

HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS

RELATING TO

REMARKABLE PERIODS

OF THE

SUCCESS OF THE GOSPEL.

COMPILED BY

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CONTINUATION TO THE PRESENT TIME;

BY

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KELSO.

KELSO:

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cond Sabbath, were pleased to take in their pockets a number of Reynold's Compassionate Address, and to leave one in every ale-house. And farther to animate them in this good work, some of "Dr Woodward's Account of the Societies for Reformation" are to be distributed among the principal inhabitants. About the same time, it happened that a recruiting serjeant came into our assembly. The second sermon he heard me preach, from Jerem. viii. 6, was made the happy means of his deep and serious impressions, for he cried out with inexpressible agony, "What have I done?" From that day he continued with us three weeks, and in all that interval gave us the most satisfying evidences of a true conversion, so that we took him to communion the day before he left us, at his own earnest request, and to the edification and joy of the whole church, though in doing it so speedily, we entirely departed from our constant practice, but the uncommon nature of the case, rendered the deviation both safe and profitable. His account of his past life much resembles Colonel Gardiner's before his happy change. He is a native of Scotland, his parents were pious, but both dead. He very soon broke from the restraints of a religious education, for he was but fourteen when he was first enlisted, and has been in the army 26 years, in which time he has seen his regiment almost destroyed twice over. His dangers and deliverances, by sea and land, have been remarkable, but he himself unaffected by all, as well as by all the sermons he ever heard in the three kingdoms. He used to think it was not possible for anything to touch his heart; but divine grace has done it, and never have I seen, in so short a time, so thorough a change. His wife is a very sensible woman, a native also of Scotland, and who retains the good principles of her education. She has of late been more thoughtful about her eternal interests, partly owing to her having been among some methodists in Ireland, and since that has been more earnest with her husband to reform from his swearing, drunkenness, &c., which made her so much his burthen, that he thought of leaving her, as unable to bear her serious discourse any longer. But now they are mutually delightful and profitable to each other beyond expression. It was the very morning after he had been with us at the Lord's table, that an order came for his going with his recruits to Exeter. We parted with prayer. A most tender parting it was. He fell upon my neck, overcome with a sense of his obligations to me, blessing God he ever entered the town, or saw my face, &c. &c.

ACCOUNTS FROM VIRGINIA.

From a Letter to the Rev. Mr —, in Scotland, from the Rev. Mr WRIGHT in Virginia, 20th January 1757.

Blessed be God, we have had more of the power of God last spring, summer, and autumn, than ever. This I told Mr Adams. But since I wrote him, there have been some remarkable revivings in Messrs Davies's, and Henry's, and mine. The former had it chiefly among the negroes, the other among the youth, and in my congregation I may say it was general, and eminently among young people. When I went off to the synod on the first Thursday of September, which was the Thursday after my sacrament, I don't know that I left above two cold and unaffected hearts in my congregation. I had another sacrament on the third Sabbath of November, which was

a day of special outpouring of the spirit, as far as I could judge. Christ triumphed among us. This was my third sacrament. Last July twelvemonth, I had about a hundred new communicants; last August about eighty or ninety added; and last November between thirty and forty new ones. At my first I had not quite six young people, but at my last I had between fifty and sixty. Do tell this to the young in Scotland, that the wild Virginians may shame them. Alas, when I lived there, I loved play more than the cross of Christ. There are many particular instances of convictions very remarkable, but I cannot take time to give you the account of them now. But this I would remark, that convictions were more deep and pungent last year than formerly, and that more got clear views of salvation this summer, than I have known since I came to Virginia before.

I sent you from Newark the commencement of a sermon of my good friend Mr Davenport's, which I know will be cheering and supporting to you.¹ There seems to be something of a religious stir among the negroes in my congregation, and among little children. I believe I have five or six of the former, who have even now a title to heaven. They received lately a present of addresses done by Mr Fawcett of Kidderminster, Testaments, Bibles, &c., which animates them much to learn to read. A good number of ministers in this country entered into a concert of prayer on Saturday evening and Sabbath morning, not only for the church in general, but for one another in particular. Will you not get a goodly number to join?

*From a Letter to the Publisher from the same Hand,
January 21, 1757.*

I shall not transcribe what I sent enclosed to the Rev. Mr —, but, having nothing else to add, shall give some account of convictions since last spring, which I esteem very remarkable.

A man attended on my ministrations ever since I came here, who was all his lifetime uncommonly serious, but had been tainted by the leaven of the Quakers to such a degree, that he could not join with us; neither had his children baptised. This summer he seemed frequently affected; but upon the preaching of two Quakers within ten miles, he was uncommonly affected, which made me think that he was irrecoverably confirmed in that awful heresy. But, blessed be God, the Sabbath before the August sacrament, the snare was broken and his eyes opened. Upon a week day he told me, that he was fully convinced the eucharist and baptism were of Divine institution, and earnestly begged me to try his qualifications for the table. Upon inquiring into his religious exercises, I was well satisfied with his piety. He told me he endeavoured after the light within, till he found himself nothing but darkness, deadness, and everything horrible. It would cheer

¹ Of Mr Davenport, see Hist. Coll., pp. 357, 391, &c. The sermon here mentioned was preached by Mr Davenport at the opening of the Synod of New York, met at Philadelphia, October 1, 1755. In the preface by Mr Gilbert Tennent and Mr Richard Treat, are the following words: "Let not the pious author be offended with our freedom, in saying, that his life adds weight to this discourse; for the latter is but a copy of the former. Nor should it be forgotten, that the gracious God, who delights to honour the humble and sincere in heart, gave manifest tokens of his special presence when this discourse was delivered,—not only the speaker, but divers of the hearers, both ministers and people, being solemnly affected."

your heart to hear him talk. I have now six children to baptize for him.

Another instance is a young woman that was awakened last spring, but did not discover it till the beginning of November. Her husband, to whom she was married last September, had very uneasy thoughts about her turning a Presbyterian. About two weeks before our November sacrament, she told him she must come and talk to me, which shocked him much. Upon discoursing with me, I thought I had not seen any instance of deeper distress for many years. Forgetting God so long, slighting Christ when relations highly prized him, stifling convictions when she had them, seemed to her unpardonable sins. But her ignorance of God in consequence of that, and aversion to duty, she thought rendered her case quite helpless and hopeless; and which added to her distress, she said her husband was averse to religion. After I had spoke to her case, I told her the danger of her husband being her worst enemy unless converted, and exhorted her, to cry mightily to God for his conversion, which she promised to do. After she got home, he was in a rage, and authoritatively insisted upon hearing every word I said to her; but she refused, because he was in such a rage. According to directions, she cried night and day for him, and the Lord inclined his ear and answered prayers; for her conduct and distress preached to his conscience, in so much, that the Saturday and Sunday before the sacrament he neither could eat nor sleep, telling her that she was holy and a lover of God, but he was a beast and infinitely worse. On the Sabbath morning she got ready to go to the sacrament, not doubting of his going till the very time, and then to her surprise found that he resolved against it. Upon which she asked the reason. He told her that he was too vile to appear at that holy place. He said it killed him at once. Upon which she and he wept together, and she begged him to go, and at last prevailed. After we dismissed in the evening, I saw him leaning upon her shoulder, pale as death, with the tears running in abundance. A few days after, I sent him a letter directing him to pray in the family morning and evening; but he put it off from day to day, till one morning he heard negroes at prayer, which struck him with such conviction, that he told his wife he durst not venture out of doors till they prayed together, which exceedingly rejoiced her; but he told her she must pray, for he was a beast and no man. Upon which they kneeled, but she could not get words, and cried bitterly, in which he heartily joined, and when they were tired weeping, they got up, humbled and ashamed.

I shall mention one instance more. The husband of one of my last summer new communicants, a young rake, the Saturday night before our last sacrament, after they got home, asked her what made all the people look as solemn as if they were afraid of thunder and lightning; and added he could not see how people could weep and look so. She told him that if ever he saw his danger, felt his misery and the power of the word of God, he could not help being just so. Upon which he answered, that he must have some strange new light before he could possibly be so. But on Sunday he was so struck, that he was like to roar out in the meeting-house. Ever since, he is a constant bearer, and has set up prayer in his family.

Dear Sir, pray for me and mine, and engage as

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many advocates as you can among the children of Zion, in the same charitable work.

COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY, &c.

Extract of a Letter from the Rev. Mr A. B., Feb. 12, 1757.

As I have had more fatigue, so I have had more comfort in my little society this winter than ever. There is at present, and has been for some time, more of a religious concern among the youth here than ever I have known; some of the most careless and thoughtless are considerably reformed, and others solemnly concerned, what they shall do to be saved.

From a Letter to the Publisher from the Rev. Mr DAVIES' Hanover, June 3. 1757.

It is with great pleasure, and ardent gratitude to God and man, that I hear of so many and such generous societies formed, in various parts, for promoting Christian knowledge, by distributing good books, especially as Hanover, the favourite spot of the globe to me, has been so highly distinguished with so large a share of this generous charity, and my unworthy hand has had the honour of conveying it. I really hope it has had very good effects already, especially among the poor African slaves, whom I have considered as the most proper objects of it. In their names and my own, I heartily thank the society in Glasgow for their liberal and well-chosen benefaction. Mr Richardson, now a resident in my family, and myself will divide them according to direction, and endeavour to distribute them to the best advantage.

Nothing remarkable has happened of late as to the state of religion here, but what you have seen in my letters to my English correspondents. But my honest friend Mr Henry has had remarkable success last winter among the young people in his congregation. No less than seventeen of them were struck to the heart by one occasional evening lecture; and he tells me he has great hopes of the perseverance of sundry of them, and that hardly any of them appear discouraging.

But the best news that perhaps I ever heard in my life, I lately received from my favourite friend, Mr Samuel Finley, minister of Nottingham, Pennsylvania, tutor of a large academy, and one of the trustees of the college of New Jersey. I had sent him some extracts from my British letters, giving an account of the revival of religion in sundry parts of England, particularly among the clergy; in answer to which he writes thus:

— April 16, 1757.—“I greatly rejoice that our Lord Jesus has put it in my power to make you a large compensation for the good news you sent me. God has done great things for us. Our glorious Redeemer has poured out his holy spirit upon the students at our college,” (*i. e.* the college of New Jersey), “not one of all who were present excepted; and they were in number sixty. The whole house, say my correspondents, was a Bochim. Mr William Tennent, who was on the spot, says he ‘never saw any in that case, who had more clear views of God, themselves, their defects, their impotence, and misery, than they had in general—that there never was, he believes, in any house, more genuine sor-