it, and God designs another and exactly the opposite. Its proper effect would be to encourage, not to discourage, make him industrious, and not slothful; it was the very ground on which he should have laboured in hope, not sat down in despair. Divine sovereignty was concerned in his poverty like the sun in drawing out those pestilential exhalations.

But let us examine this case a little more particularly, catechise this misguided predestinarian on the other part of his creed, and see how far his faith will stand the test prescribed by the apostle James. Whether he shows his faith without his

* Ps. cxxvii. 2.

works, or by his works. And has he taken the common sense precaution against the failure of his harvest by seasonable cultivation, did he plant and sow as Solomon enjoins—prepare his ground, and make a wise selection of seed? Not at all. He thinks it vain to “rise up early and sit up late,” without the Lord’s blessing; but he has not ascertained by experiment, whether it is just as vain to labour with his blessing: he has been depending on the sovereignty of God to fill his empty granaries, cultivate his fields, and feed his children; but he has not inquired whether the result would have been the same had he put his trust in God, while he was using his prescribed means for doing it himself. And do any respond that the folly I am describing is altogether imaginary—that men never act nor argue so absurdly in relation to their worldly interests? True, but thousands do about their spiritual. It is the very essence of

that old saw with which so many are accustomed to parry appeals to their conscience—"If we are to be saved, we shall be saved, do what we will; and if we are to be lost, we shall be lost, do what we can." It is moreover the sad perversion of truth by some good men, who ascribe the ceasing of a work of grace to God's sovereignty, while they are doing little or nothing to promote it. And it is an extreme to which they are often urged, who presume to be wise above the Scriptures, and virtually disregard one revealed truth, because they cannot reconcile it with another. Thus, who can question that the grace, and power, and sovereignty of God are eminently concerned in every genuine revival of religion, whether we can make the fact agree with the agency of man or not? And yet the very last question for any labourer in such a work to ask is, what God's hidden purposes are? And least of all is he to

cease his efforts, for fear that these unrevealed decrees may be against him. What have we to do with the secret counsels of God, as a rule of action in a revival, whether he designs it to go forward or to cease? What is our duty, but to keep ourselves faithfully engaged within the narrow limits of that humble agency to which he has appointed us, and leave the issue with him?

When, in a time of serious apprehension from Benhadad king of Syria, Joash king of Israel came to the prophet Elisha for instruction, he was told to take a bow and arrows and shoot one eastward, and the king obeyed; whereupon the prophet exclaimed,—“The arrow of the Lord’s deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria, for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek till thou hast consumed them.”* Here the king of Israel sup-

* 2 Kings. xiii.

poses that he now receives an unequivocal promise of a complete overthrow of his enemies, endorsed by the sovereignty of God. But notice what instructions follow. The king is now commanded to take the arrows and smite upon the ground, which he did thrice, and stayed. Whereupon the grieved and disappointed prophet, immediately subjoins, "thou shouldst have smitten five, or six times, then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst conquered it, whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice." And what, the astonished and mortified Joash might have well inquired, what has this to do with my triumph over the king of Syria? If the result has been secured by the purposes of God, how can this be affected by any agency of mine, whether I had smitten three times or six? The very question virtually which we hear so often asked concerning God's control, and our freedom, both of which are just as capable of being proved, as is

his eternity or omnipresence, and just as easily understood. The smiting with the arrows, enables us to see the simple fact of a union of divine and human agency, as in a figure, yet it does not aid us in the least to comprehend and explain the connexion.

Thus the Lord's prophet believed in the sovereignty of God, and he knew that whether the king of Israel should slay many Syrians, or few, depended not upon the emblematic action, but upon the will of God. He, nevertheless, declared, that his triumph would be only partial, and that the imperfection of his victory must be ascribed entirely to himself:—that had he smitten five, or six times, with the arrows, he had then smitten the Syrians till he had consumed them, but that now he might see the measure of his success, in what he had done to shadow it forth.

The key to this parabolical act is easily applied. His ceasing to smite, evinced

the weakness of his faith, which would betray itself in the feebleness of his efforts, as well as in the smallness of their number. And here, in the duty of the king of Israel in carrying on his work, the church has a pleasant exhibition of what God requires of them, in promoting theirs. Instead of pausing to solve a mystery which perplexes Gabriel's mind not less than ours, how a divine decree should seem to be suspended upon such a capricious agency as man's, their concern is with the arrows. And if in the progress of a revival, there are any tokens of a decline, let the church conscientiously inquire, how far the ceasing of the work, is connected with their Joash-like backwardness in smiting, or their ceasing to use the appointed means.

I ask once more, should the agents in such a work cease, *for want of motives, or of due encouragement, in labouring to promote it?* And to meet this general in-

quiry, by recurring to the instructive case described in the foregoing outline—what do we discover, in the nature or results of such a work, which should have forbidden its friends to desire, or to hope for its continuance? Among those who remain still wedded to their sins, are there any whose conversion would be thought more difficult than was that of some, who are now indulging its joys? We have seen the eyes of many that were born in blindness opened. Is there any Bartimeus left whose case is more formidable? Imagine that in anticipation of this visit of mercy, the most discerning Christian had ventured to foretell who would be the subjects of grace, would his predictions have corresponded with the result? Does not every revival leave some in unbelief, who would have been selected by most as likely to be among its first subjects—those apparent borderers on the kingdom, for example, who have long seemed to be so

near, that the gentlest impulse, it was thought, would be sufficient to bring them in; while others have been taken, who had long been regarded as vessels of wrath fitted for destruction; whom many looked for judgments and perdition to overtake, but none ever dreamed of their conversion. The displays of God's discriminating grace, have caused many to marvel; and should it please him to return and carry on his work, till the rest should be gathered, could it cause us to marvel more? And why should not such a hope be indulged? Can the rod that has so often smitten the rock, and called forth its waters, do it no longer? Does the arm that has wrought such wonders ever become weary? Is prayer less acceptable to him who then heard it, or are means less suited to be the channels of mercy? The heralds of redeeming love were not long since going out into the lanes, and the highways, and hedges, with the cheer-

ing invitation of the Saviour—"Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." And have these moving scriptures lost their power? Are the cup, and the bread, and the waters of salvation less gratuitous than they were?—less freely and generously proffered? And can any doubter say, wherein his attitude towards a throne of grace is so changed, that he may not plead with the same importunity, and ask for mercies with the same holy boldness as in those months of rejoicing whose memory is so grateful? Do we hear him say, that the Spirit has withdrawn, and that the means of grace are no longer operative. And why? Because that measure of influences which were purchased for this vineyard of Zion has been expended—or that prayer for more will not be heard? Are the souls that remain unconverted, less dear to the Sa-

viour—or are his sympathies less tender for their salvation? Do such inquiries need a reply—and is there no other ground of discouragement than these? Then why sit down like pensive Elijah under his juniper shade in despair, when perhaps a wife, or a child, a parent, or a husband is among the ransomed of the Lord, from whom he is less disposed to withhold his regenerating grace than we are to ask it. “What meanest thou, O sleeper, arise and call upon thy God.” With the apparent ceasing of the work of grace, has there not been a corresponding abatement of Christian zeal, a relaxation in labour, a turning aside to the cares and follies of the world? “I have somewhat against thee,” says the Saviour to the church at Ephesus, “because thou hast left thy first love.” Thou hast lost thy tenderness of conscience, thy affectionate zeal, thy persevering diligence. And has not this Saviour somewhat against thee, young con-

vert—and art thou not a partaker in the sin of grieving the Spirit? Hast thou not left thy first love? The ardour of thy first love for himself, for his people, his service, his word, and his ordinances? Do not thy closet, thy Bible, and thy pious brethren and companions testify against thee? And yet, though thou hast well nigh forgotten thy Saviour, he still remembers thee. He remembers “the love of thine espousals,” and he is ready to restore thee to his favour. “Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do thy first works.” Regain thy first faith, exercise thy first repentance, be as faithful, as humble, as zealous, as earnest for the salvation of others as at first, and then mayest thou confidently hope to be restored to thy first success in labour, and recover thy lost joys.

Have I told you, says the Saviour to his desponding church, that my purposes

of grace are all accomplished? and are the operations of my Spirit so fitful and transient, that they cannot abide with you? Do I cherish any secret decree which should hinder you from labouring in hope? or have the displays of my love and power among you been adapted to discourage and fill you with despondency? Then prove me, disciple; let my fidelity to my promises, and my love, be brought to a test. "Bring ye all the tithes into the store-house." Do your whole duty; discharge your covenant obligations; be as faithful in conversation, as importunate in prayer, as exemplary in your life, as strong in your faith, as your duty demands: and prove me herewith, "whether the Sun of Righteousness shall decline, and the good work among you cease?"

And are not the foregoing considerations suited to rebuke the too common infirmity of the church in prescribing limits to the operations of grace; of hedging

up, as it were, the ways of the Saviour by obstacles of their own devising? And why should "the hope of Israel and the Saviour thereof" be regarded as a "stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside for the night,"* instead of abiding in the gift of a continued blessing? And why should wondering Christians ascend to heaven for causes of the ceasing of a work of grace, or descend into the deep, when they are nigh them, and might easily be understood? If the fire seem to decline and threaten to go out, let not the troubled householder go to his books of philosophy for instruction on the theory of combustion, while, in the meantime, he is withholding the requisite fuel. Nor let any friend of Zion's prosperity be too hasty in ascribing the stinted measure of her graces to the sovereignty of God, so long as he is ceasing to use the means of obtaining more. The fire may

* Jer. xiv. 8.

refuse to burn, it is true, no matter what the supply of fuel, or however great the care of keeping it alive; and so may a work of grace decline, and ultimately cease, let the Nehemiahs of the church do what they please to arrest it; but *then* is the time to ascribe it to the hinderance of the Lord, and not *till* then, when they have done all that his word prescribes as their duty in carrying it forward.

The suggestions which have been made, moreover, should serve to commend the Apostle's excellent caution to the Corinthians, to "judge nothing before the time."* Not to be hasty or premature either in adopting our opinions, or of making them known; a monition to which we may well take heed, in pronouncing on a work of grace, whether upon its origin, its progress, or its termination. Much that we see in such a season is shrouded in impenetrable mystery; for while there are

* 1 Cor. iv. 5.

some attributes and results of such a work, which are manifest to all, and as inseparable from it, as are light and heat from the sun, and which we need not fear to proclaim, yet it is not so with all. The way by which the Lord is pleased to operate, is not unfrequently as secret, as it is sovereign, and the instrument is as hidden as the agent: and we can only admire, and adore, and be still, and know that it is God. "Many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus, the prophet, and none of them were cleansed, saving Naaman, the Syrian."* Of the two that are grinding at a mill, or toiling in the same field, the one is often taken, and the other left. The young man not far from the kingdom, approaches no nearer, and is only an almost Christian still; while the kingdom itself has seemed to suffer violence, and to be taken by force of some who had ceased almost to be objects of hope.

* Luke iv. 27.

Nor let the church judge before the time, in regard to any omens of evil, or imagine the Lord to be withdrawn, because, like desponding Israel, "they see not the signs."* The whirlwind, and earthquake, and fire, by which the Spirit made himself known in the commencement of the work, may have passed by, yet the power of God may remain in the soft and subdued voice. But while many are looking for those more imposing demonstrations, such as were seen in the multiplied convocations, the crowded assembly, the increasing throng of inquirers, they may neglect to search for those silent, and not less powerful operations, in which the Spirit may be still carrying the work forward.

Nor should any be too ready to magnify the incidental evils, which evince the infirmity of the agents in such a work as

* 1 Kings xix. 11—13.

has been described; lend a partial ear to disparaging rumours, or seem to delight in hearing of the relapse of this or that professed convert, as tending to bring dishonour upon the revival, and render men incredulous. It makes the case of the unbeliever no better, should their predictions of apostasy, and of the drawing back of professed converts, be all fulfilled. But that the net when cast at such seasons, gathers more to be "cast away" than at others, is not sustained by fact. "In looking back upon the revivals of ten or fifteen years, with which I have been acquainted and personally concerned," says the Rev. Asahel Nettleton, (whose labours for a time were blessed, perhaps, without a parallel in this country) "and comparing the whole number admitted to the church at these seasons, with those who came in at other times, when there was no general revival, I think the former outshine the latter. I do believe," he adds, "that the

number of excommunications from the latter are more than double the former.”

In revolving such a question as we have been considering, let those who are enjoying the blessings of reviving grace, ponder well the consequences, should such a work cease. Ah! had it never been begun among them, what, to many now rejoicing in hope, had been the consequences then? And should the Spirit be withdrawn, what dreadful desolation must inevitably follow? God forbid that we should here commit the sin of limiting the Almighty, which we have rebuked in others, by asserting that the salvation of a people is suspended upon a revival of religion. God can fertilize his Zion with the dew, as well as with the shower; can gather in his people one by one, as well as by scores. And yet without seeking first to know what is his secret purpose concerning the manner of his working, the church may be admon-

ished by the emblem of the prophet Elisha. They may hope for results at such a season, when by the more abundant zeal and faith and labours of the church the ground is "smitten six times," than at others, when they smite but thrice. In a word, would they have great things, they must expect great things, and must labour for them, and then, according to the promise of the Saviour, their blessing will be great or small, according to their faith.

But whatsoever the heart deviseth or the hand findeth to do, for the salvation of others, let it be done with all diligence, for the night cometh, when the toils of his militant state must cease. A little while, and these scenes of labour and conflict will be ended. The darkness that now hangs over the grave will have been penetrated, and if faithful unto death, we shall have become inhabitants of that world of

light and blessedness, where faith and hope shall end in fruition.

Where on a green and flowery mount,
Our weary souls shall sit,
And with transporting joys recount
The labours of our feet.

There to fulfil his sweet commands,
Our speedy feet shall move ;
No sin shall clog our winged zeal,
Or cool our burning love.

And while our faith enjoys this sight,
We long to leave our clay ;
And wish thy fiery chariots, Lord,
To bear our souls away.

APPENDIX.

A.

I have remarked that the appointment of a day of fasting and prayer, to be observed by the Presbytery at New Brunswick, was made at their semi-annual meeting, held in the village of Boundbrook. It is worthy of particular notice, that not long after the descent of the Spirit upon the former place, there were indications of his special presence in the latter. But soon the Lord appeared in this congregation, in no less glory and greatness than had been witnessed among ourselves. The pastor who had been lending his assistance in gathering the harvest in New Brunswick, was called to thrust in the sickle at home. Though this visit of the Spirit was at that season of the year when the labours of his people were most severe and engrossing, yet these did not

prevent them from giving due attention to the paramount interests of the soul. The general characteristics of the work in this congregation, the means employed, and the results, were similar to those which have been described in the "Outline." In a reply to a letter of inquiry on this interesting subject, the pastor observes—"The first apparent seriousness in our congregation, was about the 10th of June. A number of our people had visited New Brunswick, and had there received impressions which resulted in their hopeful conversion. But the work may be said to have commenced with us in an especial manner, about the 20th of the month, when the Presbytery met for fasting and prayer in that city, agreeably to their appointment at their meeting in April. I urged my people to go and attend the meetings that were in progress among yours. On the day of humiliation numbers were impressed. In the eve-

ning of that day, I lectured, and the word was received with very great interest. From this time the work advanced with increasing power. On the 6th, 7th and 8th days of July, we had a protracted meeting, which was attended by very large assemblies, and which appeared to be signally blessed. During the months of July and August, in addition to the services of the Sabbath, I lectured to some part of the congregation every evening in the week ; and, although it was in a very busy season of the year, yet our places of worship were thronged. Our farmers could work hard all day, and when evening came, could repair to the house of God with delight. Their spiritual interests were so absorbing and their feelings so much aroused, that they seemed to be incapable of bodily fatigue. None manifested heaviness, or seemed to feel it. Oh ! these were days of rejoicing, both in heaven as well as on earth ; which I love

to review, as well as to pray and hope for their recurrence.

“At our communion on the first Sabbath in September, we admitted on the profession of their faith, 102. Of this number, 37 were publicly baptized. On the first Sabbath in December we admitted 17 more, seven of whom received the ordinance of baptism. The whole number gathered into the church as the fruits of this spiritual harvest were 125. Our meetings were continued through the autumn, and three evenings of the week during the winter. The influence of such a visit of the Spirit was exceedingly happy upon the church, in reviving their graces, quickening them in the path of obedience, and in making them more devout and watchful and heavenly minded. It was happy in its effect upon many households, in turning “the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers;”

in reclaiming the wicked, and in promoting order, sobriety and every good cause. But the full results of such a visit of mercy to our congregation, will never be known until the joyous scenes, in which you and I have been such happy co-workers, shall be reviewed, and the whole truth revealed by the light of eternity."

I would only add, that the cloud of heavenly influence did not rest here, but continued moving and expanding, till many of the adjacent villages enjoyed a time of refreshing. To the churches of Somerville, of Plainfield and Piscataway in particular, the accessions were great.

B.

THE question has been frequently asked, whether there was any "perceptible connexion" between the religious state of New Brunswick in 1837, and the extraordinary events which preceded, by which the people had been greatly affected. Whether the severe visit of cholera in 1832, and the tremendous tornado which did so much mischief in 1835, did not tend to prepare the inhabitants, by generating a sort of sensibility to fear, or a peculiar susceptibility of impression from what is suited to alarm, so as to enable us to account for the revival, without being obliged to resort for explanation to supernatural causes. And how far these events were adapted to *terrify and cause the strongest emotions* will be attested by

thousands, who retain them in fresh remembrance. They are written indelibly upon their memory, nor do they need any other record to preserve them from oblivion. Yes, it was a period in the history of New Brunswick not soon to be forgotten, when in 1832 the angel of destruction seemed to stand between heaven and earth, with a sword in his hand stretched out over that city, and when so many hearts quailed for fear of impending death which then menaced them, in the form of an awful and most mysterious pestilence. That was a reign of terror in this place, when you could reciprocate the salutations of the morning with a neighbour in the market place, and see his hearse pass by in the twilight of the evening. Here was an enemy of our life so new and uncontrollable, that we soon ceased to speculate about second causes, but our quickened conscience led us backward to the first. Thus we came together in the solemn as-

sembly ; made confession of our sins, and recorded our vows ; but as to the moral results, these were such as in most cases have been found to follow those excitements which are occasioned by fear.

“ As from the wing the sky no scar retains,
The parted wave no furrow from the keel,”

so transient were the impressions on many hearts of water, caused by a national judgment in which this usually healthful city was severely a sufferer. While death appeared to be so near and so inevitable, many bowed the knee in private ; repaired to the house of prayer ; and paid a formal respect to holy things, which they were not wont to do before. But as the special object of alarm was withdrawn, this “ sorrow of the world ” subsided. *When Pharoah saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart.* The worldling returned to his business with all his former idolatry. The luxurious and intemperate went back to their cups and excess. The profane swearer and Sab-

bath-breaker became equally reckless of their sins and their danger; and it happened unto these, so lately trembling transgressors, according to the true proverb, "*the sow that was washed returned to her wallowing in the mire.*"

The visitation of 1835, though of a very different character, was not less monitory in itself, nor more fruitful in its moral results. To attempt an adequate description of the scene which was then exhibited, or of the feelings produced in those who were present to witness it, is utterly vain. None but those who saw it, can conceive the terror of that moment; when the portentous cloud, freighted with its deadly missiles, gleaned and accumulated in its destructive course, paused as it approached, as if to gather strength for the onset which it was about to make upon our city. Next the tumult which followed, the mingled sounds of the roaring element, the crash of our dwellings

and the shrieks of their terrified inmates. And then the appalling prospect which met the eye, when we first ventured to direct it towards the path of the destroyer, and saw the dreadful work accomplished in his rapid transition. What heaps of ruin! What utter devastation of the works of taste, and skill, and convenience, and necessity! How many were bereft of a habitation in a moment, and the savings of many years borne away on the wings of the whirlwind! And what must be the sacrifice of life! Surely, we thought, that beneath such wide-spread ruin, there must be found scores of the mangled and dying and dead. And how many now began, like the mother of Sisera, to look out at the door or the window, or to search the lanes and the streets for an absent child or a husband, a wife or some member of the household; while imagination was bringing before the mind, his fractured limbs, his bloody visage, or his

lifeless body. And how many bosoms were almost bursting with the swell of this anticipated anguish, during the painful period of suspense which preceded a discovery of the truth. That such a prostration of our dwellings, and the whirling of their heaviest materials with tremendous violence through the city, should not have strewed the tempest's path with the corpses of very many, seemed impossible: and our first inquiries were for the wounded and the dead. Nor had we been much disappointed, if the wailings of mourners, as we passed along, had furnished a parallel to the work of the angel in Egypt, who, in going through the land in a single night, left one dead in each habitation. But, while such wrath as this was expected and deserved, the Lord remembered mercy. While one hand was "lifted up" to show how little he valued our substance, the other was extended to convince us how much he

regarded our lives. Among the notices of this impressive event, which were made at the time and which have been preserved, I find the following, which, I am persuaded, a portion of those for whom this sketch is made will be pleased to possess, in some accessible place and convenient form. It was written by an eye witness of the desolation, immediately after its occurrence. The memorable day of this visitation, was Friday, the 19th of June, when, in the words of the writer, "about 5 o'clock P. M., a tornado swept through the city from the western suburbs and down to the river, and in its resistless course destroying a vast amount of property, to which, we regret to say, must be added a number of lives. It was first seen approaching from the west; and from the clouds of dust, shingles, &c., that rose in the air, was supposed by the inhabitants of the lower and central parts of the city to proceed from a heavy fire, and

the alarm bells were rung; but the flying of roofs, rafters and trees, in every direction, soon taught them that a hurricane was rushing with awful violence through the town, leaving a complete mass of ruins to mark its track. Where it first commenced we cannot correctly learn, but it is said in the vicinity or north of Trenton: and report says that many of the farm houses and barns northward of the turnpike, are blown down or otherwise injured. Having struck several houses a little distance from the town, it reached the hill, where it remained apparently fixed for a minute or two, presenting the appearance of a pillar of fire, its base resting on the earth, and its top reaching a mass of black clouds. It then took an eastern course, threatening Albany and Church streets, but suddenly changing its direction, swept across the town lot towards the dwellings in that vicinity, tearing the roofs off of some, making literal wrecks of the barns and

out-houses, and either uprooting or twisting off the largest trees, in some instances carrying the latter twenty or thirty paces. It then crossed to the buildings at the head of Paterson, Liberty, Bayard and Schureman streets, unroofing one house and levelling another, burying beneath its falling timbers, one of our respectable citizens and his eldest son. Both were extricated a short time after, the son in a dying state, in which he lingered until 9 o'clock last night, when death relieved him from his sufferings; the father seriously, but, we believe, not dangerously hurt. A young lad about eight years of age was also killed near this spot, a rafter from the blacksmith's shop having struck him immediately above the eyes, and almost severed his head. A female was found dead under a building in Schureman street. The tornado now swept with increased force across George street, down Liberty, Schureman, and New

streets, crossing Nelson to Burnet street, a quarter of a mile in distance, down to the river, unroofing or tearing off the tops of the houses, and sweeping the lower doors and windows from their fastenings. Schureman and Liberty streets, from top to bottom, may be said to be a complete mass of ruins, as is likewise part of Burnet street.

“The loss to our citizens in the destruction of buildings and other property, must be immense. Various estimates place it at from *one hundred thousand to one hundred and fifty thousand dollars*; and as upwards of one hundred and twenty dwellings, besides stores, storehouses, &c. are either greatly damaged or entirely ruined, we scarcely think the latter sum will exceed the amount of loss.

“Since the above was written we have ascertained that the tornado first commenced on the Millstone, within a few miles of Griggstown, a gentleman near

the spot having his attention attracted to two dark masses of clouds, rapidly approaching each other, and which, furiously commingling, rushed to the earth. Suddenly bounding again into the air, a lofty black column was left resting on the earth, surmounting which appeared a mass of clouds in the wildest commotion. For a minute or two the pillar seemed fixed to the spot, the next dashed to the southeast with inconceivable speed, though, as far as we can learn, doing but little damage until arrived in the vicinity of Middlebush, where, gathering power, it prostrated the stoutest forest trees. It first struck some buildings between Middlebush and Six Mile Run, which were slightly injured, then passed on, unroofing a building in one place, or levelling it to the ground in another, prostrating fences and trees, spreading desolation and ruin on its way to our city. Just before its descent upon us, the column remained for some minutes,

observing a rapid rotatory motion, and carrying up in concentric circles, beams, boards and branches of trees, which it threw to a great height in the air, until they fell beyond the sphere of its influence, or retained in air, were forced with terrible violence either against or through the houses in the city, or swept before it across the river. Having made such parts of the city through which the tornado passed a complete wreck, it crossed the river, and struck the woods, uprooting some of the largest trees, twisting off the body of others, and throwing several 40 and 50 yards from the places where they stood. In one place it appears to have played for some time, in a circle of about 100 feet, tearing up the grass, and leaving the earth completely bare of any signs of vegetation. It now changed its direction, taking again to the woods in a course about north east until near Piscatawaytown, where its course was east. Here

rushing with terrible violence it swept over the devoted village, leaving scarcely a house untouched, and strewing the road and adjacent fields with the ruins. Immediately after the tornado had passed, the village displayed a horrible scene; the isolated situation of the houses and barns, presenting a fair mark to its terrible ravages. In some places we marked whole orchards prostrate, and the trees carried over the road into the fields opposite.

“Having gone through the village, it took a direct course for Amboy, slightly touching a house on the south-western edge of the town, and passed into the bay, throwing an immense body of water into the air, and striking, it is said, the southerly point of Staten Island, when it was lost sight of.

“No pen, or at least it would require a more able one than ours, can do justice to the passage of the tornado through

our town. It would seem as if the spirits of the air had gathered in the pride of their might, and in their wrath would sweep the besom of destruction over our devoted people, leaving naught but death and desolation to mark their track. None but an eye witness can conceive the awful scene: houses toppling and crashing to the ground, or completely riven, flying through the streets, and scattered in every direction—heavy beams and rafters driven with fearful impetus into and through the houses—women and children, frantic, screaming for aid—and men, who had been strangers to fear, with blanched cheeks running in breathless haste to seek shelter from the impending danger—while with a deep roar like that of a heavy, unremitted cannonade, or a vast building in one sheet of flame, the tornado sped upon its way, sucking up every thing within reach of

its horrible vortex. The intense noise which accompanied it, may be inferred from the fact, that many who had sought refuge in the lower apartments of the buildings partly destroyed, were unaware of their loss until the hurricane had passed; they heard nothing but its awful roar. Many of the escapes from death are wonderful; we have not time or space to recount a tithe of them. Men who threw themselves upon the ground, were lifted up and thrown violently down; while others, who were clinging to posts or other supports with the desperate strength which fear calls into action, were torn from them and dashed to the earth. One lad, 12 years old, was carried from his father's house at the head of New street, down to the wharf, a distance of half a mile, passing through a tree, the branches of which he attempted to grasp, with no other injury than a sprained wrist. Heavy

oak beams, 18 feet long, and pieces of roof 10 feet square and upward, were blown across the river, and fell into the woods, which were strewed with boards, window sashes, door panels, tile, shingles, bedding, wearing apparel, and glass. Boards, shingles, &c., are said to have fallen on Staten Island. The trees are broken, shivered and uprooted on the opposite side for a thousand yards along its banks, and the vegetation is scathed as if a flame had been quickly passed over it. The loss is great, though not so heavy as at first supposed; \$100,000, it is said, will cover the damages."

The following notes, which were made at the time by a well-known gentleman of science, are subjoined as worthy of constituting a part of the record of this distressing phenomenon.

"At about half past five o'clock, while on board the steamboat Napoleon, which

was then six or seven miles from New Brunswick, my attention was called to a singular appearance in a north-westerly direction. A very dense and low cloud stretched itself along for some distance like a dark curtain, which, near the centre, was dipping towards the earth in the form of a funnel or inverted cone, and was gradually uniting with another cone, whose basis rested exactly on the surface. At one extremity of this dark cloud was a smaller one, having a flecculent appearance, which soon also became conical in its shape, but which did not descend to the earth. These cones seemed to have been formed by gyratory or whirling movements, produced by currents of wind passing in opposite directions, viz. from the north-west and south. In a few minutes the well defined character of these united cones was changed, and there arose a column, spreading at the top, and which

had every appearance of the eruption of a volcano. A vast body of smoke, as it seemed, rose up and again descended, producing a sort of rolling, upward and downward movement. The opinion now became general that it proceeded from the burning of some large building, which it was thought had been caused by lightning, a vivid flash or two of which had preceded the formation of the cones. This idea, however, was soon abandoned, for in a few minutes the dense column was dissipated, and we could distinctly observe the gyratory motion of wind, as was proved by the dust and fragments of timber which were carried upward in its course. Onward it swept, with incalculable velocity, until another black and well defined cone was again formed, which remained stationary for a short time and then, as before, gave place to the eruptive appearance and gyratory movement before mentioned. These al-

ternations continued, although much less distinctly characterized, until the whole vanished from our view. On approaching New Brunswick, we witnessed the devastation which the tornado had occasioned; but it was in the city alone that its mighty power was fully exhibited.

“From the facts which I have collected, there can be no doubt that the cone above described, was formed about three miles nearly west of New Brunswick, and that it remained stationary, that is, revolving on its axis, for some minutes. But when the second movement occurred, a dense cloud overshadowed the city. Slight, but distinct explosions, as of the *bluffing* of sails, were heard from the column. The heat of the air became oppressive; volumes of smoke and even flames were thought to be issuing forth and rolling over in various directions. Under these circumstances the idea of an extensive and rapid conflagration, would naturally

be suggested. Immediately the alarm bells were rung, the firemen repaired to their engines; but while all eyes were directed to the black and terrible column which was approaching, apparently toward the head of Albany street, no one could fix upon the exact spot to which effort should be directed. This state of uncertainty, however, did not long continue, for soon a tremendous rush of wind passed through the city, and in a moment the dense column which had been an object of so much wonder and dread, stood on the opposite bank of the river, as it were, rallying for another desolating march.

“The force of the wind, in its passage through the city, it would be idle to calculate. Men were thrown down, buildings of wood and brick were unroofed and even completely demolished, large trees were torn up by the roots and scattered promiscuously in all directions. The

air was filled with dust and missiles of various kinds. The crash of the timbers was scarcely audible in consequence of the roaring of the tornado. Many of the inhabitants who had watched the appearance of the column, were apprised of the coming danger and fled to the cellars of their dwellings for safety, and, in several cases, where the doors of the buildings were firmly closed, they suffered little or no injury, though in the midst of destruction.

“Thus far the course of the tornado had been a little north of east, a direction which it pursued to the village of Piscataway, about three miles distant, and which it almost totally destroyed; then inclining somewhat to the south, it held an easterly course, passing over Amboy and thence to the ocean. It terminated, as I have seen it stated, by a fall of ice or hail, and by a great commotion of the water. The fall of ice is said also to have character-

ized its commencement, but on this subject I have not yet obtained authentic information.

“I will at present add only a few words concerning the cause of this, at least in our latitude, very remarkable occurrence. The formation of the inverted cone or funnel, so often mentioned, was undoubtedly produced by the currents of air from opposite directions. But whether these currents were caused by a vacuum arising from the electrical discharges from the cloud, or whether the supposed vacuum was the *result* of these currents, it is, perhaps, impossible to determine. But if this funnel may be compared to that of the tube which forms the water-spout—and it certainly bore a close resemblance to that phenomenon—we may suppose that there was a current established from the earth to the cloud. This upward movement is indeed indicated by the occurrences which succeeded, and by many facts which have

since been ascertained. Among these may be mentioned the unroofing of those houses into which the air rushed through the doors and windows, and the lodgement of these roofs nearly in front of the houses to which they belonged. This upward movement was distinctly visible at a distance, and it was this which gave the phenomenon the appearance of a volcanic eruption. At the same time, also, there was a gyratory motion to which the destruction produced by the tornado is to be chiefly ascribed. This motion appeared to us on board the *Napoleon*, to succeed the upward movement just mentioned and characterized the progress of the tornado until it passed from our view. This gyratory motion is also evident from the appearances which are presented every where in New Brunswick and its vicinity. According to my measurement, the track of the tornado through the city did not exceed three hundred yards, although the circle seems to have been

much larger where the cone was first formed, and, also, on the opposite side of the river, where the column is supposed again to have rested. Near the circumference of the supposed circles, was the line of the most destructive force of the wind. Several buildings in their centres, remain altogether uninjured.

“I cannot subscribe to the opinion which has been advanced that the violence of the wind was produced by two currents making towards each other, and having at the same time an onward motion. If there was not a gyratory as well as an upward motion, I must discredit my eyesight, and be blind to the appearances which are every where presented, both in this city and its vicinity. Having had a fine opportunity of witnessing the phenomenon in its most interesting stages, and of studying its effects, it is perhaps more difficult for me to form a satisfactory theory on the subject, than it is for those who were less favourably situated. I

shall therefore still continue the humble and frequently too much neglected business of collecting facts, in the hope that they may hereafter lead to views more worthy of notice."

As a suitable recognition of the mercy of God in our preservation, the mayor of the city recommended that a day of humiliation and prayer be observed, in which the inhabitants concurred with a becoming unanimity. The evidences of a special Providence were so marked in the present instance, that none who were accustomed to look for divine interposition in any case, could fail to see and acknowledge it in this. We do not call it a miraculous display of mercy, and yet the circumstances, by means of which the lives of many were protected, are marvellous. It was providential that the immense cloudy column, so much resembling the smoke and cinders of a great conflagration, should have been mistaken. It served to rally in a place of safety, many who were at this time

occupied on the tops of houses or in those shops of slight construction, that, in a few minutes, would have crushed them in their ruins. How many lives were moreover preserved by the din of voices and engines, proceeding from the northern part of the city, as if it were an expedient of Providence, to decoy the people from the southern, which was so soon to be made "a ruinous heap." And again, that it did not occur in the night. That to an event so terrific by day, was not added the horror of the gloom and peril of night, like that which occurred on the 11th of August, 1772, in the island of Java, "when every thing was destroyed for forty miles round, houses were demolished, plantations buried in the earth, fifteen hundred head of cattle were destroyed, and about two thousand human beings were in a moment, plunged into the gulf of eternity." Had the tornado been sent at night, instead of the day, how many would have slept their last sleep, and their

mangled remains been disinterred in the morning from the rubbish under which they had been overwhelmed! Moreover, that it was not winter, when we are aware that such meteoric phenomena rarely occur; but in a season of the year when from the mildness of the weather—the exposure of an open habitation could be endured with so little danger to the health, and comparatively little discomfort. And yet, though the hand of God was so visible in this awful event, it is not known to the writer that a moral impression was made upon a single person which proved permanent, and resulted in their reformation. While in these successive providences was heard the voice of one crying in the ears of the impenitent, and which “made them tingle”—yet, in no instance of which we were apprized, did they prove spiritually beneficial: much less is there cause for supposing that in any sense, they were instrumental in “preparing the way of the Lord” in the revival of 1837.



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