

LECTURES
ON
THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION.

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REVIVAL OF RELIGION.

BY

MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

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PREFACE.

THE very term, "Revival of Religion," we are perfectly aware, causes some persons to recoil with a species of instinctive antipathy, as if it inevitably brought before their minds nothing but images of wild and extravagant fanaticism. In such a state of mental antipathy it is manifestly impossible that they can be benefited by the perusal of writings on a subject the mere designation of which arouses at once within them such a formidable array of hostile and stubborn prejudices. Yet this is equally unnecessary and unfair,—it is unjust at once to the subject and to themselves. It would be surely more becoming to suspend their judgment till they had attempted to obtain somewhat of a more clear and accurate conception of the matter, discarding prejudice and listening to reason. It would be well that they would ask themselves what the phrase really means, whether in itself, or in its common application, before allowing a mere name to startle them from their propriety. The phrase may not be very happily chosen; but the true question is, what meaning is it intended to convey? Unquestionably it seems to imply, by the very terms, the awakening into more active and living energy those religious feelings, habits, and principles, which previously existed, but which had sunk into comparative dormancy. But this is not all its meaning. It is employed also to indicate the conversion of sinners, who were previously in a state of irreligion altogether. The word *revival* is not certainly applicable, in its strict etymological import, to the *conversion* of a sinner; and so far its technical use, so to speak, has a tendency to mislead, or at least to

leave unexpressed a portion of what is meant. When a single sinner is brought under the power of Divine grace, and conversion, or a saving change, takes place in him, which may be known to no person except his immediate relations, and the clergyman whose ministrations he attends, this can of course attract no attention, and if it did, would not be called *a revival*. If, on the other hand, one who had formerly been so converted, but had relapsed into a careless state, and in a great measure resumed his worldly habits, should he awakened out of this dangerous situation of the soul, quickened and renewed in the spirit of his mind, neither would this be called *a revival*, although it actually was so, in the strict meaning of the term. But, if *many* of either or both of such cases should occur, in one vicinity, and about the same time, so as to become evident to public observation, this would be termed a revival, in the common acceptation of that phrase. When, therefore, men use or hear the term, *a revival of religion*, it ought to be understood to mean, '*an unusual manifestation of the power of the grace of God in convincing and converting careless sinners, and in quickening and increasing the faith and piety of believers.*'

It will at once be seen that a revival, thus defined, may be viewed in two distinctly different aspects, as manifested in these two different classes of people; while its own essential character is one and the same in both. It is the life-giving, light-imparting, quickening, regenerating, and sanctifying energy of the Holy Spirit, converting the hardened sinner, and reclaiming the backsliding or dormant Christian. No one who deserves the name of a Christian will deny that these are the operations peculiarly ascribed in the Scriptures to the agency of the Holy Spirit, and that it is the duty of all to pray for, and the privilege of all to expect them in answer to earnest believing prayer,—nay, that there cannot be Christianity without them, and that they have taken place, and are taking place in innumerable individual instances. Why then should one who admits so much shrink back appalled from the occurrence of that in many contemporaneous

instances, which he hails and believes with joy when individually experienced? Besides, when we turn to the Bible itself, we read of some very memorable instances of even thousands converted simultaneously, which surely is sufficient warrant for us to believe that such events are perfectly consistent with the economy of salvation. And not only so, but even the most guarded and cautious interpretation of the language of prophecy leads us to expect a still more glorious effusion of the Holy Spirit in. "the latter days so that all Scripture gives the most direct and authoritative countenance to revivals of religion, understood as above defined, according to their true scriptural import.

'But many of these so-styled revivals are either altogether unreal, or are so mingled with errors, and lead to such abuses, that it is very dangerous to give them any countenance this is the language very often used by those who would rather discourage than openly oppose them. No person, who knows what he is doing, can wish to encourage a fatal delusion. No person who wishes to see sinners converted, and believers quickened, can possibly wish any thing to take place which could only tend to harden the sinner, and lull the backslider into irreclaimable security. But "what is the chaff to the wheat?" Why discourage a *real* revival, lest you should encourage a counterfeit? Why not rather study the subject thoroughly, by the teaching of God's Word, and the recorded experience of God's servants, till you are able to distinguish between the real and the counterfeit, and then act according to your better knowledge in promoting the true and checking the delusive? This certainly ought to be the procedure adopted by all wise and honest men, in a matter of such vital importance to the interests of religion. Nor can any truly candid and intelligent man long permit his mind to be biassed by such a fallacious and sophistical mode of reasoning as that which would condemn the use of any thing because it is liable to abuse. Every thing is so; but chiefly, if not solely, because man is a fallen and depraved being, prone to pervert and abuse, to his own ruin,

the most precious gift of God. So that, in fact, this sophistical argument employed against revivals amounts to this absurdity,—that man should not seek a revival, just because he needs it. It cannot be necessary to waste time in further refutation of a fallacy which refutes itself.

In most cases men can readily separate the abuses from the uses of any thing, and thereby arrive at somewhat of a true estimate of its real value; but the subject of revivals is generally thought to be so mysterious, that no such discriminating process can be followed, and therefore no such estimate obtained. This, too, is a fallacious notion. A revival, rightly understood, is essentially the same as conversion in one of its aspects, and recalling the backslider in another,—and these are in their essence of necessity identical. Be the vital principle in man what it may, restoration from disease or lethargy can be nothing else but the same vital principle awakened into renewed healthful energy. And as conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit, calling the soul from the death of sin into the life of holiness, so reclaiming the lapsed converts can be nothing else but a repetition of the same vivifying call, raising the soul from its dangerous lethargy, and evoking anew the holy energies of regenerated life. There is, therefore, in reality exactly the same mysteriousness in a revival which there is in conversion. Each is the work of the Holy Spirit, convincing, converting, and sanctifying the soul of man, according to His own infinite wisdom and almighty power, and in a manner inscrutable to human reason. When we have reached this point of the investigation, we are compelled to stop, to bend reverently, and to adore the wonder-working and unsearchable God. But whatsoever either in a conversion or a revival is comparatively adventitious,—whatsoever may be viewed as merely adjunctive, tending naturally either to retard, bias, or promote the effects, —whatsoever belongs essentially to human nature, and may be explained or reasoned upon according to the known laws of mental phenomena,—these fall legitimately within the province of inquiry, and may,

without profanity, be made the subject of animadversion, if done with becoming gravity and seriousness of spirit.

Admitting then, conversion and revival to be essentially the same as regards the Divine Agent, the effect intended, and the final result, the first and the chief distinction between them consists in a revival being the manifestation, to an unusual degree, of power and extent, of the converting energy of the Holy Spirit. When this takes place in any district, it is not strange that men should feel their souls overawed, as in the more than usually manifested presence of the Lord God Almighty—not strange that the conscience-stricken sinner should crouch in trembling terror, as in the near view of his omniscient Judge—not strange if the cold and worldly formalist, who had been permitting the deadening lethargy of sin to lull him into a fatal repose, should start appalled, as if he heard a voice saying to him, “Awake, O sleeper, and call upon thy God”—not strange if, in each and all of these cases, the minds of men should be shaken by a sudden and a strong excitement, impelling them to much which could not have been caused by a single unobserved conversion. A considerable degree of excitement in such circumstances is perfectly inevitable; and yet it must be evident, that it is not essential either to the conversion of a sinner, or to the re-awakening of a dormant believer, but has its source chiefly, if not entirely, in the sympathetic principle of human nature, which is so powerful in producing, increasing, and extending emotions of every kind. The existence of excitement, therefore, is no proof whatever of the genuineness of conversion, or of a revival; and remains fairly within the province of human reason to enquire into its cause, to ascertain its nature, and to guide, modify, or check its progress, without in the very slightest degree presuming to intermeddle with the sacred and mysterious work of the Holy Spirit. At the same time the existence of excitement furnishes no just ground of distrusting the reality of conversion; for it is scarcely possible to imagine so great a change effected within the soul as that termed

in Scripture being "born anew," "called from death to life," "from darkness into marvellous light," without producing in the person by whom it is experienced a thrill of, new, strange, and rapturous emotion throughout his entire frame, such as no words can ever adequately describe. The only thing, therefore, to be determined is, whether the emotion, or excitement, be that arising from so great a change, or that produced by witnessing the emotion of others—whether it be the excitement of conversion, or of mere sympathy; and when that has been as accurately ascertained as possible, it is our duty either reverently to own the Spirit's work, or prudently to guide and control what is, as yet, merely human in its origin and operations.

We said, what is, *as yet*, merely human; because we have no wish to conceal or undervalue the influence of sympathy, not only in deepening a good impression, but even in tending to produce it. It is well known, that to assume the attitude, the gestures, and the general aspect of any passion or emotion, merely in semblance, has a great tendency to produce, and often does produce, the reality. And, as God influences and moves the mind of man according to its nature, it is at least possible that He may employ the sympathetic principle to awaken, mollify, and prepare the mind for the great and real change of conversion. This we would regard as the *use* of sympathy, and the excitement which it causes. But the utmost effect of sympathy, and the highest degree of excitement which it could produce, is not conversion, and could never of itself effect or even approach conversion. *That* is a divine work, which the Holy Spirit can alone accomplish. It is, therefore, erroneous and dangerous in the extreme, to mistake mere sympathetic excitement, assuming the semblance, and even giving rise to some of the results of conversion, for conversion itself. That is the *abuse* of religious sympathy. And as religious sympathy, and the excitement which it produces, necessarily accompany a revival, and yet are adventitious adjuncts, belonging essentially to human nature, and explicable by its laws, we regard them as entirely within the province of human rea-

son, to be approved or disapproved, regulated or checked, according to the dictates of a sound judgment, guided by the word of God and the light of experience.

In this point all men, and peculiarly young men, are prone to err. Because a genuine revival generally produces, and almost necessarily must produce, some, or even considerable excitement, they rashly conclude that it is essential to a revival, and therefore they too often attempt to produce the revival, by taking every possible means likely to produce excitement. Into this error they would not be so liable to fall, if they would more closely investigate the matter, both in its own nature, to ascertain what is truly essential and what merely adventitious, and according to what is recorded of it in the Bible, where they will find no warrant for making mechanical arrangements calculated to awaken sympathetic excitement in the mind, with the view of producing conversion. Undoubtedly it is possible to awaken a very high degree of excitement, which sympathy will speedily heighten and extend incalculably, by a well-concerted arrangement, and by the use of fervid declamation, on topics of a peculiarly arousing character; and it is *possible* that religious impressions may be made then, which it may please God to ripen into genuine conversion; but it is only what ought to be expected, if an attempt founded upon a principle so defective, and conducted on a scheme so erroneous, should be productive of many glaring abuses, calculated to grieve the Christian and delight the scoffer, and should rarely be honoured as instrumental in promoting the interests of pure and undefiled religion. Yet all such abuses prove nothing, except that those by whom they were planned and executed were grievously ignorant of the true nature and essential principles of a genuine revival. It ought to be distinctly understood and constantly held in remembrance, that excitement is not of the essence of conversion, and therefore not of the essence of a revival, these being essentially identical; that excitement may be the consequence of conversion, but cannot be the cause; that it cannot

with propriety be considered as even predisposing to conversion in any higher sense than as instrumental in removing that callous indifference of heart and mind, which is one of the main preventives of any serious and beneficial impression being made by the ordinary means of religious instruction; that the closest relation it can hold is that of a concomitant, in which it may naturally but not necessarily appear; that, in short, excitement is of a secondary and non-essential character, when viewed in connection either with the conversion of an individual, or with that more unusual and large manifestation of saving grace called a revival, and cannot be regarded, received, encouraged, and acted upon as primary and essential, without giving rise to errors and disorders of multitudinous form and character.

If a physician were so little acquainted with the true nature of the human frame, and the diseases to which it is liable, as constantly to mistake secondary symptoms for primary maladies, and regulate his treatment of patients accordingly, every intelligent person would certainly regard him as an ignorant empiric, and would place no confidence in his opinions and directions. In like manner, the man who so far mistakes the nature of conversion, or of revival, its more extended and simultaneously developed form, as to imagine excitement to be of its very essence, and should accordingly, in his sincere desire to promote the best interests of mankind, and the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, direct his whole efforts to the production of an intense religious excitement, he also might justly be regarded as one who, however zealous, was still deplorably ignorant of the true nature of conversion. And though God might, by His sovereign power, over-rule, and in His great mercy, and for His own name's sake, forgive all that was erroneous, and bless whatever was sound and right, in the honest though ill-informed and erring zeal of such a man, yet, as the wheat thus sown would bear but a small proportion to the tares, so the result would inevitably be a gleaning only of what was truly good, with a large proportion of what was absolutely

pernicious. It is because our American brethren have so frequently mistaken what is at most only concomitant, or merely adjunct or consequent, for what is essential to conversion, that they have fallen into such multifarious errors and abuses, in their zealous attempts to "get up" and "conduct" revivals.

There is something offensive to the mind of a sincere and humble Christian in the language commonly used respecting revivals. When we hear of, or read directions "howto produce or promote a revival," and "how to conduct a revival," we are apt to feel as if there was of necessity something profane, if not positively impious, in such language. It seems as if man were presuming to attempt, by his own devices and arrangements, to originate and guide the operations of the Holy Spirit, or entirely to supersede them. And indeed the rash expressions employed by ardent but injudicious friends of revivals, give too much room for an idea so revolting. Yet there is no real ground for such an idea, if the matter were viewed in the light in which we have been endeavouring to present it. If those who talk of the best methods of "promoting or conducting a revival," were to be asked to explain their meaning in the simplest and most direct terms, and were to do so, it would be found, either that they were totally ignorant of its true and essential nature, regarding it as nothing more than excitement deepened and diffused by sympathy, which, of course, they might succeed in producing and conducting; or, that while they held conversion to be the exclusive prerogative of the Holy Spirit, and totally beyond the reach of man to originate or direct, they were anxious to make the wisest and most energetic use of all the means of grace within their reach, hoping and most earnestly praying that the Holy Spirit would bless such instrumentality, and render it effectual in His own hand, in promoting the salvation of perishing sinners. In this latter view, there is nothing necessarily objectionable. No sane and intelligent Christian will deny, that even in the economy of grace, the result is not to be expected without the employment of the means. But the question arises,

“what means are to be employed?” and perhaps, also, “how much value is to be ascribed to the use of means?”

To the question, “what means are to be employed?” the direct answer is:—Those means which God himself has enjoined, and the sincere and faithful use of which he has promised to bless and render effectual. In every point of essential importance, the only safe directory is the word of God. Never can it be very safe to adopt any method not expressly commanded, or at least indirectly and by fair inference sanctioned, in the Holy Scriptures; while, to follow any measure opposed to, or condemned by that standard, can be productive of nothing but the most baneful consequences. Were this rule adopted, and rigidly adhered to, it would at once put an end to very many of the extravagant and offensive proceedings which have tended to cast an injurious shade of suspicion over the very name of revivals. We cannot afford space to follow up this rule and show its application to a number of questionable cases; and fortunately it is not necessary, both because every attentive and prayerful reader of the Bible may, without much risk of error, do it for himself, and because there are several very valuable and judicious treatises, written expressly for the purpose of giving directions concerning the means to be employed during periods of revival.

Of these it is impossible to name any that so powerfully demand the attention of the candid and thoughtful reader, as the work on Religious Affections by Jonathan Edwards,—that entitled *A Narrative of the Revival of Religion in New England, with Thoughts on that Revival*, by the same great Author; and Sprague’s *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*. At a time like the present, when the attention of the public is strongly directed to the subject of revivals of religion, it is of unspeakable importance to be able to refer to the writings of such a man as Edwards, equally distinguished as a pre-eminent philosopher, a profound divine, and a sincerely and practically pious Christian. The statements and the reasonings of such a man are alike suitable for the perusal of those who oppose and those who advocate the cause of re-

vivals of religion. The known integrity of his character places his statements beyond the reach of being lightly rejected, as unworthy of serious attention; and his celebrity as a mental philosopher makes it equally impossible for any man who values his own reputation, to dream of dismissing with a sneer, the clear and strong arguments brought forward by such a man. Those, therefore, who are opposed to revivals of religion, regarding the whole as merely a peculiar phasis of enthusiasm, would do themselves but justice and some credit, to say nothing at present of the subject, if they would carefully and solemnly peruse and re-peruse the above-named works of this great and good man, when they might find themselves constrained to admit, at the very least, that there was more in the matter than had hitherto met the eyes of their philosophy. On the other hand, those who admit the reality of revivals of religion, but are little acquainted with their true nature, and consequently feel themselves unable either to defend them in argument, or to aid in promoting them when they appear to be in operation, or to distinguish between a reality and a counterfeit, should lose no time in making themselves thoroughly acquainted with these inestimable works. Instead, therefore, of attempting to exhibit specific cases, with suitable rules and applications, we refer every candid and anxious inquirer to these truly philosophical and scriptural works, with the certainty that they will there obtain the very information which they need. For though a considerable period has elapsed since these works were first produced, their applicability to similar cases has not diminished. The nature of man may indeed assume aspects at one period somewhat different from those which it bore at another, but its elements remain always the same; and Time itself will grow old before the writings of Jonathan Edwards become obsolete.

The Lectures on Revivals of Religion by Dr. Sprague may also be consulted with great advantage by those who are earnestly asking the question, "what means are to be employed?" This calm, judicious, and well-timed work, written by a man of no little ability and thoroughly conversant with the subject of

which he treats, we regard as second to the corresponding treatise of Edwards alone, and decidedly superior to every other similar production which has yet appeared. It is indeed a work of great value, written in a clear and dispassionate, yet earnest and impressive manner, based upon and pervaded throughout by the principles and rules of the Bible; and therefore peculiarly fitted to direct the enquirer to the only safe rules of direction,—the sure oracles of the living God. The letters appended to the volume are also well deserving of perusal, though not all of equal merit. In them we have the testimony of twenty witnesses, ministers of six different denominations, all unhesitatingly asserting the reality of religious revivals, however they may be accompanied by or mixed with matter of a more questionable character; and the very censure which they express of some of the measures that have been adopted by less judicious men, not only tends rather to confirm than diminish our confidence in their testimony, but also, at the same time, furnishes some very striking exemplifications of the important truth, that the only means which can be safely and effectually employed, either as tending to produce or to promote a religious revival, are those which God himself has enjoined, and the sincere and faithful use of which he has promised to bless and render effectual.

To the question, “how much value is to be ascribed to the use of means?” the answer is equally direct; means are in themselves of no absolute value whatever. “Neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.” Not the less, on that account, however, is it the bounden duty of every man to make the most strenuous use of every means placed within his power, and commanded or sanctioned by the word of God. The employment of the means which God has commanded, and has promised to bless, appears at least to indicate an obedient will and a trusting heart. Now, the very essence of the fall consists in the rebelliousness of the will, and in the evil heart of unbelief. To whatsoever extent, therefore, men employ the means appointed by God, with sincere obedience of the will,

and simple and honest integrity of heart, they are to that extent either already on the path that leads to Zion, or at least with their faces thitherward,—they are, so far as we can judge, faithfully using the appointed means, and humbly waiting for “the promise of the Father.” Such an attitude, even human reason may see, is one naturally suitable for the reception of the promised blessing,—not as an efficient cause, tending of itself to produce that blessing, but as an indispensable condition, required by God, becoming in man, to which the blessing has been graciously promised, and which the Holy Spirit condescends to produce in the soul of man, with or without his consciousness, and to employ in his conversion. The means have in themselves no positive virtue, no absolute value, no efficient power; but the use of them is commanded by God, and has therefore the appearance, may have the reality of an act of obedience, if rendered with genuine integrity of will and heart, and not in the deceitful spirit of self-righteousness; but the mighty working of God’s Holy Spirit is alone the efficient cause of conversion. This view, rightly understood and constantly felt, would tend to rescue men from the folly and the danger of attaching too much value to the use of means, and even to the instrumentality of able, earnest, and devoted men, whose efforts we are too prone to over-estimate, sometimes even to idolize, till God, even in mercy, breaks or casts aside the instrument, that he may rescue us from such a dangerous delusion, and compel us to feel and own, that all our well-springs are in him,—that no created thing possesses or can possess any inherent value,—and that all virtue, all power, and all glory, belong to him alone and for ever.

Keeping these explanatory observations in view, and acting in their spirit, it would be comparatively easy and harmless to discuss such questions as, ‘what is the best method of promoting or of conducting a revival?’ For, thus understood, those questions mean nothing more than, ‘what is the best method of commencing or of continuing the use of the religious ordinances appointed by God?’ Such a question, it is obvious, would involve nothing of a

profane or impious nature, and not only might be but ought to be both asked and answered by every man who wishes to be obedient to the laws of his Creator, and to aid in promoting the kingdom of the Redeemer. But it would have lost that aspect of mystery which renders it so attractive in the eyes of many; and which also is the main cause of those abuses into which men are so prone to fall, when attempting to promote, they know not well what, by the use of any means which may, they know not how, have that tendency. Instead of rashly devising all manner of "new measures," however extravagant, and vainly indulging all the phantasies of a heated imagination, men ought steadily to direct their attention "to the law and the testimony," and make these, in all respects, their standard and their guide. And for those who may not have the faculty of readily apprehending what is the teaching of God, in the Scriptures, with reference to such matters, we would, again, with great confidence, recommend the studious perusal of the works already mentioned, namely, Edwards on the Religious Affections, and Thoughts on Revival, and Sprague's Lectures.

Notwithstanding that we have taken some pains to make our remarks as plain and intelligible as we could, there may be some to whom they will convey no definite meaning. We have endeavoured to point out the precise and essential identity of *conversion* and *revival*; but no person who has not been himself the subject of that great change—no *unconverted man*—can possibly understand what is meant by conversion, consequently he cannot understand what is meant by a revival of religion. We make this remark, because the arguments used by those who oppose revivals are very generally either directed only against the abuses which are found in the secondary or non-essential adjuncts or concomitants of revivals, or are such as would bear equally against conversion itself, and which, therefore, awaken in our minds the grave and mournful feeling, that those who employ them are themselves still unconverted. This is a painful and a melancholy conclusion;—a conclusion, the application of which to individual instances, we will not and

we dare not make,— for we remember that it is written, “judge not, that ye be not judged.” But we would most earnestly entreat all the opponents of revivals to look more narrowly into the matter,—to ascertain, as far as possible, in what a revival, or conversion, really consists,—and to prove their own selves, lest it be found, in the great day of decision, that the reason why they opposed and maligned the light which shone in the midst of the uncomprehending darkness, was because they were not themselves children of the light, but of the darkness.

At the same time we would no more attempt to explain the precise nature of the mystery of conversion, than we would attempt to explain the precise nature of the mystery of creation. We do not, indeed, hold it to be possible for a created being to comprehend and explain either the one or the other. *That* we regard as one of the prerogatives of the Creator himself,—of Him who spoke the universe into being,—of Him who can alone “create anew in righteousness and true holiness.” Might we not say, that it is an incommunicable attribute of Deity? Yet, as any created being is known to *be* merely by its *existence*; so conversion, or the being created anew, can be known to us by no other and no surer criterion,—it is known to *be* by the very fact of *its existence*. Hence it is manifest that none but those who themselves enjoy that new and spiritual life can possibly know assuredly whether it does or does not exist in others,—they cannot, in fact, comprehend its existence at all, for spiritual things are spiritually discerned, and not otherwise. A man who has himself been converted may be deceived in forming an opinion of the state of another; for all the external aspects of conversion may be for a time sympathetically superinduced, or stimulated; but an unconverted man never can be an accurate judge in the matter, for he wants the faculty, and therefore all his arguments against its reality in others can prove nothing, except that it does not exist in himself. It is painful and pitiable, but not surprising, that unconverted men should misrepresent and oppose what they cannot understand or appreciate; but their opposition, and even their hostility should be mildly

and compassionately borne, and every effort made to induce them to lay aside their hostility, to abandon their prejudices, and to come and see whether some good thing may not come out of Nazareth,—if, peradventure, “the light that lighteth every man” may yet shine into their benighted minds, and call them from death to life, and from their natural darkness into God’s marvellous light.

So far as we have been able to explain our views, and to communicate them to our readers, we would fondly hope that the subject of revivals has been presented in an aspect in which it is little’ exposed to the assaults of its antagonists, and rescued from the injudicious defences of erring friends. Viewed aright, it is seen to be in its essence wholly beyond the reach of man. All that human beings can do, either in attempting to promote, or to retard it, can exercise no influence upon any thing except what is merely of secondary importance, and of concomitant or sequent position and adventitious character. Yet, in such matters, there is ample scope for the most earnest and strenuous exertions on our part, and ground enough for us to entertain feelings of very deep responsibility, regarding the manner in which we discharge the obligations resting upon us. Although our strenuous use of the appointed means of grace would never of itself produce conversion, yet if men neglect and despise those means, they are manifesting a spirit of determined rebellion against God, and can have no reason to expect His mercy and blessing so long as they retain that spirit. Still more, if they endeavour to cast obstacles in the way of those who are attempting to comply with the injunctions of the Scriptures, though God may, in mercy, arrest and convert them, thereby rendering them the more signal monuments of Almighty grace, they have no right to look for any such forth-putting of His mercy, but rather that He should cut them off in His wrath, and make them terrible examples of His judgments.

There is also most urgent necessity for the exercise of the most sound religious prudence on the part of those who are friendly to the cause of revivals. It is

deeply incumbent on all such, to give their nights and days to the study of the word of God, in the spirit of humility, and teachableness, and prayer; that they may be enabled to discriminate between what is essential and what is secondary and adventitious—between what is real and what is counterfeit—between what belongs to conversion and what to sympathetic excitement—between what is God's and what is man's. Great and irreparable injury may be done by those who intermeddle with matters so sacred without due preparation. Sudden and terrible was the doom of those who ministered strange fire at God's holy altar; and their doom should be a warning to all men, not to introduce human schemes into divine institutions.

Great faithfulness, as well as great tenderness, should be exercised towards those who are, or appear to be, converted in such times of unusual manifestation of divine grace, lest false hopes should be encouraged, spiritual pride awakened, or despair confirmed. Here, again, the standard is still the word of God, by which to try every spirit. Much assistance may also be obtained by comparing the cases that come before religious instructors, with the recorded experience of matured Christians, who have themselves been versant in similar scenes. And here again we cannot help earnestly directing the attention of our readers to the works already specified, as beyond all comparison the most valuable of such writings.

As we regard excitement as by no means essential to, though extremely natural in, a revival, we would also suggest the necessity of using all care to temper, guide, and keep it in moderation. This is the more necessary, inasmuch as the inexperienced and the warm-hearted are peculiarly liable to regard the excitement as itself the conversion—to be elated in proportion as it prevails, and dejected as it abates. Much of the excitement, as we have shown, is purely human, arising from the principle of sympathy, and likely to pass away when the circumstances which called forth are removed or terminate. On it, therefore, no dependence can be placed. But there may be also

very considerable excitement caused by the mighty change of passing from death to life—from old things passing away, and all things becoming new. Should it be of this character, its effects will be permanent, but all of it which was due to the novelty of the work, and of the sensations then first experienced within the soul, will necessarily abate, and the mind subside into a peaceful and calm serenity. This abatement, however, may alarm the young convert, causing him to think he is relapsing into his former deadness of heart and searedness of conscience. Such an one should be taught, that the natural progress of the divine life in the soul is indicated by the very arrangement of the words of the inspired Apostle, “joy and peace in believing.” “Joy” is the first stage of “believing;” its matured result is “peace.”

This may be easily shown. When the mind has been convinced of its utter sinfulness, of its lost condition, both by nature and by its own wickedness—when it has tried every fallacious resource, and found no relief from its guilty terror—when something like despair seems darkening down above and all around it, can the prospect of deliverance be obtained without exciting an eager thrill of hope, and a fervent desire to secure the offered salvation? And when the Holy Spirit frees the soul from the fetters of iniquity—when He takes of the things that are Christ’s and shows them to the sinner—when He unites him to the Redeemer, and enables him to address God as his heavenly Father; who may express the unutterable rapture that bursts upon the soul—the rush of new life and new sensations that pervades the whole being—the glow of conscious immortality that burns within the heart, and shoots its living energy through every fibre of the trembling frame! But this condition cannot last; and it were not well that it should. When the whole inner man has experienced the transforming efficacy of the gospel faith and promises,—when a new direction of all the powers of the mind has obtained the ascendancy so completely as to characterise the general course of thought, word, and action; the soul will then begin to entertain a rational happiness, a calm delight, a peaceful piety, still more consistent

with the spirit of the gospel, and of its meek and holy Author, than was the troubled joy which poured its impetuous torrent on the heart of the convert when he was first called into new light and life. Let not, then, the young, the excitable, and the imaginative, either be exalted over-much on account of having enjoyed such raptures, or expect them to continue or be frequently renewed with undiminished vividness. Let them not pine and be depressed because such transports are no longer experienced and enjoyed. Let them rather forget those things that are behind, and press forward to those that are before; and let them learn that "peace" is the proof of a more advanced stage in the Christian life than "joy;" nay, is the *fruit* of which joy is only the *seed*—is the *end* to which the other is only the *conducting means*.

But it is not expedient for us to prosecute this line of discussion into the almost innumerable topics which present themselves, equally deserving observation. To do so would be to write a treatise on revivals, instead of a few remarks, introductory to a course of lectures in which the whole subject is discussed fully and with great ability. Still there is one topic to which we must, however briefly, advert. The state and aspect of the times, fraught with the elements of peril and commotion, give a feeling of importance to the subject of revivals of religion which it might otherwise not have been thought to possess. The *reality* of the importance indeed cannot be increased, but men's *perception* of it may; and the condition of our country, and of the world, is such, that all men anticipate a period near at hand, marked by mighty events, and productive of changes of incalculable potency for evil or for good. Never, probably, were such mighty agencies at once in such a state of restless and conflicting action. It seems as if some universal convulsion were on the point of bursting forth, to wrench and shake asunder the entire fabric of society throughout the world, and to cast the shattered fragments into the boiling vortex of confusion, that they may be utterly broken to pieces, fused, and blended together, preparatory to the formation of a completely new order of things out of the dissevered

and chaotic ruins. No principles or laws, civil or political, seem to have any power to avert the dire convulsion. All who think deeply on the subject are alike persuaded, that none but an Almighty hand can check the progress of the demoralising and dissociating principles which are at present working with such fearful energy in the very heart of the community. In the midst of these portentous omens, nothing could re-assure and calm our minds but the cheering hope, the heart-confirming belief, that God had not utterly forsaken us. And nothing could have given us this assurance of hope, but some unusual manifestation of His gracious presence, such as He has been pleased to grant by "reviving His work in the midst of the years, and in wrath remembering mercy."

By the Church of Scotland, especially, should this glorious event, this time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, be hailed with the deepest gratitude and holy love, as peculiarly a token for good. Surrounded by fierce enemies, and half forsaken by cold alienated friends, it seemed, indeed, to her a day of gloom spread on the mountains. But God hath visited her in the day of her depression. She has not been permitted, under the fear of man, to rend with her own hand, the Solemn Covenant, dyed in the blood of her martyred sons, of other days. She has been divinely enabled to maintain and re-assert the undivided supremacy of Christ, her only Head and King and Lord; and He has not forsaken her, nor will forsake, though days of darker gloom should lower over, and storms of fiercer peril rage around her. The shout of her King is again heard in the midst of her holy places; and while her sons are still girt in their defensive panoply, her daughters are beginning to raise their grateful songs of deliverance.

Yet, let us join trembling with our gladness. The storm has not spent—has not even, we apprehend, yet mustered—all its might. The revival which God has been pleased to grant to our earnest prayers, may be intended to convey to us a two-fold message—both a pledge of final victory, and a warning to prepare for a sterner conflict. It may be, that the furnace into which we are about to be cast, will be heated seven

times more than it was wont to be heated, and, therefore, has an unusual manifestation of the presence and the power of our Saviour been vouchsafed, to prepare us for and to preserve us during the fiery trial. Therefore would we earnestly urge all, to receive with open heart and willing mind, the message of the Lord in all the fulness of its import—to take to them the whole armour of God, and stand watchful and prepared—to avail themselves of the spiritual nourishment thus so timeously offered, as if they heard a voice saying to them, as did the angel to Elijah,

“Eat, because the journey is too great for thee,” and thus to go forward, ready alike for the vineyard or the wilderness, fearing the Lord and void of all other fear.

Our readers will readily perceive, that the topic to which we have last adverted has special reference to the recent remarkable manifestation of divine grace—the work of the Holy Spirit at Kilsyth. Most of them will know also, that in consequence of the very deep interest excited in the public mind respecting the time of refreshing with which that favoured portion of the Lord’s vineyard had been visited, it was thought expedient that a course of lectures should be delivered in Glasgow on the subject of Revivals of Religion, for the purpose of communicating right views and removing prejudices on that all-important topic. The volume now produced in a collected form is the result of that determination; and when it is remembered with what deep interest crowded audiences listened to these lectures, and how extensively they have been circulated as they issued in a periodical form from the press, it cannot be doubted that they have been already instrumental in dispelling error, and conveying truth to the minds of many. To the thoughtful and enquiring reader the work will be found one of great and varied interest and information, embracing a wide range of religious views connected with the subject of revivals, and presenting these in all the pleasing diversities of style employed by so many different authors. The lectures, indeed, exhibit almost a system of theology specifically adapted to a peculiar aspect of the community and state of religion among professing Christians. And we can-

not well imagine any person perusing them with due attention, without feeling himself often compelled to put to his own soul such searching questions as these — “Am not I also guilty in this matter?” “Do not I also need in this respect a great revival?” “Have I felt and acted on these points as I ought to have done?” If thus our own hearts condemn us, what shall we answer to Him who searcheth the heart, and who alone can fully know its deceitfulness and desperate wickedness? Surely, surely each and all, ministers and private Christians alike, must feel it to be their urgent and paramount duty to “pray without ceasing” if peradventure God will yet return and look upon this vine which His own right hand planted, and water it abundantly in this His day of merciful and gracious visitation.

It will not be expected, that the writer of these preliminary remarks should presume to express an opinion concerning the respective merits of these lectures. Of that every reader will best judge for himself; and some will be disappointed. Many will, doubtless, turn with warmest interest to that of Mr. Burns of Kilsyth, in consequence of his personal connection with the remarkable revival which was the originating cause of these valuable productions. To those who cannot readily dissociate the idea of excessive excitement from that of a revival of religion, the perusal of the above named candid, calm, and judicious lecture will, we trust, prove highly beneficial, and may tend to relieve their mental vision from some of their most blinding or distorting prejudices. But enough. The main object of these introductory remarks was, to attempt to reduce the complex term “Revival of religion,” to its simplest elements, that all parties might understand as clearly as possible what it really was which they were either presuming to assail, or preparing to defend. If that has been in any tolerable measure accomplished, our present task is done; and the reader will be somewhat the better prepared to commence the perusal of the instructive, convincing, and excellent series of lectures on the Revival of Religion, to which he is thus introduced.

W. M. H.

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REVIVAL OF RELIGION.

LECTURE I.

The Nature of a Religious Revival—State of Religion requiring it — Effects which it is calculated to produce in the Church and on the World — Vindication from Misapprehension and Prejudice.

BY THE REV. JOHN BONAR,
MINISTER OF LARBERT AND DUNIPACE.

“And I will make them, and the places round about my hill, a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season: there shall be showers of blessing.”—EZEKIEL, xxxiv, 26.

WE meet this evening in very peculiar circumstances. For some years past there has been a growing impression on the minds of many of God’s people, that “it was time to seek the Lord, that he might rain righteousness.” Some suitable means were adopted: the attention of the church was earnestly called to the subject by public discourses; the records of what glorious things the Lord had wrought amongst us, and which our fathers had told us of, were recovered from neglect, and sent through the length and breadth of the land; the Lord’s people were stirred up to private, to family, to united, and to public prayer for this special object; and perhaps there was no Christian family and no Christian church in the land in which there was not constant prayer made that the Lord would “visit and refresh his heritage, which was weary.”

But, like Peter on the mount of Transfiguration, we knew not well what we said; and when, by fearful things in righteousness, the Lord answers our prayers,

we are afraid at his tokens. The time prayed for has begun to appear—the day longed for has broken—the windows of heaven have, rained at least on some fleeces long spread in dryness; and many are surprised. Like the disciples of old, when Jesus stood in the midst of them, vve know not that this is He, and are affrighted as if we had seen a spirit. Like the church at Jerusalem, when prayer was made without ceasing for the imprisoned apostle, we cannot believe that the fetters of iron are broken, that the prison doors are open, that the great iron gate has been rolled back, and that the answer to our prayers standeth at the door. Our eye, has been so dimmed with decay, and worn out with the false glare of deathly times, that now, when realities burst upon us, *they* seem as if they were the shadows. It is as when we first look on the face of the dead, so different from all that we could ever have conceived it to be before,—or rather it is as if we had been permitted to look on the reality of the valley of vision while the bones gathered one to another, and the sinews of flesh crept upon them, and at length “the wind blew where it listed, and we heard the sound thereof, but knew not whence it came or whither it went,” but saw the dead arise a living host, and stand up an exceeding great army of God. The veil has been suddenly withdrawn from the awful state of dead souls—the quickening power of the Spirit has suddenly passed over them; the “dew of those who dwelt in the dust,” which so long slept on them cold and chill, has become “the dew of herbs;” the Breath divine has breathed on them; and while yet we looked on the cold face of death, the motions of spiritual life have sprung into being.

Standing thus betwixt the living and the dead—all the settled though before veiled forms of death brought out to the light of day—new life appearing all around in youth, in age, and even in childhood—dust and ashes heaving with multiplied forms of that new creation which comes from and tends towards heaven—the cloud overshadowing ourselves, and the big heavy drops of rain giving tokens of a plentiful shower—we do feel peculiar need of the prayers of all to uphold us, and of

the grace of God to enable us to speak as we ought to speak, and as may not retard but advance the work of God.

But even though, in answer to such prayers, those who are to minister in this service should be enabled to speak in some measure as they ought to speak—we must not expect the full sympathy of all those who may take a deep interest in the subject. Like the land of the literal Canaan,¹ this promised land looks small when viewed in the midst of the nations, and measured by the distant look of the eye of man. He that would know the glory of that land must dwell in the midst of it, wander over its plains, rest on its green mountains, and listen to its many waters. It is in this as in the literal Zion. The casual and careless passer is disappointed, and even astonished, and says, "Is this the city that men called the perfection of beauty—the joy of the whole earth?" But he who will even yet wait to tell her towers and mark her bulwarks—to look on the mountains which are round about Jerusalem—to ascend the side of Olivet and look on the city crowning the hill of Zion, sees that the half has not been told him, and that he cannot tell the half again.² So lie that would know

¹ Another thing that has struck me is the vast extent of this land (Palestine). I expected to find it a small country, and that we could go from one end of it to another in a very short time. But such is the nature of this country, that it is both very small and very large. If it were a plain, as you see it on the map, it would be of small extent; but it is a land filled with mountains from one end to another. There is the vast plain of Esdraelon and the undulating plain of Jephtha, and the rose-covered plain of Sharon, and the waste valley of Aijalon; still it is a land of mountains. This makes the distance from place to place very great. In going to Jerusalem we wended up among the hills of Judah, and ascended a ravine for four hours. The finest rocks were overhead, the greenest of wild trees—olives of great size and beauty—wild flowers of delightful fragrance—singing birds making sweet melody, and the voice of the turtle filling the air.—*Manuscript Letter of the Rev. Mr. M'Cheyne.*

² Of all places Jerusalem is the chief in interest. At first you do not perceive its peculiar felicity of situation, and are struck only with its position amidst hills that shut it securely, making it a fit type of God's church. . . . At the same time you are ready to feel as if every thing about it was very diminutive. But this entirely passes away in going from place to place and

the glory of "a field which the Lord hath blessed," must not only hear of it but see it—must not only see it with the eye of a casual gazer, but with the enlightened eye of a believing partaker—not only visit it as a passer-by, but must himself look on the high imaginations and proud thoughts which the word, mighty through God, has brought low, and himself worship amidst the temples which are builded out of these ruins, habitations of God by the Spirit

Still something to induce to this—something to stir us up to seek these realities amongst ourselves, and to mourn their absence—may be produced by a full and connected view of what the land contains. Wisely and worthily therefore have those, who so often called you to hear what each servant had of himself to say of the Lord's work, taken the map into their own hand, and, according to the measure of grace given to them, have laid out the land, and called each servant to occupy the place assigned to him. O that we may be enabled as faithful witnesses to bring such a good report of the land—such grapes of Eschol—as may not only make men pause and wonder and admire, "but go up to the land, and, in the name of the Lord, to possess it."

This subject, like all other great and important subjects, has this disadvantage to deal with, that it consists of a great variety of parts; and that they only can have a full and comprehensive view of it who will patiently examine these parts separately, and then allow them to return as a whole in their full impression on the mind. That part which we are now to enter on, "The nature of a religious revival, the state of religion requiring it, the

seeing each locality in its proper view. After we had been two days in Jerusalem, we wondered every thing had not impressed us more at the first. Taken in a mass, the objects appeared small, and the hills round the city and the beautiful situation seemed only like some other remarkable spots. But, taken one by one, each gave the impression of its peculiar excellence. As we went round about mount Zion, the eminence of that hill soon struck our view; and as we went to the valley of Jehbshaphat and looked up to Moriah, that hill seemed really worthy to be the site of such a temple as Solomon's.—*Rev. Mr. Bonar, Home and Foreign Missionary Record*, p. 34.

effects which it is fitted to produce in the church and on the world, with the misapprehensions and prejudices which lie against such a work," is large and important, and as it more or less enters into all the rest, it is the more necessary distinctly to state what it chiefly contemplates in virtue of which it has a separate and defined place for itself.

In speaking therefore of the Nature of a Revival, we will not now enter particularly into the origin and progress of revivals, nor yet into the symptoms or aspects of revival times,¹ but simply seek to point out wherein such a revival properly consists—what it is that constitutes a time of refreshing as distinguished from any other time, and so to ascertain the real nature of that which we seek to advance. In speaking of the state of religion requiring it, our business will be not so much to enter into the present state of the church, in all its interesting details, as generally to consider the state of religion requiring a revival.² In considering the effects which a revival of religion is fitted to produce in the church and on the world, our object must be, not to describe the symptoms and fruits of any particular revival, but the effects which such a dispensation of grace is fitted to produce wherever it appears;³ and, finally, in vindicating from misapprehension and prejudice, we will not deal with the objections which lie against the details of the work of revival,⁴ but those only which lie against the whole thing in its great leading features. The nature of a revival as thus restricted, the state of religion requiring it, the effects which it is calculated to produce in the church and on the world, with a vindication from such general misapprehensions and prejudice as lie against the whole work—these then are the important subjects which lie before us.

I. Then, as to the nature of a revival.

(1.) The very expression speaks of life—of life possessed, or of life offered—but of life decaying, or gone from where it once was, or not found where it should be. The quickening to newness of life where

1 Lecture x. 2 Lecture xiii. 3 Lecture xi.

4 Lectures xii and xiii.

life has once been, and been in vigour, is therefore the first and most obvious meaning of a revival; and that which ordinarily first marks its approach to any place or church. It is a just and true saying amongst the people of God, that a revival must begin in their own souls; and although we are not to limit the Holy One of Israel, yet beyond all question, ordinarily, as we have said, a revival first appears there. When the church is made to hear the voice of the Lord, "Strengthen the things that remain, which are ready to die"—"Behold I come quickly; be zealous therefore and repent"—when she is led to mourn over her past deadness, and turn again to the Lord her God—when a new power and life is felt in secret, in family, and in public prayer—when enlarged views of Divine truth are opened up, and an enlarged experience of its reality is possessed by them, then is there a revival begun.,

"When thou art converted," said the Lord to Peter, "strengthen thou thy brethren." There is then a second conversion, which even an apostle may need—there is a second revival, by which all things are made new, even to the new creature. There is a newness of life which, though it comes to life already in existence, is "life from the dead"—when the Lord's people are all prophets—when "he that is feeble among them shall be as David, and the house of David as the angel of the Lord before them." Now when this is the case in any church, then is a time of revival begun—a time of revival very full of blessing in itself, and very full of promise of larger blessings still. This is the first troubling of the waters which tells that the angel of mercy is come down—the rising of the spring that will reach to earth's distant and desert places—the breaking of the day whose onward course shall reach many a habitation of darkness far removed from its first dawn.

(2.) Beyond the people of God, the living members of the church, and as it were around them, and yet betwixt them and the more openly careless and contemptuous, there is a cold and dreary region, not only of decay, but of death—an outer ring of darkness, under the cloud of which souls are passing in countless numbers to eternity. The shadows of life indeed are

on it—the imitative aspect and acts of life are there—the dry bones are gathered together, and clothed with sinews and with flesh—but death reigns still—death all the more hideous for these very acts and attitudes of imitative life. “These are they who have a name to live while they are dead—a profession of religion, but not its living principles—a form of godliness, but not the power of godliness—on whose dark and stiff eyeballs the light shines, but the darkness comprehendeth it not. Now when that light not only shines on the darkness, but enters in and chases it away—when the Breath divine breathes on these cold and dead ones, and they become living souls; and when thus, those who have long been satisfied with such an empty formal profession, find its vanity, feel its sin, see its danger, and seek the reality—then it is that the second great feature of revival appears—the exchange of the form of godliness for its living power—the coming of life where life has never been, notwithstanding the long and fond profession of it.

(3.) But beyond this dark and cheerless domain of “living death ” there is a still darker circle, outwardly at least exhibiting more of that night of eternal death, into the blackness of which it is ever delivering its awful burden of lost souls—the world that lieth in the arms of the wicked one—baptized it may be, but as unbaptized by the Spirit as the veriest heathen—calling themselves by the Holy name of God, but in works dishonouring and denying him. Alas! this kingdom of acknowledged death is a wide-spread domain indeed. It is not confined to the precincts of any valley. We must ascend the highest mountain, traverse the widest continent, and visit the remotest islands to know any thing of the length and breadth of that dark empire over which spiritual death reigns triumphant. But when the light of life enters there also—when the secure are shaken in their refuges of lies—when the contemptuous are brought to the despised ministers of Jesus, saying, “What shall we do?”—when the careless or profane come to the house of God and hear as for eternity—when, in a word, “the wicked is turned from his wickedness, and the unrighteous man from his

thoughts," then the third great feature appears which may serve to direct us as to the nature of revival in religion.

But not every instance, nor every number of instances of such things, can be looked upon as a revival. Wherever the Gospel is faithfully preached—wherever there are those who, after "they have heard the word of the truth of the Gospel, have trusted in it"—there, from day to day and from time to time, individual souls are quickened to newness of life, and sealed by new and precious influences of the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption. It is only when such instances multiply apace—when another and another of God's people are so quickened and refreshed—when the leaven *springs* and seeks to leaven the whole lump—when the body, of believers, being brought nigh to the living Head, are brought nigh to each other in holy love—it is only when some approach to this is vouchsafed to any place or people that we can speak of the time as a time of revival to them.

So also with respect to the conversion of sinners. Blessed be God, his word does not return void at any time, but does accomplish that whereunto it is sent. Wherever the Gospel is preached, some humbled penitents under the sanctified rod of God—some careless professors under the living power of the truth, are from time to time led by the Spirit to "ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward." But it is only when these are no longer single and solitary, but multiplied and gathered—when many seek to enter and are able, through Christ who strengtheneth them—when, if it be not "daily," it is yet "greatly" that there is added to the church of such as shall be saved—it is only then that the time, in reference to the unconverted, can be called a time of revival.

Yes! in all times of the church, precious flowers are brought out of the wilderness, and planted in the Lord's vineyard; but in times of refreshing some portion of the wilderness itself blossoms as the rose. In all times another and another is arrested by the arrow of conviction, and, separated like the "stricken deer," sits alone and is silent in deep concern for his soul; but in

time of refreshing the flock seek to the Shepherd as gathered together by his hand. Always there are trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord; but in these times they spring up quickly, graciously, spreadingly, and humbly, as willows by the water courses. In the worst times there are yet souls escaping from the storm and tempest, and hiding in the cleft of the Rock of ages; but in these times the words of the prophet are fulfilled, "Who are these that fly as a cloud—as doves to their windows?" So was it at Pentecost, when three thousand received the word gladly, and were added to the church. So was it at Samaria, when Philip preached Christ unto them, many believed, "and there was great joy in that city." So was it when the glad tidings of the Gospel reached each dark and distant land by its first heralds. So was it at the Reformation, when such glorious accessions were made to the kingdom of Christ. So in our own land—(one of the fairest daughters of the Reformation, alas! how marred in her visage now,) when a nation was born in a day.¹ And so in every subsequent revival of the Lord's work the same glorious truth has been made to produce the same glorious results.

Viewed then with respect to the church, a time of revival is a time of newness of life. Viewed with respect to the world, whether professing or openly careless, it is a time of multiplied conversions. Multiplied conversions is the great outstanding characteristic of a time of revival. Multitudes, multitudes lying dead in the valley of vision find that it becomes to them the valley of decision: The windows of heaven are opened, and

¹ The Church of Scotland hath been singular among the churches. For, 1st. It is to be admired that,—whereas in other nations the Lord thought it enough to convert a few in a city, village, or family to himself, leaving the greater part in darkness, as it was in France and Poland; or perchance the magistracy and greater part of the people, as it was in Germany, the Low-Countries and in England,—in Scotland, the whole nation was converted by lump: and within ten years after popery was discharged in Scotland; there was not ten persons of quality to be found in it who did not profess the true reformed religion, and so it was among the commons in proportion. Lo! here a nation horn in one day—yea, moulded into one congregation, and sealed as a fountain with a solemn oath and covenant.—*Kirkton*, p. 22.

sudden plenty of Divine communications is poured forth: While yet the dreariness of winter seemed almost unbroken, the winter is past and the summer is come: Graces long languishing rise to newness of life—fruits long lingering advance to sound and sudden progress; souls long halting are brought to a blessed and present decision: The kingdom of heaven comes, “and every man presseth into it”—“the Son of Man is lifted up,” and anew draws all men to him. “In those days and in that time the children of Israel come—they and the children of Judah *together*, going and weeping as they go—and seek the Lord their God; they ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, saying. Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.”

Such being the true nature of a Revival of Religion, it will at once be seen how essentially and broadly it stands distinguished from much that has often been confounded with it. It is not only excitement, but excitement which has to do with the soul and its prospects for eternity. It is not only anxiety, but anxiety awakened by the truth, and seeking its resolution in the knowledge of that truth. It is not only a time when many *sag* they are converted, but when multitudes show that they are converted. In a word, by the purity of the doctrine taught, by the spirituality of the effect produced in the soul, as well as by the gracious results in the life and conversation, does a time of true refreshing show itself; and by them is such a time for ever distinguished from those seasons of excitement which many have sought to confound them with. It will be the more especial duty of him who discourses of the means of a revival, to show how every revival is by means of the truth. Meanwhile it is only necessary simply to say, that the Spirit of God in such a time, as certainly as in the calmest assembly or most secret closet, works by “the truth as it is in Jesus;”—that all the effects which mark such a season, whether of conversion or of quickening, are accomplished in the soul by leading it to enlarged views of Divine truth; and that in this respect, as in all others, such a revival is distinguished from that mere excitement of the mind

which may be and has been often brought to the highest pitch by the things which the natural man can receive—by the lying miracles of a supposed saint, by the glories of a crusade, or by the follies of an enthusiast. In all such cases, the ignorance of the truth, the presence of actual error, or the sad and natural fruit of such in the conduct and conversation, showed at once that the work was not of God but of men; nay, not of man alone, but of man as led captive by him who can and will change himself into any similitude, even into that of an angel of light, to deceive souls and keep them from the truth.

II. Such being the nature of a revival, it will not be difficult for us to appreciate the state of religion which most requires it—which at once demonstrates it as most needful, and yet declares it far away, unless it be brought nigh by much prayer and the outpouring of the Spirit in answer thereof. So long as the Church is weighed down by a body of sin—so long as there is in all her members a law in the flesh which warreth against the law of the mind—so long as without ceasing there arises from her the voice of distress, “Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death!” the enlightening, convincing, and converting influences of the Spirit will be required at each step of her progress through the wilderness. And so long as the world remains a valley of the shadow of death, every where times of revival will be required—every where needed—every where to be sought.

But yet there *are* times when a revival is more instantly required, and should be more anxiously sought. If, for instance, in any place or at any time, men who had long heard the gospel, and it may be long enjoyed special privileges, should become not only careless, but confident in their carelessness; not only negligent of the word of God, but contemptuous of it; not only doubters or rejecters, but scoffers of God’s holy truth;—if things present and temporal fill every avenue and employ every power of their immortal mind, and this be boasted of as true wisdom;—if every question receives a readier hearing than the question of their own state towards God;—if as often as it is pressed upon them

it is adjourned and disposed of as if there was nothing in the world which should cost a man less trouble, or which he might more safely postpone to the future;—if with a retention of more of the forms of religion, Divine truth has lost the hold it once had over men's minds, Divine ordinances have ceased to have even the power which they once had among them, and they walk in the midst of them, yea touch and taste and handle them with the coldness of a second death, more deep than heathenism itself: or finally, if this coldness has stretched its night-shade over the Church herself, and the things which remain are ready to die in her very bosom—if she has become careless of purity of doctrine and relaxed in purity of discipline—if she seek to accommodate her teaching to the ever-shifting spirit of the age, and her practice to the taste of a world that knows not her Lord—If these and such like dismal features mark the state of religion in any place or time, then, beyond all question, at that time and in that place there is a peculiar necessity for all who love the Lord and the souls of men to seek a time of revival. Where Satan holds his seat most firmly there is most need for the power of Jehovah to be revealed. Where darkness is most visible, there it is most desirable to penetrate with the light of life. Where men have most grieved the Spirit of God, most quenched his influences, most striven against them, there is it most needful that he should not depart lest all should utterly perish in their own corruption.

And these I fear are the great leading features of our own times to a very awful and alarming extent.

Infidelity — cold, careless, and inhuman as it is God-denying—is boldly avowed by many. The Gospel is openly classed by such with the bygone impostures of a departing age; all its power is looked on as the deceit of men; and all its claims as only new attempts to enthrall the human mind. And such infidelity is wide-spread as it is deadly: If its lurid lights have been put out or concealed in the high places of the earth, they have found their way in ten thousand groveling and polluted channels to the dense and crowded streets of the busy, the dark lanes of the poor,

and even the dismal dwellings of unprovided disease; and there, triumphing in the miseries she inflicts and the ruin she has wrought, she sits in mockery of her victims, and hears with bitter scorn their fears and cries, as, shivering and bereft of hope, they enter eternity, now too near to be denied, and too terrible to be trifled with.

Even where such things are repudiated, and men cling to the forms of religion, the power is often denied and often scorned too. The peculiar doctrines of Christianity are set aside as doctrines not now to be insisted on; her most essential truths are explained away as unmeaning or unnecessary; and no real credit is given to her most distinct and reiterated statements as to the eternal condition of man, and the connection which God has established betwixt the rejection or reception of the Gospel and that eternal condition.

Meanwhile multitudes everywhere are entirely taken up with what they shall eat and what they shall drink: to get gain, to get honour, to get advancement to themselves or their families, is the one thing needful for them. The success of their party, or even the distant movements of the nations of the earth, awaken a deeper interest in them from day to day, than the concerns of their own soul or the interests of Christ's kingdom in the world. And hence in many families and in many dwellings the Periodical of the day has banished the Bible and Catechism from the breakfast table of the rich and from the leisure hour of the poor.¹

And the Church of Christ—his professing and his real people—has been deeply affected by the atmosphere with which she has been surrounded, and in which she has too much lived and breathed. Her light has become dim and unsteady; her trumpet has given an uncertain sound; her unity has become broken, and her enemies have triumphed over her. We have our Sabbaths, our ordinances, our sacraments; but

¹ Fifty years ago it was common for the nailors of a village well known to the author, to work with the Confession of Faith stuck up on an iron stand in the midd'e of their block, and to read and converse on chapter after chapter. The stand is still there, but the Newspaper occupies the place of the Confession.

how little are these Sabbaths, days of the Lord—these ordinances, Divine ordinances—these means, means of grace! We have no famine of the word of the Lord; and yet we have leanness of soul. We have no want of profession; and yet we have the presence of spiritual weakness or decay. The broad features of distinction by which the Church is called to be separated from the world, have by many been frittered down to meet the tastes and secure the pleasures of the world; and everywhere in their business, in their families, in their pursuits, in their pleasures, in their honours, the professed people of God have lamentably conformed to that world from which Christ came to redeem them.

Even the living members of Christ's church have too much come to hover about the outside of the temple, and not to enter into that which is within the veil. Thus standing without, their mind does not take that deep and firm grasp of the truth which would produce the full experience of its power. They know neither the depths of Satan whereby men are deceived, nor the depths of Divine fulness out of which they may receive grace to trample Satan under their feet. They do not put on the whole armour of God, and hence, in the day of trial, they are sorely worsted by the fiery darts of the evil one. They are not strong in the Lord and in the power of *his* might, and therefore they are weakened in their way, and overcome of evil at almost every step. Every where we have the proof, and in most places the confession, that we "are consumed away with a perpetual consumption "but no man stirreth himself up to take hold of God."

If ever, then, there was a nation, if ever there was a church, if ever a state of the church, which required a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, ours is that time, ours that church; and perhaps never, since the words of the holy psalmist breathed out for himself and the people of God in his time, the desire of his heart, has there been a time when it was more fit for all who love the Lord to unite together in that earnest prayer, "Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts; look down from heaven and behold and visit this vine,

and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the Branch that thou madest strong for thyself." "Return, O Lord, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants. O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Let thy work appear unto thy servants and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea the work of our hands establish thou it."

III. But the state of religion requiring a religious revival, and the desirableness of such a time at the present for ourselves, will be more fully manifest by considering the effects which it is calculated to produce on the world and in the church: And these will be best seen by considering separately, First, The effects in the church, and, Secondly,⁷ The effects on the world.

1st. Here then I would observe first of all, that such a revival of true religion meets the darkness and deadness which comes over the Church in times of decay. In such times the designs, desires, and doings of the Church are apt to become to a lamentable extent low set. Contented with things as they are, she stretches not forward to the things that are before. The Spirit seems gone; and even the things which remain are ready to die. But when a time of revival comes, the Lord again says, "Let there be light The Spirit of the Lord again moves on the face of the waters, and the freshness and beauty of the new creature comes forth. The very page of nature seems more full of God; the very words of Scripture seem written with a new light and glory and fulness and meaning."²

¹ "All things abroad, the sun, moon, and stars, the heavens and the earth, appear as it were with a cast of Divine glory and sweetness upon them."—*Edwards' Narrative*, page 34.

² Persons "after their conversion often speak of religious things as seeming *new to them* that the Bible is a *new book*; they find there *new chapters*, *new psalms*, *new histories*, because they see them in a *new light*."—*Edwards' Narrative*, page 43.

Not only are the means of grace earnestly resorted to, but such Divine power attends them as neither earth nor hell can resist; and souls are led through all their doubts to peace and joy in believing. The great doctrines of salvation stand forth in bold relief as all in all: Man's need of Christ,—the power and willingness of Christ to save,—the efficacy of his atonement, and the freeness of the gospel offer, which men satisfied with themselves had ceased to feel the value of, are found to be that which alone meets the necessities of perishing men: The righteousness of Christ,—acceptance in the sight of God, only for his righteousness imputed to us and received by faith alone, which many of the professed people of God had set aside as the dogma of a harsh, metaphysical, and antiquated theology, is found, to be the saving health of the soul, its happiness, its holiness, its joy; Conversion, regeneration, the work of God's Spirit, which the world had almost persuaded us to say less about, are written anew, great and glorious realities without which none can enter into the kingdom of heaven: Peace with God, fellowship with the Father, and communion with Christ, which men had almost reasoned out of the church itself, are known and rejoiced in as the life and light and liberty of souls.

One of those who have gone forth to seek the outcasts of Israel in Israel's own land, says of it, "this land is an opened Bible." And so it is: for every stream, every mountain, every hill, and every valley, confirms and illustrates the *letter* of God's word. But a "field which the Lord hath blessed " with a time of refreshing from his presence is still more gloriously an opened Bible—not of the letter but of the Spirit.

The things which are written there are done here: what we heard of by the hearing of the ear in the word of truth, our eye sees accomplished in the souls of men by the mighty power of God: Souls *are* converted by the truth; peace *is* found in the blood of Christ; sins red as crimson *are* made white as snow; souls dead in sin *are* quickened; and sinners long alienated from and enemies to God are reconciled to him and stamped with his image: Yes, every converted soul is a living epistle of Christ—a living epistle, writ-

ten not with ink and pen, but with the Spirit of the living God. Every one added to the number of such as shall be saved is a new page in that living epistle, reflecting brightly the truth and certainty of the Word which liveth and abideth for ever, — the grace and glory of the Lord, whose word it is. And every revival therefore, unfolding so many of these pages to be known and read of all men, is more gloriously than any thing else on earth can ever be “an opened Bible.” And the Church, thus looking on the living word and the living fruit of that life-giving word, cannot sit in darkness, cannot rest in death. She is reprovèd and confounded for all her indifference. She is zealous and repents, and hastens to do her first works. She wakes up to hear the glad voice, “O house of Israel, come and let us walk in the light of the Lord.”

2nd. A time of Revival meets the heartlessness and hopelessness which comes over the church in times of decay.

One great cause of this heartlessness is the want of success, or rather the want of a right improvement of such a sad state. Conversion has become so rare that people have almost ceased to look for it—ministers to seek it as that which must pass upon all—churches to mourn over the want of it as a deadly symptom of their state. We live on and on from Sabbath to Sabbath, and meet and part from time to time, and no awakening amongst dead souls—no conversion, and yet no deep sense of the awfulness of such a state is felt. But when a time of refreshing comes, it both shows the importance of the thing and the possibility of it. When another and another and another — and those from amongst the most hopeless—are apprehended of the truth and brought back, its glorious trophies; when many feel that they dare no longer trifle with the concerns of eternity, and can no longer go on even with the business of time till these be settled on a sure foundation; then the Church is awakened from her lethargy—ministers are roused to feel the dark and destitute state of every soul that has no interest in Christ, and all who know the Lord are stirred up to seek the coming of that kingdom amongst men which is righteousness and

peace and joy. Then it is both seen and felt that God can and will convert souls, and that in great numbers at a time. This itself is of amazing importance, especially to ministers. It is success in their high calling; it is doing business in the great work given them to do; it is fulfilling the ministry received in the great object of it towards men; it gives a business aspect to all that before seemed so fruitless and so much in vain: and thus it stirs up to newness of life and newness of exertion.

It would be a heartless thing for a merchant to stand all day ready to dispose of his goods, and none to come in even to ask the price of them. It would be still more so if he offered without money and without price the most precious and the most needed possessions* and all in vain. But hath it not been thus with the servants as with their Lord? Have we not gone with the gracious message, and stood and counseled men in vain “to buy the eye-salve that they might see, the gold tried in the fire that they might be rich, and the white raiment which is the righteousness of the saints, that they might be clothed”? Has not the answer to all our importunity been a fulfilment of the Lord’s words, “and straightway they all began to make excuse”? One goes to his farm, another to his merchandise, and the precious blessings of the gospel are everywhere despised and rejected by those who are perishing for lack of them.—o it does require strong faith to exercise the ministry in such times. Our faith failed, and we thought our hope had perished from the Lord. Hence the heartlessness which had come so darkly over the work of the ministry, the work of the eldership, and the work of doing good to souls in general. But when in mercy the Lord visits us, when he revives his work in the midst of our days—when Christ is preached and Christ received, and there is great joy even in the darkest streets of our cities and distant dells of our land; then are our feeble knees strengthened, and our weak hearts confirmed; then is our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: Then say they among the heathen, “The Lord hath done great things for them;” and

1 Rev. iii, 14—22.

then, in deepest humility and most fervent gratitude, do we answer, "the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

3rd. A time of refreshing from the Lord meets the divisions and distractions which are apt to spring up in a time of decay.

Never for instance were brethren more unworthily or unhappily divided than they have been of late. No where can they be more worthily or happily reconciled than in the mountain of the Lord's house, which He hath exalted above all the mountains of their controversies and made all nations to flow into it. It is gloriously impossible for those who are reconciled to God in Christ Jesus to be permanently unreconciled to one another, and a time of revival, bringing out all the great realities in which they are at one, and sinking all the minor points on which they are divided, has a blessed tendency to unite their hearts, and so gradually to unite their hands in the work of the Lord. O it is sweet to see how in such a time the holy of all sects and denominations are invincibly drawn together by the constraining influence of the "love of the Spirit." It is sweet to find that the divided and separated body of Christ is yet one. It is sweet to discover, beneath the rents at which the world has so long mocked, cords of love still, which bind them fast together by binding them all to one great centre, and that centre Christ. It is sweet to find that the name of Christ is yet powerful to calm the troubled waves and hush the howling winds, to still the noise of the waters and still the tumults of the people. Yes; His name is as ointment poured forth, very precious, and in a time of revival, the alabaster box is opened, and fills the room with its savour. It is like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, and went down to the skirts of his garments. The oil of gladness descending from the great High Priest in such times reaches to the remotest of his people. Then does the Lord fulfill his own word, "I will make with my people a covenant of peace; and I will make them, and the places round about my hill, a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season: there shall be showers of

blessing.” Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly; thy kingdom come, thy will be done, that we all may be one, and that thine own words may be fulfilled. “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”¹

Thus, meeting the deadness which is so apt to creep over the church—meeting the heartlessness which so much paralyses her exertions—meeting the distractions and divisions which lay her so open to the scolf of the world and consume away her strength—meeting and removing these by the holy happy influences of the truth as it is in Jesus—a time of revival advances the church towards the accomplishment of that high and holy vocation to which she is called as a witness for God—as the light of the world Hitherto she has only shown what Christianity can hinder, and how it arrests the tendency to evil in man: She has yet to show what Christianity can do²—what it can produce out of the fallen ruins of humanity; and towards this every Revival directly and distinctly tends. Separating believers from the world—brightening in them the image of God—advancing them towards the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus—it tends to raise human nature, in Him who is at once its partaker and

¹ John, xvii, 21.

² “Ordinary Christians are necessarily of a negative religion. Their powers and their passions from their childhood have had a different bent from their late assumed principles. They are divided against themselves; and it is the amount of their victory to have overcome their rebellious passions, and to have refrained from evil. They are under two opposing forces, and if not actually kept at rest, yet their progress is slow. We can judge from them of what Christianity hinders, but not of the triumphs which it can ultimate’y effect, nor of the consolations in their abundance which it can bestow. We would desire to see one like Paul nearing the goal, whose race is almost won and whose victory is nearly achieved, on whose blow the garland of victory and immortality is about to descend, and on him our minds would rest as a living and visible, and, while he remained on earth, a continued miracle, though not so named, because only a moral miracle.—*Douglas on Revival of Religion*, page 34.

redeemer, to a height, of holiness and happiness as yet only read of in those prophecies and promises of God which tell us of the grace and glory afterward to be revealed. O it is impossible to say how such effects of true Christianity, no longer scattered over centuries of barren profession, or shining as lights far removed from each other as east is distant from the west, but crowded and shining together like the stars of the milky way in the dark sky of night, would influence the church in general—It is impossible to say what newness of life would pervade all her members; what light and love, what joy and gladness, would pass from one to another; what treasures of wisdom and knowledge which lie yet unexplored in the deep mines of God's word would be brought to light; what new and yet undiscovered forms of grace and glory would reveal themselves in God's people, if He vouchsafed generally or universally even such times of refreshing as have come upon peculiar places, as earnest of good things yet to be poured out upon all.

(2.) But if a time of refreshing be so calculated to meet the worst aspects of the church, and so to remove them, it is in this very way also calculated to meet the most dangerous and alarming symptoms that mark and mar the moral and spiritual state of the world.

The only book of Christian doctrine or of Christian evidences, which most men can think of reading is the lives of professed Christians. From these they judge what it is to be a Christian, and what claims Christianity has upon them. Alas, this book has in times past been indeed dark and deluding: many blots on the fairest lines; many blanks in the most important passages. Hence the mockery and triumph of the wicked—hence the suspicion and murmuring of pretended friends. But when God sends a time of refreshing to the church these blots are dried up, these blanks are filled, the lines of truth become broad and clear,—he who runs may read; and even he who hates is compelled to acknowledge that there is more here than his cold philosophy ever dreamed of, or the boasted powers of human nature can either accomplish or account for. Let us look into this for a moment and glance also at the effects

which a time of revival is fitted to produce upon the world.

And, 1st, It meets directly the *atheistical* spirit of the world.

There is much atheism which admits the existence of a God. There is even a boasting of a God which denies the only living and true God. But a time of revival meets this deepest atheism, and sends it back astonished and confounded to its native darkness. It repeats with invincible power the voice which came from glorious Sinai, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one God." Over every meeting of awakened souls there is written with the finger of the living God, in flaming letters, "The Lord is in this place and men knew it not; how dreadful is this place! This is none other than the house of God." Arguments will often fail to convince: No form of reason is so conclusive that a form of reason may not be found to oppose it: But let the proud reasoner who would deny the soul, and dispute God out of his world—come into the midst of those who are dealing directly with this God; let him mingle with that deep, solemn, and impressed company who now feel that the favour of this God is life, and his wrath worse than death; let him mingle with those who joy in God through Jesus Christ, and he will know better than by a thousand arguments that verily there is a God, yea, that it is no vain thing to draw near to him; and so falling down, will confess that God is in the midst of his people of a truth.

2nd. A Revival of true religion meets the *infidelity* which lurks so deeply, and spreads with such deadly power in a time of decay.

Nothing tends so much to produce and confirm such infidelity as the inconsistent lives of professed Christians. These live so much as if they did not believe the truth of the Christianity they profess, that those who wish it to be untrue can, and do with the most unhappy success, quote their lives as an answer to their profession, and a denial of their principles. The best way to meet such infidelity, therefore, is to show that wherever Christianity is understood and felt, it is a living and sanctifying principle. It does not do what

it ought to do, says the careless unbeliever, even in those who profess it; and goes away as if he had advanced an invincible argument against the truth of Christianity! There are many ways of answering such a cavalier; but without going farther, his cavil is for ever put to shame when Christianity dops accomplish what it professes—when it reaches the soul—when it writes it with a holy love of God—when it calls it to new joys and hopes in Christ; and when it raises it above the gross and groveling pleasures where once it sought and found its delight. No soul! as the rejector of the Gospel would argue:—The best answer to this is a company of fellow-creatures, deeply concerned for the salvation of their immortal souls—feeling the body and time to be nothing—the soul and eternity to be all. No Christ!—The best answer to this is a multitude of fellow-sinners seeking Christ: not able to rest till they find him; and when they have found him, rejoicing in him as the pearl of great price, for which they have willingly sold all. No reality in things divine!—The best answer to this is just a multitude of rational and intelligent beings under the deep and lively impression of divine things, feeling that these are realities—all else dim, shadowy, and passing.

O if our churches and meetings were filled with such worshippers, Infidelity would hide her head ashamed, and would not dare to degrade rational, responsible, and immortal man to the rank of the beasts that perish.

3. A Revival of Religion meets the carnal security of the world in a way which nothing else can do.

That security, in virtue of which all earnest concern and all anxious enquiry is adjourned from day to day, like the infidelity out of which it so often arises, is not founded on any reason, but upon the want of all reason. It has no support but what it gathers from the multitudes that will have it so—It is carried by the vote of the majority—and that vote prompted by the passions and appetites, carrying the day over the reason and responsibility of man. When, therefore, a stand is made for the truth on principles of truth, alarm is spread amongst these secure ones. Even one holy person, evidently worshipping God in spirit and in truth, will send a conviction of the reality

of these things over many a careless one, who yet anew hides his concern, or forgets it amongst the multitudes. But let another and another be added to this number of witnesses for God;—Let these things grow apace till a time of revival appears;—Let a general and growing concern pervade a once careless congregation, and the whole ground of the careless man's confidence is removed; every new convert is a new alarm to him; neutrality becomes impossible, and he must either harden himself more and more, or be found amongst those who seek the Lord while yet he may be found.

Yes I a people awakened out of sleep, to look on the great realities of eternity, anxiously passing from one to another the question, "What shall I do to be saved?"—feeling the value of the soul—realizing the nearness of eternity—striving to enter the strait gate—refusing to take comfort which is not based upon the word of the living God, sealed with the blood of Christ and applied by the Spirit—and ever and anon another and another, as the light of the glorious truth shines in on them, exchanging their mourning for joy—the spirit of heaviness for the garment of praise: This, this is the most solemn scene which this earth can witness; that which most rescues man, and raises him from the earthly things amidst which he is buried, and stamps him a being made for God and eternity. The body is annihilated; the soul is all; the Invisible is seen, and seen to be Eternal; Spiritual things, before so shadowy and distant, are felt to be real and near and urgent: Earthly things, hitherto so important, sink away into comparative littleness before these great realities. It is as if the limits of earth and heaven were partly broken—the veil of flesh partly removed;—as if earth and seas had fled, and men felt they were already standing before the throne of God, to hear the behest which angels wait to obey. The very atmosphere of such a place breathes a new life—the very prayers—the very praises—the very sighs and tears of such a people, all speak of the world men are neglecting—of the souls men are ruining—of the Saviour men are forgetting. A word will evoke from some dark heart the concealed and forgotten sins of bygone

years.¹ The swell of a note of praise will break a rocky heart² into tears of penitence and prayer; and again, calm the heaving waves of an agitated people as by the breath of God's Spirit;³ the very aspect of the people hearing as for eternity will arrest and solemnise.⁴ The simplest statement of the truth will fall with the power of God upon the soul;⁵ and he is indeed a very hardened sinner—he may well tremble for himself, who can pass through this sea with God's host, and not be sprinkled with its baptizing waters—who can come out of such a meeting of his fellow-creatures and fellow-sinners, and not be led to say—Tell me, tell me also, what must I do to be saved?

4. Such a time of revival meets the formality which satisfies the world so well for a religion, in the most effectual way.

When men are led to the inquiry what they shall do to be saved, the first impression is to do something that may save themselves. If in this state of mind they

1 A thoughtful person, who was present at Kilsyth during the public sermon in the tent, on the Monday of the communion at Kilsyth last summer, said, "I felt as if, by one turn of expression, the preacher had summoned the whole of my life in one particular line of it before my mind and before my God. It was all at once light all around it."

2 Not only was this the case with some thoughtless and unimpressed people, but true Christians were often deeply affected by the same thing. A minister, who was a hearer at Kilsyth on the occasion of the dispensation of the Sacrament alluded to in a former note, said, "When the notes of the congregation began to swell in a psalm of confession, I felt as if it would have *hearted* me—as if I would give way altogether."

3 In the midst of the greatest agitation at Kilsyth and other places, the singing of an appropriate psalm had the most tranquilizing effect.

4 An intelligent person, who was present at Kilsyth on the same occasion, not by any means likely to be carried away by impressions, said, "I never saw so solemn a thing; people were in such earnest, it was most awsome and impressive."

5 One of those who, at an early stage of the work at Dundee this summer, preached there, said—"The wonderful thing is, not only that people come—not only that labourers from a distance come night after night, but that the simplest statement of the truth in the simplest language seems to fall with power and be listened to with the deepest interest."

take up with a form of godliness which will pacify their fears, and yet let them keep their sins; they will often settle down upon their lees in a very hopeless manner. "I am not afraid, said one, so much for my children, that they fall into open vice—that they should become drunkards, thieves, or extortioners—as I am afraid that they shall get into that formal state which speaks about religion, professes it, is busy with something connected with it, and is yet destitute of it. If this should be their state, I would indeed fear for their eternal salvation." Yes! this is a delusion which fast binds many souls, who, wrapped in the garment of a decent profession, have yet upon them the condemnation of the law, and within the leprosy of sin. But a time of awakening is a blessed mean of rescuing such from this snare of the devil. It discloses at once the great gulph which there is between the vanity of a formal profession and the reality of living principle. It shows that there are depths in man's breast—fountains of great deeps, lying like waters in the heart of the earth, which none can touch but God, and which, when he breaks up, none can stay but himself. It discovered leaks in the vessel plying her perilous voyage to eternity, which the vain forms in which most men trust can no more stop than paint and gilding can stay the leak which is fast sinking the shipwrecked vessel in the ocean. It discloses diseases which nothing in the universe can heal but the heaven-appointed remedy of the glorious gospel. It awakens convictions which nothing can meet but the revelation of God in the face of Christ Jesus. And thus it is, that in such times the name of Christ—his person—his work—so long named in vain, comes to be so precious; the influences of the Spirit, so long practically rejected, come to be so earnestly sought; and the waters of life, so long flowing in vain through the cased and hardened channels of the soul, cold and clear and fruitless, come to be wells of water springing up in them unto eternal life.

Such are the precious effects of a revival of religion on the world. It meets the atheism, the infidelity, the false security, and the formal profession which reign so

widely, and which in times of deadness in the church are permitted to reign so undisturbed.

IV. One might expect, that any thing fraught with such blessings would be hailed universally; that churches long praying for such a time would gladly mark the first appearance of it; that ministers long mourning their own and their people's deadness would rejoice in its approach; that people would every where seek to lie open to its influences; and that even magistrates, taught by experience how ineffectual mere human law is to bind the restless mind of man, would hail the appearance of a power which would teach every man to livesoberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, by the energy of an inward principle. But alas! such times of refreshing in any corner of the Lord's vineyard have ever been the signal for many adversaries to appear, and some of them of a kind little to be expected. It is no new thing for the world to spit upon Christ and revile him,—no new thing for unregenerate and foolish men to blaspheme the work of the Spirit,—no new thing even for the Lord to come to his professed people, and they "know him not;" but it is very sad that any that are indeed his should hide their faces from him and from his work. Some reasons, doubtless, the one and the other—the world, mere professors, and such misjudging Christians—think they have, and the strength of them will be found in the objections which lie against a revival, which is the last thing we are to consider at present.

1. And first, an objection is taken by some to the very idea of the thing.

Revival, say they, supposes decay, and decay is wrong; and therefore, if we understand the objection right, it is a wrong state of things which needs a revival, and a wrong view of religion to think that revivals are always to be needed, or religion to be advanced to its final triumph by a succession of them.

True, it is a wrong state of things that needs a revival, but that state of things existing, surely a revival is not in itself wrong. Nor is it quite so certain as these objectors think, that religion is not to be advanced in this way, even to its final glory. Reproduction is the great

law of all things on earth: Day dies into night to be born again to day, and the lengthening day meets the declining winter, and issues in the summer: wave recoils on wave, but the tide advances to fill its appointed place. So it may be, that the truth is to advance by "successive impulses," each growing and accumulating till the knowledge of the Lord covers the earth as the waters cover the sea. To him that looks only to the recoiling wave, there may seem nothing but decline, but to him that looks to the advancing tide amid every decline, there is the promise of future progress—a step in advance taken, and at length every mountain shall be covered, and the mountain of the Lord's house alone exalted above the mountains, and all nations shall flow into it.

2. Others object to the things which ordinarily accompany a revival.

Ordinarily there is much excitement, great anxiety to hear the word preached, deep impression under it, and such affections of the bodily frame as such an agitated mind will often occasion. Now those of whom we speak think such movement of the feelings is highly dangerous. They do not like excitement. They are horrified at such excitement in religious things as would utter itself in tears and cries. They have taken a sudden dread of all protracted meetings, and dangers which we could never convince them might come from the ball-room or the theatre, however prolonged, now stare them in the face as certain to come from a protracted service in a church, or a protracted meeting for prayer.

Now, dealing seriously with this objection, at once we say, that every thing out of the way in which Christ's people have commonly rejoiced to walk is ordinarily to be avoided—that all mere bodily excitement is to be repressed, and that both counsel and authority are to be used for this end. But it would surely be too much to say that a physician would bind himself by all his ordinary rules, and keep his ordinary times when disease and death demanded his presence night and day. It is surely too much to expect that men coming together upon the great business of eternity, should be willing to

depart and that business still undone.¹ These men know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm, who speak so easily. There are feelings,—there are concerns,—there are anxieties of soul which will not brook delay—“At midnight the jailor called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and cried out, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” Paul preached till midnight, and was refreshed in the spirit, and doubtless refreshed those who heard him.

But some will say, this says nothing to the agitation, the alarm, and even bodily convulsions which sometimes accompany a revival. Why, the wonder is that these should occur so seldom: When we think of eternity—of all its interests bursting on the astonished soul—bursting on it all unprovided, the wonder, I say, is that any assembly can at any time hear and think of these things without agitation. To complain that such agitation leads to tears and outcries is to complain that we are human beings. There may indeed be much of this and no real revival; but, that there is much of it is no proof of the want of reality in the work, as smoke is no evidence against the existence of fire, but rather a presumption of its presence. There may be revivals without such, as Pentecost itself seems to have been—as Moulin was—as every revival in its later stages has come to be; but whether there be or be not such outward manifestation of feeling, the work itself is to be judged by the rules of God’s word, and not by the rules of man’s wisdom—by the effects which are actually produced, and not by the manner in which these effects are produced, of which we are such incompetent judges. It is too much for the clay to assume to itself the judgment of how it befits the potter to work. If the careless are brought to concern,—the wicked to repentance,—the profane to holiness,—the unclean to purity;—if the old man with his deeds is put off, and the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, is put

¹ A young person who was lingering lately in a prayer meeting, which the anxieties of those present had protracted to a late hour, being advised to go home, simply and affectingly said to the minister, who was rather urging her to leave, “How can I go home and have not found Christ yet?”

on, that is the work of the Spirit of God—the fruit of the truth as it is in Jesus. The manner in which these things may be wrought in us or in others may be designed by God to try even his own people as to whether they will know his hand, amid the imperfection with which every work of God is marred when it passes through the hands of man.

3. Objection is often taken against the means and instruments employed to begin or advance a revival. If objection can be taken against the piety, life, or doctrines of such, there is great reason to pause, nay, to withhold all confidence; but if it is only against them as young, as weak, or even as faulty, it is a very fond and foolish thing to found objections on such grounds. As Edwards long ago remarked, God is often pleased in this work not only to employ instruments not as likely as others in the sight of men, but to leave them also to discover much of their natural weakness in the midst of their spiritual grace. And so it will be, while the treasure of the gospel is in such “earthen vessels,” and so it is right it should be, that all may know “the power and excellency to be of God.” Every thing is to be done, by those who are employed in the work, to avoid giving occasion of offence to those who seek occasion. Every thing is to be done decently and in order, by those honoured of God to be so useful. Very much do they need to watch and pray “lest Satan beguile them,” and the Lord’s work be marred at their hands. And very much do those also who receive their ministry need to deal tenderly and prayerfully by them, lest their light be withdrawn. They have received *this* gift and grace from God; but it is out of the question for them to think, and as much so for us to expect, that they shall have every other gift and grace. It is for them meekly to exercise, and for us gratefully to receive the gifts they have, giving thanks to Him who gives to all severally as he wills.

Connected with this objection, it may be almost needless to mention that most foolish of all objections, namely, that this revival is the work of the ministers, and got up by them for party purposes. The work of the ministers! I fear this objection imputes more povvc r

to the ministers than the objectors would like to suppose them possessed of, and more praise than they well deserve. The work of the ministers! No: I fear that many even of the ministers who seek grace to be faithful are not fully up to the great occasion now opening upon us.—I fear that the Lord's work may suffer damage even at the hands of those who daily pray, "thy kingdom come," but who would not like to be so much put out of their ordinary way as the anxieties and inquiries and urgent earnestness of such a time of revival would lead to.—I fear it is too plain to be denied that there are ministers who do not want such times, and would check them if they could. It has gladdened the hearts of all God's people, that *your* ministers received grace from the Lord to rejoice in and help forward from the beginning the Lord's work, but elsewhere it has not been so dealt with: and I would not for the whole world have risked the words of contempt and opposition which have fallen from some upon the subject, though it had yet been only a peradventure as to the hand of the Lord being in it. The Lord forgive—The Lord give the grace of true repentance, and pour out upon us all his Holy Spirit, that we may both know and advance his work.

4. It is objected, that such revivals do little practical good—soon pass away, and leave no trace behind.

Because the outward appearances pass away, men take upon themselves to say, that all passes away; but when the outward and first appearances pass away, eternal good remains. If, said one emphatically, while others were speaking of how many would likely fall away in a time of revival: "If but a few souls are sealed how glorious is the result; yes, if but one be saved, how glorious indeed!" But such cannot be alone. The sealing of one soul to the day of redemption is not only the stopping a fountain of evil, whence flowed bitterness and death, but the opening of the fountain of grace to many. A handful of such corn on the top of the mountains shall shake like Lebanon. The converted ones of Pentecost were the seed of the world. The converts of the Kirk of Shotts were the Christian fathers of Clydesdale. The awakened of Skye are now the good seed of the

deserts of America. And generations yet unborn shall praise and magnify the Lord, for the work which He hath wrought in our day, and which so many think so lightly of.

And now, brethren, I must close. Removing such objectors and such objections far away, return and contemplate the thing itself. The very name REVIVAL is refreshing. It speaks of winter passing and spring returning—of weariness and death brightening into life and hope and health—of distant and desolate souls coming to God—to God their chiefest joy. It is full of blessing to your own souls, to your families, and to your neighbours, “and to this dry and thirsty land.”

But not only is it full of blessing, but it is absolutely necessary. The work of revival must begin, and must go on. People speak of it as a thing which may or may not be, which though they distantly wish they can yet do without. Why, what do people mean? what is a revival but multiplied conversions? what is a revival but living Christianity? If we can do without conversion; if we can do without Christ; if we can do without regeneration; if our children can do without these, if our friends and neighbours can do without these, then may we do without a revival. But if conversion is necessary; if regeneration is necessary; if salvation is necessary, then is a revival necessary. Ah! my friends, we have not understood what it is for souls to perish: we have not understood what is the meaning of the souls of our children perishing—of the souls of our neighbours perishing—of unconverted men and women and children dying in their sins, else we could not cease to pray and to labour, till the windows of heaven were opened, and the Lord “rained righteousness on the people, and saving health on all our families.”

LECTURE II.

The Work of Christ in connection with the Revival of Religion—His Atonement, Righteousness, and Intercession.

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“When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.”—ISAIAH, liii, 10.

IN the glory of God displayed in the first creation, and the formation of man after the Divine image, were laid the foundations of that high and sacred communion between God and the creature to which is given the name of Religion. But by man's apostacy and breach of covenant, this glorious foundation was overthrown. For, in righteous displeasure, the Most High withdrew from man the tokens of his favour and the communications of his love; and man was robbed of that purity and excellence which fitted him for communion with God. In this state of things, there can be among men no such thing as true religion. The light of nature, the voice of reason, the power of conscience, are only the ruins of former greatness: and while they remain to attest the sinfulness of men, and to establish against them a charge of guilt, they never can restore the goodly fabric which has been by sin destroyed. But He who is the fountain of life and salvation, and who ever reigns in absolute sovereignty, has been pleased to establish a new foundation, on which he may enter into friendly intercourse with the fallen children of men. He has accordingly provided for a fresh manifestation of his glory, suited to the fallen condition of men, and their restoration to his forfeited favour and lost image, whereby they may be fitted to know and serve and en-

joy him. The development of this marvellous scheme, and the application of its provisions for the salvation of sinners, are committed to the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between God and men. In this capacity, and to give effect to the designs of Infinite Wisdom, he came into the world; and, by his obedience unto death, procured eternal redemption for all them that obey him. He now lives and reigns a Priest upon his throne, to carry forward to its actual consummation the work which the Father hath given him to do. Now, in proportion as the power of the exalted Redeemer is displayed, in the effusion of the Holy Ghost, and the consequent conversion of sinners, and the edification of saints, does the cause of true religion prevail. But for the mediation of Christ, there had been no religion now amongst men: and hence every revival that takes place must bear a very close and important relation to him and to his work. For, in the words of the text, the Father having made the "soul of Messiah an offering for sin," the Messiah, in every revival of religion, "sees his seed, prolongs his days, and the pleasure of the Lord prospers in his hands."

The subject of this evening's lecture naturally divides itself into two parts:—*First*, the work of Christ; and *Secondly*, the connection of that work with a revival of religion.

We have *in the First place* to consider the work of Christ. But before we enter upon the direct consideration of this point, it is needful to advert very briefly to the person of Him by whom that work is performed. In some cases a work derives all its value from its own nature; and therefore it is of no moment by whom it has been produced. In the present instance, however, while the work itself is most glorious, it derives its chief value from the dignity of the person by whom it is accomplished.

The Lord Christ is in himself a Divine person, being the Son of God, of the same substance with the Father, and equal to him in power and glory. But according to the arrangements of the eternal covenant, and for carrying its designs into effect, He, in the fulness of time, assumed human nature into personal union with

himself. "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh."¹ In his person as God-man he is possessed of all possible perfections—divine and human. In his Divine nature he is infinitely glorious; and in his human nature he is adorned with every grace of which it is susceptible: "He is altogether lovely."² By appointment of the Father he is constituted Mediator of the new covenant, and has all its arrangements and promises committed unto him that he may carry them into effect: "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."³ In this capacity he stands in a peculiarly close relation to the redeemed, being their head in covenant; fulfilling all their obligations, and securing and dispensing to them all saving benefits. For such is the nature of the relation between Christ and his people, that whatever is done by him as Surety, is regarded as done by them: "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."⁴

In the work which we are about to consider, Christ is especially to be viewed as acting in the capacity of a Priest. For although we may not separate his prophetic and kingly offices from this, nor from any part of his mediatorial work, yet it is evident from the testimony of Scripture and the nature of the case, that a greater prominence is due to his priestly office. To this office he is solemnly set apart by the oath of the Father: "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedek."⁵ For it he is qualified by the unction of the Holy Ghost, symbolically represented by the holy oil used under the law: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,"⁶ to this office and to the work connected with it, he cheerfully consecrated himself in his zeal for the Father's name, and his love for his chosen people: "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified by the truth."⁷

1 1 Tim. iii, 16. 2 Song, v, 16. 3 1 Tim. ii, 5. 4 2 Cor. v, 21.
5 Psalm cx, 4. 6 Isaiah, xi, 1, 2. 7 John, xvii, 19.

We may now look into the several parts of the work that is performed by this glorious person. And, first, let us advert to his *atonement*. To understand this part of the work of Christ, it must be borne in mind, that the people for whom he acted lay under the penalty of the Divine law. For having, in the person of their first parent and foederal representative, broken covenant with God, they were justly condemned to die the death, even to endure the-infinite wrath of God. For such is the deeply malignant nature of sin that it opposes itself to the Divine Majesty with the full power of the subject in which it resides; and therefore justice requires, that up to the full measure of the creature's capacity for suffering it, he shall be visited with the wrath of God: "The soul that sinneth it shall die."¹ "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."² Now we hold it as a self-evident truth, founded upon the absolute and immutable perfection of the Divine nature, that sin must be visited with condign punishment. To impugn this principle is to sweep away the principal foundation on which rests the necessity of atonement. And yet it may be argued, that just as in human governments an offender may be pardoned without the ends of justice being damaged; so sin may be allowed to pass with impunity, and the throne of God remain glorious and sure. To make this supposed case fairly parallel with that of the Divine government, it must be maintained, that all offenders may be pardoned, and yet justice hold its proper place, and exert its due control over the subject. For it is for the pardon of *sin*, not for any particular form of sin, without an atonement, that the argument is proposed. If any objection be taken to this view, it may at once be obviated by the consideration, that while, in relation to human law, there is a vast difference between one crime and another; in the view of the Divine law the distinction between one sin and another sinks into nothing as compared with the enormity of any one—even the least offence. The distance between the greatest and the least guilty of lost souls may be measured; but the distance

¹ Ezek. xviii, 4. ² Gal. iii, 10.

between the least guilty and a sinless being is infinite. And therefore if pardon is to be dispensed out of mere compassion, one is as much the object of compassion as another. Or if one is to be pardoned because he is less guilty, all may be pardoned, because the difference between one and another is of little account. Now we have only to put the case in this light to show, that even human government could not be maintained if every offence were pardoned, because it would be equivalent to the dissolution of government altogether, and a permission to every man to do what is right in his own eyes. But, besides, it ought to be remembered that the immediate design of human governments and of the punishments which they inflict, is to promote the interests of civil society. These may not at all be endangered by the occasional extension of mercy to offenders. But the grand design of the Divine government, that on which all others are suspended, and to which they are subordinated, is the glory of God. Now the whole tenor of Scripture proves, that to secure this end in the pardon of any one offence, atonement is indispensable. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission."

But next to the glory of the Divine name is the salvation of sinners: And atonement is not less necessary to accomplish this object. In support of this position we appeal to all who, by the Spirit of God, have been awakened to a true sense of the evil of sin and the glory of the Divine character. To them it is no longer a matter of idle speculation or of doubtful disputation, but a question of life or death, whether sin may be pardoned. And if so—in what way. They now see that God is the only portion of their souls; but it is God the enemy of sin and its righteous avenger. While others are reckless what becomes of the Divine character, provided only *they* obtain their own selfish purposes, truly awakened souls feel that if God be not glorified in the condemnation of sin they are undone for ever. Let it not be said this is an argument which is perfectly nugatory, because it cannot be appreciated except by those who are interested in the question; for if men will clearly understand and rightly estimate the doctrines of the word of God, they must come under the influence

of the principles which it lays down. And untill that is the case we must decline their judgment as altogether incompetent: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

The remarks now made serve to illustrate the occasion and necessity of atonement. But, after all, the most simple and conclusive argument which can be adduced on this point, is the fact, that atonement has been made; for it were a daring impeachment of his wisdom to say, that God gave up his Son to the accursed death of the cross, if such a sacrifice had not been absolutely necessary to the salvation of sinners. We said that the Lord Christ was duly called to the priestly office,—“For no man taketh this honour unto himself but he that is called of God: as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest; but He that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee.” He was thus prepared to offer up the sacrifice in which atonement was to be made. Now the sacrifice was none other than *himself*. To say that it was the human nature of Christ is not good theology, nor in accordance with the language of Scripture. For the human nature never professed any distinct personality of its own; but from the first moment of its production ever subsisted in union with the person of the Son of God. We apprehend it is more correct to say, that the sacrifice by which atonement was made was Christ in his human nature: “*He bore our sins in his own body on the tree*’—“When he had by *himself* purged our sins”—“*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.*” We shall not dwell on the immaculate purity and absolute perfection of the sacrifice of Christ, having virtually spoken to that point in the remarks that were made upon his person: Neither shall we dwell on the sufferings which he endured in the course of his eventful life, being “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;” but shall at once pass to the last and crowning part of his sufferings, in which he eminently offered up himself a sacrifice for sin. Let it not be forgotten, that against God sin had been commit-

ted; and that to him atonement was due. To the Father, therefore, as in covenant sustaining the majesty and exacting the claims of Godhead, the blessed Redeemer drew near. In the midst of darkness most deep, agonies most piercing, persecutions most cruel, and sorrows unutterable, but with a heart full of love to God and to his holy law, He received into his bosom that sword of Divine justice which otherwise must have fallen on the heads of his people, and consigned them to utter and eternal perdition: "God spared not his own Son, but delivered him for us all"—"Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin"—"He offered himself to God, an offering and a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour." We might here pause and meditate on this great sight: The Son of the Highest "wounded for his people's transgressions and bruised for their iniquities,"—The Lord of glory covered with ignominy,—The Prince of life brought to the dust of death,—The fountain of blessedness made a curse! We might think of the unspeakable glory of the priest, the incalculable worth of the sacrifice, and thence draw our conclusion, most cheering to every weary and heavy-laden sinner, that justice is satisfied; that the wrath of God against sin is poured out; and that "now no condemnation remains to them that are in Christ Jesus." But leaving these, and many other interesting points, which time forbids us to discuss, we proceed to consider,

2. In the Second place, the *Righteousness* of Christ. We have seen that the breach of the Divine law in the first covenant was the occasion of the atonement. We must however bear in mind, that the act of transgression did not weaken, far less set aside the obligation of mankind to be in nature, heart, and life, all which the law required. It were indeed a strange doctrine, subversive of all law human and divine, to say, that a breach of law releases from all obligation to fulfill it. The fact so plainly brought out under a former head, that the violation of the law exposes to punishment, proves the equity of the obligation to perfect obedience. To dispense with all obedience is to annul the law, and to open a door to the most unbounded licentiousness. To require less than perfect obedience is little better, and

is to make a practical mockery of the law. But, say some, man's condition is altered; his powers are corrupted; his will is perverted; and his whole nature is enslaved: And therefore a lower standard of obedience must be fixed than when he was possessed of perfect rectitude. But how, I ask, did man's condition come to be thus altered? Was it not by his sin—a sin which justly exposes him to punishment? Now, to punish him for failing to discharge a lawful debt, and at the same time to diminish the amount of the debt, is altogether unjust. To reduce the demands of the law one jot or tittle is so far to take away the ground of punishment: "For where no law is, there is no transgression." And the amount of transgression depends on the amount of obedience required by the law.

But another serious consequence will follow upon the attempt to bring down the requirements of the law of God to the level of man's capacities in his fallen state. The law, it is admitted, originally required perfect obedience. Now this demand was just. To say otherwise is to impeach the rectitude of the Divine Lawgiver. But on what did the justice of it rest? evidently on the claim which God has upon his intelligent creatures. He requires that they shall "love him with all their heart and soul and strength and mind." And he is entitled to this, primarily, on account of the infinite moral perfection of his nature. Let the law, however, be changed; it cannot be changed for the better; for it was before perfectly just: it must therefore be changed for the worse, and become unjust. And is it to be gravely maintained, that the righteous Governor of the world can enjoin upon his creatures a law that is unjust, and require that they shall love him with less than all their heart and soul and strength? Let the thought perish from our minds: and for the glory of the Divine name, whatever may happen to us, let his law be preserved in all its integrity and force. "The law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good."

With this resolution agrees the experience of every true believer. He sees that in the government of God there is no neutrality—that men must be either saints or sinners, righteous or wicked, justified or condemned,

in a state of favour or under the curse. The capital error into which others fall arises from their ignorance of God, their indifference to His glory, and their selfishly consulting some fancied safety of their own. By this means they are led to dream of the possibility of having a mere negative goodness; and a consequent freedom from liability to punishment; at the very time they are conscious they have no good claim to eternal life. But those who are divinely taught, and spiritually enlightened, are convinced there is no middle position which they can occupy. And as they feel their need of a sufficient atonement to satisfy for their breach of the law, so they feel their need of a perfect righteousness, to meet the claims of its precept. In these circumstances, the doctrine of Christ's imputed righteousness is to them most precious: and, like the apostle, "they count all things but loss that they may win Christ, and be found in him, not having their own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." The essential dignity of the person of Christ placed him above all law; and this lies at the foundation of his righteousness, and indeed of his whole work. For had he been a creature, no matter how high in rank, and excellent in nature, and vast in powers, he must have been obliged by that law, from which no creature can plead exemption, to employ all his powers in the service of the Creator: and when he had done all, he should have done no more than it was his duty to do. But Christ being a Divine person, and superior therefore to all law, he was competent to do for others what he needed not to do for himself. He accordingly assumed the nature of men, whose debt he was to pay. He placed himself under the law, according to which that debt was exacted; and in a human nature that was perfectly pure, and adorned with the beauties of holiness: and throughout a life of difficulty and trial, he fulfilled every demand which the law had upon his people. He thus became "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory."

The righteousness of Christ, be it remarked, is a Surety righteousness; by which we mean, that it is performed by him as the representative in covenant of all who believe in his name. It is therefore as truly theirs now in the sight of God, and on their conversion in actual possession, as though it had been wrought out by themselves: "We are the righteousness of God in him." The righteousness of Christ is a Divine righteousness. The person who wrought it out is a Divine person. For, though the obedience was rendered and could be rendered only in the human nature, yet it was not the obedience of the human nature, but the obedience of God manifest in the flesh. "This is the name by which he shall be called, *the Lord* our righteousness." The righteousness of Christ is an everlasting righteousness. The righteousness of Adam was most excellent of its kind; but it was soon lost, and lost too beyond the possibility of recovery; for we get nothing by our connection with him but guilt, corruption, and death. But the righteousness of Christ, as it is divinely excellent, is also of endless duration; and therefore no condemnation can ever be passed upon those who appear before God in it. "He brought in everlasting righteousness."¹

3. We now come to the last part of the work of Christ which falls to be considered, namely his *Intercession*; and, as before, we may advert first of all to the occasion of it. Let it be steadily borne in mind, that the great end of the work of Christ is the manifestation of the Divine glory as a basis of true religion. Now it seemed good to the wisdom of God, in his counsels of peace, to ordain that the blessings secured by the blood and righteousness of Christ should be obtained by his intercession. By this mean is brought to view the all-sufficiency of the glorious three-one God for the salvation of sinners. "Ask of *me*, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." We see another occasion for the intercession of Christ, in the fact that he is the grand model after which every believer is fashioned. And it is the will of God, and accordant

¹ Daniel, ix, 24.

with the relation in which they stand to him, that men should ask the blessings of his love and salvation. The Lord Christ, therefore, that he might be the first-born among many brethren, asks the blessings promised in covenant to him as Mediator: "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son," &c.

But in the intercession of Christ we see also a very gracious condescension to the weakness and helplessness of sinners. For how were they to be assured that his atonement and righteousness had been accepted, had he not in his Mediatorial capacity ascended into heaven, entered into the Divine presence, and continued to maintain an acceptable ministry at the right hand of God? But further, how were they to obtain the blessings of the covenant, if there were not one to intercede on their behalf? The brethren of Joseph knew there was corn in Egypt—they were assured of Pharaoh's good disposition towards them; and yet the greatness of the king, their being strangers from another country, and their own humble condition, all rendered it most desirable, if not absolutely necessary, that they should have one to speak for them. In like manner, sinners may know that there is an all-sufficiency in God to supply their wants—they may be assured that He is graciously disposed towards them; and yet his infinite majesty, and their own meanness—their vileness as sinners, and their insignificance as creatures, all call for an intercessor who may go between the great God and his unworthy creatures. "The Lord," accordingly, "raised up Jesus from the dead, and gave him glory; that our faith and hope might be in God."

In further remarking on the intercession of Christ, we may advert, 1st. To the place where it is carried on. It is heaven, the place where the Divine glory is peculiarly manifested; "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, (which are the figures of the true.) but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." The Lord Christ, having finished the work given him to do, by obeying the law even unto death, was raised from the dead, and ascended into heaven. By this wonderful event it was proclaimed

in the most impressive and satisfactory manner, that the justice of God was satisfied, that the law was magnified and made honourable. He had drawn near to the fire of Divine wrath, with the sins of the church laid upon him, and all her legal obligations imputed unto him. He had descended to the dust of death under the hand of the Father, exacting from him what was due by sinners; and therefore, to be released from the prison of the grave, to appear again on the earth, and to rise to the highest heavens, was an unequivocal and conclusive testimony to the perfection of his work. "He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification."

But as he entered into heaven, in token of the complete and acceptable nature of his work of obedience unto death, so to maintain this evidence, he will continue there till the consummation of all things: "Whom the heaven must receive untill the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." The high priest, under the Levitical economy, having made his solemn entry into the holy of holies, was obliged to return; because, through the imperfection of the sacrifices that were offered, they had to be repeated year after year: "But Christ having come, a high priest of good things to come—having by his one offering for ever perfected them that are sanctified," and having entered into the heavenly sanctuary, and sat down on the right hand of God, will continue there till, by the ministrations of the Spirit, his people are gathered unto himself. The opinion is indeed very prevalent, that Christ will appear at Jerusalem or some where else on the commencement of the Millennium, and reign with his saints in visible glory a thousand years. But this opinion, while it receives no countenance from the testimony of Scripture rightly understood, wars against the very foundations of the Christian faith. The Lord Christ cannot, in his human nature, be in more than one place at one time. In heaven, we maintain, is the place where his intercession is conducted; and therefore to say that he leaves that holy place, is to set aside his intercession, and to obscure,

yea, sweep away the evidence which the Divine Redeemer himself hath supplied of the completeness of his righteousness: "Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me *no more*" The evidence on which the Comforter convinces men that Christ's righteousness is sufficient for their justification is, that He has gone to the Father. But the continued sufficiency of this evidence depends on his continuing with the Father; and therefore he tells his disciples that they should see him no more; that is, till his righteousness had been imputed to all his people, and he "come again to receive them to himself, that where He is there they may be also."

2. We may next advert to the ground of Christ's intercession; and this is his most perfect oblation, and glorious righteousness. Hence the beloved disciple, in a vision of the heavenly temple, "saw in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb, as it had been slain." And our Lord himself, addressing his Father, said, "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do; and now, O Father, glorify me with thine ownself"

3. We may notice, *thirdly*, the prevalence of Christ's intercession; and this is founded on the all-sufficiency of Godhead. The Father is able to give whatsoever Christ may ask; for, "with Him is the fountain of life." It is founded on the faithfulness of the Father. He hath promised in covenant to give to Christ what he asks: "Thou hast given him his heart's desire; and hast not withholden the request of his lips." It is founded, as we have before stated, on the completeness of his work. "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins."

4. The intercession of Christ is *continual*. The occasion which calls for it is not peculiar to any age or condition of the church, but is coextensive with its duration in the present world. And hence the Scripture distinctly instructs us that Christ "*ever liveth to make intercession for his people.*" But here too the opinions of Millenarians are at variance with the doc-

trine of the word of God. They, indeed, believe that the personal presence and reign of Christ will give a mighty impulse to His cause—that it will hasten the overthrow of his enemies, and serve to extend and prosper his church. But how are such expectations to be reconciled, I do not say with Scripture testimonies, fairly interpreted, but with the very foundation of the Christian scheme? The whole work of Christ on the earth, or what is called his finished work, points to and terminates in his glory within the veil, part of which glory is his intercession. By that intercession is his work made effectual unto the mission of the Spirit, and his operation in gathering, building up, sanctifying, and comforting the church. The intercession of Christ is, so to speak, the golden link which connects the work of Christ *for* the church and the work of Christ *in* the church. And the state in which it is carried forward may be said to hold a middle place between the humiliation of his first advent and the glory of the second. We have endeavoured to show that there is an inseparable connection between that state and the intercession that is maintained by Christ *in* it; and therefore to suppose, as Millenarians do, that he will leave the right hand of God, is to suppose that his intercession ceases; and if his intercession cease, the mission of the Comforter is suspended; and the church, instead of rising in beauty and splendour and power, sinks at once into the gloom and silence of spiritual death. How different is the doctrine of the word of God! “When he had by himself purged our sins, he *for ever* sat down on the right hand of God—from thenceforth expecting till all his enemies be made his footstool.”

In the holy of holies he is, and always will be, to appear on behalf of his people. Not like the Jewish high priest, with their names graven on a breastplate of gold and precious stones; but faith their names, their cause, their interests, on his heart of ineffable tenderness and love. He will there make mention of them before his Father; plead their cause against all opposition; obtain for them “mercy to pardon and grace to help in time of need.” And now, looking back on the particulars of his work consummated in his prevalent and continual

intercession, we may say, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth;—who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

We now come to consider, *in the Second place*, the connection which subsists between the work of Christ, and the revival of religion. The foundation and source of all religion is the one living and true God, manifested in Christ Jesus—"this is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." The truth of this proposition holds, whether we look at the object which in religion is embraced; the principles which are exercised; or the influence by which the whole is animated and controlled. In the world, indeed, there are gods many and lords many; for men in their natural state fashion their idols according to their own corrupt humour and selfish interests. But these are "lying vanities—things which cannot profit; they that make them are like unto them, so is every one that trusteth in them." To the church however, that is, to all who are the subjects of vital godliness, there is only one glorious object of worship; one medium through which he is known and loved and served; and one Spirit by whom the revelation of God in Christ is made effectual to salvation: "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things. By whom we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

The same glorious Being, manifested through the same wonderful medium, is the spring of the principles that go to make up real religion. "He is the Father of lights, from whom cometh down every good and every perfect gift." In themselves corrupt and fallen, men have indeed a propension to seek after and depend upon some superior; for absolute independence is as alien from the feelings as it is incongruous to the nature of creatures. But such is their blindness and depravity, that they embrace every phantom which happens to fall in with the schemes and desires of the present moment, and live in utter indifference to the glory,

and opposition to the will of the living God; "there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God." But He, who is himself the object of all religion, in the riches of his mercy, delivers men out of this degenerate state; renews them after his own image; and thus prepares them for embracing himself as at once their chief good, the object of their supreme veneration, the beginning and the ending of all things. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ the Saviour."

The remarks now made serve to open to us some leading views of the connection which subsists between the work of Christ and a revival of religion. But to enter a little into detail, it may be observed, *in the First place*, that in every revival of religion there must be a manifestation to the soul of the object of religion. Now we have said, that this is the one living and true God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. He must be revealed in his being and perfections. In this we see the primary foundation of all religious worship, "he that cometh to God must believe that He is." Now, in order that he may be known, it is necessary that he manifest himself: For, in his own nature "he dwelleth in light that is unapproachable," and therefore, "who by searching can find out God?" But it is in the person and work of Christ, and there only, that he reveals himself to sinners of mankind. The heavens indeed declare his glory, the firmament showeth his handy work, and on all his works he hath left the traces of his eternal power and Godhead: But that revelation is made to intelligent creatures, simply considered as such: And, by reason of their depravity, is in nowise suited to sinners, except to leave them without excuse, and to shut them up to condemnation. The law of God also makes known his glory, for being an expression of his will, and his will being in harmony with his perfections, it is a transcript of his character. But that revelation is adapted to those who have not transgressed its precepts; and by them alone can it be received and acknowledged. In the human

family) however, there is no mere man of this description—"there is none righteous, no, not one." And hence, like their first parents, men, instead of being attracted to the Creator, flee from his presence and hide themselves among the vanities of the world. But in the work of Christ, the glorious God makes himself known. To set forth this precious truth in significant types was one design of the tabernacle and temple of old; for there the Lord said he would put his name. "In Judah God is known, his name is great in Israel." To come therefore to any right knowledge of his being and character, as the only object of religious homage; it is indispensable that men turn to the work of Christ; for "no man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." And how doth he declare him? in his prophetic office by his doctrine—"this then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all." In his kingly office by his royal majesty and grace and power—"he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father:" In his priestly office, the foundation of the other two, and the centre of his whole work—"I have glorified thee in the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

2. The true God must be revealed in his grace and love to sinners. This now enters as an essential element into the foundation of true religion. "He that cometh to God, must believe not only that he is, but that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." And this is necessary, because it is as the God of salvation that sinners are required to worship him. And it is in that view only they ever will be brought to worship him. But it is in the work of Christ, and in it only, that God has been pleased to reveal himself in this character. And hence he promised to meet with his people Israel, and graciously to talk with them from off the mercy-seat; a most expressive symbol of Christ crucified. It was while Moses stood in the cleft of the rock that Jehovah passed by and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and slow to wrath, abundant in

mercy and goodness and truth." We may talk about the mercy of God as an essential attribute of his nature, and flatter ourselves that he will not deal very hardly with us for our sins. But as God hath nowhere manifested his glory, as the God of saving sovereign mercy, but in the cross of Christ; so in vain do we expect ever to see him in any other quarter. "Herein is the love of God manifested, because God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him."

3. The true God must be revealed in his counsels and will towards sinners of mankind. It belongs to him not only to reveal the object of worship, but also to prescribe the kind of worship which he will receive, and the manner in which it is to be rendered. To deny this is to plunge at once into all the darkness and absurdity of will-worship; and to subject ourselves to the inevitable doom of those who offer strange fire upon his altar. But nowhere except in the work of Christ hath God made known his will in this matter. To Adam, indeed, in his state of innocence, the law was a sufficient guide, because it was suited to an unfallen creature. But the law has become weak through the flesh, or corrupt nature of man; so that, let it demand what it will, nothing that is acceptable to God is rendered. The work of Christ, however, opens to our view the rich provision of the second covenant, as exactly and fully adapted to the condition of sinners. And thence we learn what is the kind of worship which God will accept, and how it is to be offered. The sum of what might be advanced on this head is contained in the following words: "We are of the true circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

Now, brethren, how very important in this *first* view is the connection which obtains between the work of Christ and a revival of religion. The first impulse towards such an interesting event must come from God; on the first movement that is made may we trace the steps of his glorious majesty; "for who hath first given to him and it shall be recompensed to him again; for of him are all things?" The silence of death prevailed in Paradise after the fall of our first parents: and that

silence had continued until now had it not been broken by the gracious voice of Him who announced, that "the Seed of the woman should bruise the head of the Serpent." The bondage and oppression of Israel in Egypt had never been terminated, far less succeeded by the refreshing season of the Exodus, if the God of Abraham had not remembered his covenant, and graciously visited his people. The heart-stirring and solemn scene of Pentecost had never been witnessed at Jerusalem had not the Lord taken to him his great power, bowed his heavens and come down, stirred up the apostles and their brethren to pray; and, in answer to prayer, poured forth that Spirit, by whom multitudes were awakened from spiritual death. In vain do we expect a revival of religion in our day and in our land, unless the Lord shall be pleased to appear in his glory, and make himself known to his own people for their refreshment, and to sinners for their conversion. The beginning of a revival is never seen till the voice from the temple goes forth, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

I observe, *in the Second place*, that in any revival of religion there must be subjects capable of apprehending and acknowledging the object thus revealed. We remarked in the outset of the lecture, that religion consists in the communion which a creature holds with the Creator. Now to this communion it is necessary that God be manifested: and this, we have endeavoured to demonstrate, is done in the work of Christ. But not less necessary is it that the object so manifested be known and loved, otherwise there can be no communion. To unfold this part of our subject, we remark,

1. The primary foundation of all personal religion is laid in the foederal union of the soul with Christ. We have already stated, that the original source of the principles which constitute true religion is the Three-one Jehovah, "of whom and through whom and to whom are all things, to whom be glory." Now, in communicating of his fulness to mankind, it hath pleased him to deal with them in the way of covenant; and on the principle that one should represent the many. He accordingly entered into covenant with Adam, and thus

laid the foundation of natural religion. But that covenant being violated, this foundation is removed; and now to trust to natural religion is to build upon a volcano, which will one day burst with awful fury, and involve all within its range in eternal ruin. In his sovereign wisdom and love, however, God was pleased to frame a new and better covenant; and constituted his own Son, who in the fulness of time became man, the representative of a people chosen in him to salvation; and thus did he lay the foundation of the Christian religion, the only system which now deserves the sacred name of religion. The Lord Christ, in his love for sinners, and zeal for the glory of Godhead, cheerfully accepted the appointment; and in the counsels of peace, or covenant of grace, sustained the character of representative of his people. The union of the church to this glorious head in covenant is the foundation of all practical religion, and the grand source of its revival, progress, and final consummation. Now can we look into this amazing mystery of Divine love, this inscrutable device of Infinite Wisdom, and not exclaim with the apostle, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

The union of which we speak constitutes the original spring of all revival of religion. For to those only that are embraced in covenant, and partakers of that union, will such a revival extend its healthful influence. The people of the world may live in the same neighbourhood, they may belong to the same family, they may worship in the same church, but, like Gideon's fleece, the members of Christ will be drenched, whilst the rest are left dry. Oh, how solemn is this truth! How does it lay in the dust the pride of man, and stop the mouths of all who glory; for "He will be gracious to whom he will be gracious." But observe the connection between this union and the work of Christ. The Father chose a people, and gifted them to the Son. The Son accepted them, guilty and polluted and ruined; and engaged to redeem them by his precious blood. In this wonderful transaction lay those deep foundations of religion, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.

“Thou hast given him power overall flesh, that he may give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.”

2. To fit a man for receiving and acknowledging the revelation of God in Christ Jesus, there must be vital union to the Lord Jesus Christ. The federal union is from eternity,—it is immutable and everlasting. The names of his seed “are written in the Lamb’s book of life;” and none can ever be erased from it, none can be added unto it. But this profound mystery is hid from all flesh, even from its favoured objects, untill the day of Christ’s power. In that day he, by his Spirit, apprehends the soul dead in trespasses and sins; and communicates a new nature, implants a principle of spiritual life; and thus disposes and enables the soul to apprehend Him as he is offered in the gospel. The very nature of a covenant, and the principle of representation, require that an *actual* union shall be formed between the head and the members of the body with which the covenant is made. By natural birth, accordingly, the successive generations of men become actually connected with the first Adam, and in him with the covenant made with him. In like manner, it is by spiritual birth, and by an act of faith consequent upon it, that any of the children of men become actually united unto Christ, and in him become connected with the covenant of grace: “Except a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

Now the work of Christ is the immediate source of this connection. It is not formed but at his instance in his intercession. For whether we regard the intercession of Christ in general, or view it in detail, we must perceive that upon it is suspended all which takes place in the church: “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one.” In this we see the first active movement in a revival of religion. Be it that prayer should be made; and that uniformly it has been made by the church for this end,—Whence comes the Spirit by which they are stirred up to this holy exercise and guided in it but from the intercession of the High Priest within the veil? But though prayer

be made of the church continually, not a believer will be revived, not a sinner will be converted, until the Intercessor on high express his will that so it shall be. And how is it that Christ possesses this mighty, this marvelous influence? it is because he fulfilled all righteousness and poured out his soul unto death: "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed"—"He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied."

3. To fit men for the revelation of the glory of God in Christ, it is indispensable that they have an interest in Christ. In one sense it may be said that all to whom the gospel is preached have interest in him, inasmuch as he is freely offered to them, and they are invited to accept of Him. The enemy indeed labours to persuade sinners when first awakened that their guilt is too great, their hearts too wicked, and their lives too abominable, for Christ to receive them. But this is false: For, since the gospel is preached to *sinners*, and to sinners considered as such,—that is, having nothing in them but sin, all are as free to embrace it as they are to receive a letter that is addressed to them. A saving interest in Christ, however, no man hath until, by faith, of Divine operation, he is united unto Him in the manner already described: "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away, all things are become new."

Now it is when believers realise their interest in Christ in a clear and decisive way that religion flourishes in their souls. It was well with the Church when she could say, "My Beloved is mine, and I am his." For then they see that Christ and they are one; that their guilt and corruption and misery may be rolled over on Christ that he may take it away; and that Christ's life, righteousness, grace, and salvation, may be appropriated as theirs. It is also when numbers are daily obtaining interest in Christ by faith that religion is extended. We may imagine that a revival has taken place when churches are multiplied, ministers are increased, and people are flocking to ask admission to spiritual privileges. But all that may be, and religion be on the decline or extinguished altogether. Where will you find

such multitudes claiming this kind of interest as in the church of Rome? and yet that church is so degenerate as to be no better than a synagogue of Satan. The church prospers—religion is revived when, as on the day of Pentecost, multitudes are pricked in their hearts, and cry out, Men and brethren, what shall we do? and when, through the operation of the Spirit bringing them to Christ, they obtain actual interest in him and in all the blessings of his grace: “He that believeth shall be saved.”

But without the work of Christ no interest can be obtained in him. He intercedes on behalf of sinners for this end. He pleads his blood and righteousness as the ground on which it shall be extended to them; and by an exhibition and application of his work to their souls do they actually come into the possession of it: “For our gospel came unto you not in word only, but in power and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance.”

4. To fit men for apprehending the revelation of Divine glory in Christ, they must have communion with Christ: By which we mean, the acting, out of one’s interest in Christ, unto the enjoyment of all the blessings of his purchased redemption. The life which the soul receives in the day of its espousals is a spiritual and active life; and it manifests its nature in all the graces which belong to the Christian character. Now the work of Christ is the grand point of attraction to these graces; and in it they find at once the food which nourishes and the objects which exercise them. The chief of these graces, and that on which all the others depend, is *faith*. And it is so just because it has more immediately to do with Christ as he is proposed and commended in the light of Divine testimony: “By grace are ye saved, through faith”—“By faith we stand”—“We walk by faith”—“The just shall live by faith”—“Who are kept by the power of God *through faith* unto salvation.”

Now when religion is revived, this principle is invigorated in the true people of God, and implanted in many who before were entire strangers to it. When this is the case, a believer seeks communion with Christ in his work: he seeks it in his atonement. For, viewing his union to Christ, and interest in him by faith, he

sees that when Christ died for sin, he died for it: "I am crucified with Christ." He seeks communion with Christ in his righteousness; for by faith he sees that when Christ obeyed the law, he obeyed it; and when He rose from the dead, he rose: "We are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we also should walk in newness of life." This is a great mystery, which carnal wisdom derides and despises; and which, in a low state of religion, is obscured or perverted. But when the Spirit is poured out from on high, when interest in Christ is sought and obtained, and when faith, upheld and guided by Him who is its author, looks into the constitution of the new covenant, it sees its reality and glory causing the believer to exclaim, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

1. The fruit of this communion with Christ in his finished work, is the full and irrevocable pardon of all sin and a valid title to eternal life. In a dead state of the church, men are content with vague hopes of forgiveness; and affect to wonder at the presumption of those who speak of their being reconciled to God by the death of his Son. But when religion is revived, and the work of Christ applied; then the soul is so burdened with a sense of guilt, so oppressed with the fears of wrath, and so distressed with a conviction of alienation from God, that nothing will do but immediate and full restoration to the favour of God, and good hope of eternal life. Nor until this is obtained is there any progress made in real religion. For so long as the conscience is harassed with the accusation of guilt, there will be a disposition to flee from God, not to come near unto him,—like the brethren of Joseph, who trembled at the recognition of him because they were reminded of their offence against him. But when the work of Christ is revealed as wrought for poor sinners, and is seen to yield entire satisfaction to the justice and law of God; and when the sinner obtains by faith an interest in it; then the righteousness of Christ is seen to be a believer's righteousness: and coming near to God, in the garment of his elder Brother, he is accepted and blessed. And

now he understands the language of the apostle, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

2. A second fruit of communion with Christ in his work is the sanctification of the soul. The effect of a revival of religion is to discover to men, that as they are guilty and ready to perish, so they are altogether corrupt and unprofitable. The ideas of their own virtue and strength, in which they gloried, are now dissipated; and a painful conviction is produced in their minds, that "every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts is only evil and that continually." To persons in this state it is not enough that you assure them of safety; they require spiritual health and purity. For such are their apprehensions of the Divine character, that they feel they are not fit to serve him in the flesh, in which they know there is no good—"The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." To remedy this sore evil, men may try a variety of expedients; but if they know the grace of God in truth, they will find they are all insufficient. But in the work of Christ, provision is made for the mortification of sin: "For our old man is crucified together with Christ; that the body of sin might be destroyed; that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him."

The work of Christ, however, is efficacious, not only for the mortification of sin, but also for the production of true holiness. The soul under its influence is transformed into the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness: "And have put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." The whole life is brought into subjection to the will of God. The corruptions of the heart, combined with the temptations of Satan, do oppose many obstacles to the work of grace, and cause the believer to cry out, in the bitterness of his soul, "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" But through faith he can say, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." And

delighting in the law of God after the inward man, he can add, "so then with my mind I serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."

3. A third fruit of communion with Christ by faith is deliverance from every enemy. The original apostacy, as it exposed men to the wrath of God, so it reduced them to the most abject slavery. And in this servitude they continue till the Son of God break their chains, and set them at liberty: "If the Son therefore make you free, ye shall be free indeed," In a declining state of religion, spiritual bondage is little felt or feared. The great adversary of God and man is then comparatively quiet; for he sees every thing turned to the advancement of his kingdom. But the moment the symptoms of a revival of religion appear, he is awake, and stirs up all his might to hinder or mar it. "The Devil hath come down, having great wrath, because he knows his time is short," is a description which applies to every instance of real progress in the work of the Lord. He assails the children of God with the most violent temptations; for he knows that the revival must begin with them; and he hopes, by striking at its source, to cut it off altogether. The apostles were to be the instruments of the revival on the day of Pentecost; and what do we read? "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat." We argue, that the Lord designs to do good to our Sion, from the very fact that the church is in being sifted; and so violently is the process carried on that some of our people seem scarcely able to keep their ground. For, "when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him."

He does not, however, confine his assaults to the people of God. He attacks those who have been awakened to some concern about their souls, and labours to persuade them that there is time enough to seek salvation. And when this device fails he insinuates that it is now too late, for they have sinned away the day of grace, and now there remains for them nothing "but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation." He seeks also to bring the whole question s>f religion into contempt, by sowing tares among the

wheat. He gets individuals to profess great concern, to be constant in their attendance upon means, and to assume the aspect of really decided Christians, at the very time they are secretly living in sin and resisting the Spirit of grace. By these means, he hopes to throw discredit upon the entire subject of religion, and thus to deter men from having any thing to do with it. Now how is this subtle and powerful adversary to be resisted and overcome? By communion with Christ. "He spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross." He won this victory as the head of his redeemed. And they by faith are called to enter into his triumphs; and, "taking to them the whole armour of God, to stand in the evil day." "The accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony."¹ "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not," said our Lord to Peter in the view of a sifting time.

We might go on to show, that it is by faith in the work of Christ that those who are fitted for receiving the revelation of Divine glory are delivered from the world: "this is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith"—from the power and dominion of indwelling sin: "sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace"—from the fears, and in due time from the bitterness of death: "Oh grave, where is thy victory? Oh death, where is thy sting? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law, but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." But time forbids us to dwell on these interesting topics.

5. We therefore hasten to observe, in the last place, under this head, that to fit men for the revelation of God in Christ to their souls there is required conformity to Christ. By this principle must we test the pretensions of men to the possession of the grace which we have illustrated under the former heads. "For whom God foreknew he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." And therefore "if any man

¹ Revelation, xii, 10.

have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his." By this principle, also, must we test all pretension to a revival of religion; for if there be no growing conformity to Christ in the people of God, and no beginnings of conformity to him in others, where shall we find traces of a revival? A person endued with great spiritual sagacity, indeed, may see symptoms of a coming season of refreshing while it is yet afar off. He may, like the servant of the prophet, descry the cloud of heavenly blessing though not larger than a man's hand. But just as the thirsty soil is not refreshed, nor the trees of the fields revived, nor the flowers of the earth beautified, until a shower of rain actually fall, so it is not until the Spirit be poured from on high that the wilderness and the solitary place is made glad for it, and the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose. But when that is the case, one of the most prominent features of the work is the conformity to Christ which it produces. A revival took place on Pentecost; and the Jewish rulers took knowledge of the apostles that they had been with Jesus. The work of the Lord prospered in Antioch, and there disciples were first called *Christians*, that is, persons like to Christ. "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself so to walk even as he walked."

The conformity to Christ of which we speak must be universal; that is, extending to our whole condition in time and eternity, and to all the relations in which we stand to God and our fellow-men, and to all the principles and faculties of our nature. We must be conformed to him in life: "Because I live, ye shall live also;" "Our life is hid with Christ in God"—in righteousness: "We are the righteousness of God in him"—in strength: "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus"—in spirit: "Let that mind be in you which was in Christ"—in suffering: "I fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ;" "Let him take up his cross and follow me"—in conversation: "Leaving us an example that we should follow his steps"—in victory over enemies: "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us"—in eternal glory: "He shall change our vile bodies, and fashion them like unto his glorious body;" "When he appears, we shall be like him; for

we shall see him as he is;" "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am sat down with my Father on his throne."

But though conformity to Christ be thus universal in its extent, we must not forget that it is slow and gradual in its progress. The Christian life is compared to natural life, in which there is childhood, manhood, and old age. And it were as unwise for a child to complain that he is not a full-grown man as for a young convert to complain that he is not an experienced believer. The growth of this conformity is subject to many checks, and even backslidings. The children of Israel now advanced towards Canaan, again they stood still, and sometimes they retrograded. And in like manner, true believers sometimes go on their way rejoicing, sometimes they "are in heaviness through manifold temptations," and sometimes they are "carnal, and walk like men." But amidst the severe trials to which they are subjected, the eminent perils to which they are exposed, and the painful conflicts which they are obliged to maintain, they hold on their way. For He who has called them to his kingdom and glory leads them by the right way, that they may go to the city of habitation. "The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

We need hardly remark, that, in this feature of it also, a revival of religion stands closely connected with the work of Christ. In that work is the glorious model exhibited after which his people are to be formed. And it were well for them to remember that "as He was, so are they in this present world." By the contemplation of the glory of Christ as it shines in his work, in the exercise of faith, are they to be gradually transformed into the likeness of their Head: "We all with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." But that work contains the foundation on which conformity to Christ proceeds. He lived and suffered and died as a public person—the Father of a numerous offspring—

the Head of a singular community; and in all that happened to him, his people were virtually included. The conformity which they acquire to him, therefore, is just the development of what was wrapt up in his personal history. The favour they have with God is the favour that he has; the sufferings they meet with are his sufferings—only in their case they are not penal as they were in His; the righteousness they wear is the righteousness which he wrought out; the grace they possess is the grace that is in Him; the glory they shall enjoy is His glory. In the contemplation of this wondrous truth, the manifestation it affords of Divine wisdom and love, the interest which it throws around the whole Christian scheme, and the security and honour and stability it yields to the Christian life, may we not exclaim, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword,” &c.¹

We have contemplated the work of Christ in relation to *the object* of the Christian religion, and the qualifications involved in the apprehension of the object. We now call your attention, in the *third place*., to the connection of the work of Christ with the Divine agency by which this glorious object is revealed and apprehended. The agency is none other than the Spirit of the living God, who, equally with the Father and the Son, is to be loved, adored, and served by all in heaven and on the earth. To Him is committed and by Him is graciously undertaken the work of giving effect to the love of the Father and the grace of the Son—in the actual redemption of the church from sin and ruin, and her exaltation to holiness and bliss; this is “the pure river of water of life” which John in vision beheld, “clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.”

In the further illustration of this subject I remark, that the mission of the Holy Spirit to the church proceeds from the work of Christ. We must doubtless refer this arrangement to the constitution of the eternal covenant: a constitution, however, which is manifestly designed to bring to view the personal relations of the

¹ Rom. viii, 35–39.

glorious Godhead. In that covenant the Father engaged to give the Holy Spirit without measure to his incarnate Son as head of the church; and through him, and for his sake, to bestow him upon the members of his body. But this promise had a distinct and specific reference to the work of atonement and righteousness which Jesus was to accomplish, and to the intercession which, founded on that work, he was to maintain: "Thou lovest righteousness and hatest iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." We accordingly find that it was not until he had finished the work given him to do that the dispensation of the Spirit properly began to run its course: "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified;" and how was it he was to rise to this glory? "Ought not Christ to suffer these things and to enter into his glory?"

The reason of this arrangement is sufficiently evident from the testimony of Holy Scripture. We have seen that all friendly intercourse between God and man was broken up by the entrance of sin into the world, through the transgression of Adam. Now the only basis on which this intercourse can be renewed is the work of Christ, and the satisfaction which he thereby rendered to the justice of God, and the honour he put upon his holy law. But the first step towards the actual renewal of this sacred intercourse, and that on which every other is suspended, is the mission of the Holy Spirit the Comforter. The heavens are silent as to all living and effective demonstrations of grace, and the earth is fast closed against all overtures of Divine love till this precious gift is communicated. The glory of God shines not in the soul, and the soul has no apprehension of that glory until the Spirit of the Lord be sent forth. The spiritual world is like the original chaos, where thick darkness reigns till the Spirit come in his life-giving power. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The Scripture, accordingly, represents every saving blessing as wrapt up in the gift of the Spirit; and observe how

its bestowal is connected with the work of Christ: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." The mission of the Spirit, as it thus proceeds on the finished work of Christ, is immediately connected with his intercession in heaven. In his last discourse to his disciples, he comforted them under the sorrow they felt at the prospect of his departure, by assuring them that the Spirit would more than supply his place: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever—a promise, by the way, which is utterly inconsistent with the expectations of Millennarians. The very terms of the promise demonstrate, that the Spirit is designed to supply the place of the Redeemer in His absence from the church. And consequently, if the Comforter be with the church, Christ in his bodily presence is absent. But, observe how long this state of things is to continue—"for ever—" that is, to the end of the Christian dispensation. And lest it should be imagined, that the church was to lose any thing by this arrangement, our Lord tells his disciples, "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you." But how was the Comforter to come to the church? We answer, by the intercession of Christ: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter." With this promise in his view, and looking back upon the events which had occurred in the interval, the apostle Peter knew well the subject of his discourse when he said—"therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear"

2. The work of the Spirit hath exclusively respect to the work of Christ. To enter upon any account of this work would be to anticipate the subject of the next Lecture, and therefore all I intend at present to show is, that, in the whole of it, there is express and special reference to the work of Christ. The language in which our Lord speaks of the subject is very remark-

able: "He shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore, said I, that he shall take of mine and shall show it unto you."¹ The description which in the same chapter he gives of the work of the Comforter, finely illustrates this point. He convinces of sin, but how? because they believe not on *Christ*. He convinces of righteousness, because *Christ* went to the Father, and the Church sees him no more. He convinces of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged, namely, in the triumphs of the cross of *Christ*.

I must go on, however, to notice, in the *Fourth place*, the connection of the work of Christ with the instrument employed in the revival of religion: And that is the whole word of God, contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Now, to show that this instrument is closely connected with the work of Christ, we might remind you that it is represented as the word of Christ; and hence the apostle Peter, speaking of the great salvation declared in the Gospel, says, "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify." But, passing from this, we observe that the work of Christ is the grand subject of the revelation made in holy Scripture. The introduction to the Book of Revelation might, without the least impropriety, be put before the whole Bible, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him." In conversing with the Jews at a time when not a page of the New Testament was traced, our Lord exhorted them to "Search the Scriptures, for," he says, "in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." And talking to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, "he began at Moses and all the Prophets, and expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."

In a declining state of the church this view of the

¹ John, xvi, 13-15.

word of God may be entirely forgotten. But no sooner is there a shaking among the dry bones, and sinners are constrained to enquire what they must do to be saved, than the Scriptures are read, especially as setting forth Him who is given to be a covenant to the people, that he may be for salvation to the ends of the earth. The people of God too are constrained to search the Scriptures, that they may see the glory and hear the voice of Him whom their souls love. They labour to fulfill the apostle's command, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom."

I remark, in the *Fifth* and last place, that the work of Christ is connected with Divine ordinances, by means of which a revival of religion is maintained and promoted. And of these the first in importance is the Gospel ministry. To the work of Christ we owe the very existence of this excellent and powerful mean of grace.¹ To the ministers of Christ are committed the keys of doctrine and discipline. By the key of doctrine I mean the preaching of the word. But what is, at least what ought to be the subject of their preaching? let one of the most gifted and useful of ministers answer: "I determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." In many cases the ministry of the word is conducted in such a way that one would imagine men had resolved to exclude this glorious theme from their discourse. An exposition of the duties of human life, an exhortation to the practice of virtue, an advice to be patient under trouble, intermingled with some dry allusions to the example of Christ, and a flattering but awfully delusive assurance that if men are only attentive to these things the rewards of heaven await them; that is all the gospel which many preachers give to their people. But others contrive to amuse them with a form of sound words, and to maintain all the appearance of evangelical preaching, while in reality they administer the most deadly poison to their hearers. For where is the mighty difference between saying that a man is to be saved by works, and preaching that he is to be saved through Christ by a faith of his own production? The only difference is, that

¹ See Ephesians, iv, 7-13.

the one exposes to view the destructive error, while the other gilds it over with the appearance of evangelical doctrine. But it is not in connection with such a ministry that a revival of religion will take place. The work of Christ must be held forth in all its beauty and amplitude and fulness; and salvation, by absolutely free and sovereign grace, must be proclaimed, flowing from the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the communion of the Holy Ghost; and thus may a revival be had, but not till then: "We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness; but to them which believe, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." By this criterion are ministers to be tried: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God; for many false prophets are gone out into the world." Let men have ordination handed down to them in an unbroken chain from the apostles; let them have all the learning which schools and colleges can give, and all the skill in ecclesiastical law which church courts require; let them be ever so accomplished in all the arts of pulpit oratory, if they do not faithfully preach Christ crucified they are not to be received: "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel, let him be anathema."

To the ministers of Christ is committed the key of discipline: And this also hath respect to the work of Christ. For it is not every one that is to be admitted to the privileges of the Christian church; nor is it all who happen to be of age, of good character, and of competent knowledge; nor is it all who may be esteemed by blind and carnal men disciples of Christ; but those who give evidence, such evidence as may be judged of by a spiritually-minded man, that they are the subjects of the work of grace which we have endeavoured to describe, as lying at the root of all true knowledge of Christ and saving interest in him. And when this is the case, carnal professors will be ashamed, and hypocrites, like chaff, will be driven from the church. "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

We might illustrate the connection of the work

of Christ with the administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper; with prayer, secret, social, and public; with fasting—a duty which has ever been owned of God as a mean of promoting a revival; and with other means of grace; but we must forbear. In reviewing the ground over which we have traveled, and marking the close and vital connection which the work of Christ bears with the revival of religion in all the views in which it can be contemplated, we are reminded of the words which the exalted Redeemer spake to his servant in Patmos, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty."

The practical reflections suggested by the subject before us are so many that it is necessary though difficult to make a selection. In the first place we are called to contemplate and admire the glory of Christ. In every view that has been taken of his work he appears exceedingly glorious. He is glorious in himself, in his Godhead, and in his manhood, and in the union of both in his Person. He is glorious in his office of Mediator—the Prophet, Priest, and King of his church. He is glorious in his atonement, his righteousness, and intercession. He is glorious in his grace and truth, his person and love, his cause and salvation. Now it is for us to enquire whether he be glorious in our estimation, and whether, like the apostle, "we count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord;" for what will it avail to us that he is in all his characters and relations so precious, if by us he be accounted "a root out of a dry ground, having neither form nor comeliness wherefore he should be desired?"

2. We see how truly noble and excellent are the true people of God. By the world indeed they are despised and reproached; but that is because they do not know their character nor appreciate their worth: "The world knoweth us not because it knew him not." But truly excellent are they as the objects of God's everlasting love, the member's of Christ's mystical body, the temples of the Holy Ghost, the purchase of atoning blood, the partakers of imputed righteousness, the children of

God and the heirs of eternal life. Be exhorted to examine whether you have any scriptural claim to be ranked with this singular people. And if you have, then walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. Meditate on the work of Christ that your souls may prosper and be in health; and that, living yourselves, you may seek that others may be quickened and brought to Christ. But if not, then be exhorted to cast in your lot with the people of God, and "esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures in Egypt."

3. How fearful is the condition of those who reject Christ. The guilt of the first apostacy lies upon them; and that is sufficient to fill them with terror and dismay. But there is superadded to that the more tremendous guilt of despising the second Adam, and setting at nought the covenant ratified by his precious blood. Now who can conceive the misery that awaits gospel despisers in being exposed to the wrath of the Lamb of God? O be exhorted to flee from this terrible judgment, and seek refuge, by faith of the Spirit's operation, in him who is "a hiding-place from the wind and a covert from the tempest." One thing is needful for life; one thing is needful for the hour of death; one thing is needful for the solemn hour of the judgment day; one thing is needful for long, long eternity: And that is an interest in Christ by the awakening, converting, and regenerating grace of the Holy Ghost.

4. We may finally remark, how ample and how rich is the encouragement given to sinners to seek Christ and salvation in him. He is all-sufficient to save from the lowest depths of guilt and corruption and wretchedness. No sin is so heinous but his blood may expiate it; no guilt so aggravated but his righteousness may cover it; no depravity so strong but his grace may subdue it: "He is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." And if it be pleaded by any that they are blind and cannot see his glory—helpless and cannot accept his mercy: Even for this case there is provision made in Christ. He is lifted up that he may draw men unto him. He possesses the rare vir-

tue of bringing sinners to himself that they may be saved. To them therefore who labour and are heavy-laden, not only under a sense of their sin and misery, but also under a conviction of the hardness and rebellion of their hearts, the Lord Christ is a most suitable Saviour. For the very doctrine of free and sovereign grace, which is a stumbling-block to the world and to mere professors of religion, is a doctrine exactly suited to those who feel that they have destroyed themselves. The glory of the gospel of Christ is, that salvation belongeth to the Lord, not only in its design and purchase, but also in its application. And but for this, no flesh would be saved. For leave men to themselves and they will manifest the same inveterate hostility to the Gospel which they do to the Law. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God " by their faith any more than by their obedience. The Spirit must quicken, for the flesh profits nothing. Now let sinners ready to perish hear the gracious voice that is addressed to them, "The Spirit and the Bride say Come, and let him that heareth say Come, and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him come and take of the water of life freely." Amen.

LECTURE III.

The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Revival of Religion.

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But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."—1 Corinthians, ii, 14.

IN the revival of the work of God there are two effects of the Spirit which we would mention at the outset of our discourse: He enables ministers to preach with far more than ordinary power, and the people to hear with far more than ordinary perception. *The preaching of the Word can never be imitated*—it can never be taught by man, nor learned by human skill. In this, more than in any other field, "a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven." A man may put words wisely together—he may utter them well and winningly—but he cannot therefore preach. When the Holy Spirit is given, every ambassador of Christ is another man; the same truths are far more clearly stated, and the same statements far more powerfully made.—But the Spirit enables also the people to hear. There may be no difference in the preacher—no greater clearness, no greater power—yet the people will hear far otherwise. The most common truths, most weakly set forth, will come with irresistible efficacy. The simple word read will work mightily in men's hearts for instruction, for conviction, for comfort. May the Spirit now give the preacher such energy and unction, or if He withhold the power from him, may he open your ears to hear a feeble word, and perfect his own strength in our weakness. Without his immediate teaching, the parts that fall to us both respectively are

equally difficult—alike impossible. Without Him you can no more hear than we can preach: For the dead cannot speak; but no more can the dead open their ears to listen. May the quickening Spirit now quicken us all.

On the subject before us this evening—"The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Revival of Religion"—we draw from Scripture and from the words of our text the four following positions:

I. The Spirit is now specially present on earth, and with him we have now specially to do.

II. All things pertaining to life and godliness are committed to the Spirit, and what he alone possesses, he only can disclose.

III. The Holy Spirit is intrusted with the finished redemption, not for the purpose of concealing it from us, but that he may make it known, and persuade and enable us to embrace it.

IV. Whenever the Spirit so works in the minds of many there is a revival of religion, and nothing else is a revival.

I. Then, The Spirit is specially present on earth, and with him we have all specially to do.

He is now on the earth, not merely as the omnipresent God, but in a manner more personal and special; just as Christ was in the days of his flesh. His presence not being felt by unbelievers, does not prove that it is not real, any more than Christ's not being seen of them between his death and resurrection proved that he had ascended and was here no more. Christ speaks of the Spirit's coming and presence, just as he does of his own: "If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send him unto you"—"When he is come he will reprove the world." He reproves not the world while he himself remains in heaven; he convinces not by distant messages of instruction; he convinces not by the mere words which he moved holy men to write: but he comes, and not till he has come does he begin to convince, so that whenever he is convincing any, he has first come. And he is still present, as in the days of the first disciples, for "he will abide with you for ever." Just indeed as Christ

on earth was not recognised by unbelievers, and was even taken for a devil and his works for the works of Satan; and as in his risen and now glorious body he was not seen by them at all, so the Spirit is never gloriously seen by the world, and when his presence is felt it is not acknowledged: "The world seeth him not, neither knoweth him." But as believers were witnesses of Christ's resurrection, so believers are witnesses of the Spirit's glorious descent; for "ye know him, for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you." Or if unbelievers do feel the presence of the Spirit, they reject him just as they saw and rejected the "Word manifested in the flesh." Of old they saw outward evidence of the Holy Ghost's presence, but they mocked and denied; and they felt then and feel now his reproofs in their conscience; but they quench and grieve, and even say it is Satan. Many a man, whose carnal and self-righteous confidence begins to be shaken and his worldly comfort broken, ascribes his distress to sinful doubts or satanic suggestions, when it is nothing else than the work of the Holy Spirit striving with his spirit.

The Spirit then is gloriously present in the church: present with believers, dwelling in them; present to unbelievers, striving with them: and with the Spirit therefore men have specially to do, whether believers or unbelievers. We are all brought into special nearness and contact with him. Say not, O man, the Spirit was never near to me. Christ, the Word made flesh, "was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." The eternal Spirit now is in the world, and "the world seeth him not, neither knoweth him." Pray that your eyes may be opened to perceive "him with whom ye have to do," lest you should even sin against the Holy Ghost.

II. All things pertaining to life and godliness are committed to the Spirit. This is declared in many passages of Scripture, and brought out with great fulness in the expression in our text, "the things of the Spirit of God." What in the ninth verse is designated by the expression, "the things which God hath prepared for them that love him," and in the twelfth "the things that are freely given to us of God" is in the verse be-

fore us marked by the term, "the things of the Spirit of God." Eternal life, and all that prepares for it and all that pertains to it; Christ with his death and his merits; every thing that the sinner needs to know for salvation, or can know, being saved, is numbered among "the things of the Spirit of God." These things belong to him; they are lodged with him; they are his; "He shall receive of mine;" "All things that the Father hath are mine, therefore said I that he shall take of mine." Had not Christ been equal with the Father and one with him, it had been lowering the Eternal Spirit for him to say, that "he shall receive of mine;" but because all things that the Father hath belong to Christ, therefore the Eternal Spirit, consistently with his own dignity, receives of the tilings of Christ for us. And what is committed to him alone he alone can disclose to us; "He distributeth to every man severally as he will." No one else has the blessings to bestow, and no one else can distribute them. They are very abundant and they are very free—as free as the air of heaven is; so free that it is said that the Spirit is given for the express purpose of disclosing to us how free they are: "We have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." Yet, while they are thus free, they are entirely under his disposal; no man can give them to his neighbour, or can make him know that they are given. The Spirit alone giveth or revealeth that they are given; and he does this in the way of distinct distribution according to his own pleasure, "distributing to every man severally as he will." They are never bestowed in mere mass any more than they are discovered by chance or by human skill. If one sinner is enlightened, persuaded, renewed, it is by the express will of the Spirit. If a thousand, it is the effect of the same omnipotent will: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." As the wind bloweth where it listeth in so far as it regards us, so the Spirit breathes where he wills, uncontrolled, undirected, self-moved.

III. Yet the Holy Ghost is intrusted with the things of Christ, not for the purpose of concealing them from us, but of making them clearly manifest, enabling us to know and persuading us to embrace them. Without the Spirit, the blessings of redemption are at once sealed from the view of man, and man closes his eyes to them and shuts his heart against them.

1. Redeeming grace is from its own nature sealed from the view of man. That which is revealed to the mind by the Holy Ghost is the love of God in Christ, it is opening the very bosom of Jehovah to the sinner, disclosing his heart. Now this is clearly done in the express words of Scripture—the words of the Holy Ghost himself, and these words the Spirit ever uses for revealing God in Christ. Still, when any man is born of the Spirit, it is both by the express and immediate volition of the Father—“Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth;” and there is the real unfolding to the creature of the mind of the Creator—“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.” Not merely hath the carnal eye not seen them, but the eye of the creature could never see them unless the Father brought them forth of his own free will by the Spirit; for, as “no man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man that is in him, even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God.” A man knows many things about his fellow-man, but his heart he knoweth not: even so it is with the deep things of God; no one knoweth them but the Spirit of God. Another being may have privilege of access to the Father’s bosom—an angel of light through the kindness of God—a forgiven sinner through the blood of the Lamb—but he has of himself no right of entrance. He may know the mind of God towards himself—he may understand the mind of God toward sinners of the human race; but he cannot go and say to any this is the mind of God to you: or if he can say so, he cannot convincingly prove it—he cannot unveil it—he cannot open the bosom of the Father to the sinner’s eye and say, Here is love. He hath not the

mind of God to unlock it at pleasure, but goes as a simple messenger. He cannot bring out the deep things of God; he can say I have found it so, go and you will find it too, believe and you will enjoy it; but he can do no more. God himself must reveal himself to his own creature; man may be useful as an instrument, but I must have intercourse with God, and from himself must learn his own mind: "They shall be all taught of God." "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven!"

2. But the sinful blindness of man's fallen mind also prevents him from discerning the grace of God in Christ: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." There is no finer field for the exercise of human intellect than the truths of revelation, and nothing strengthens the mind more than that access which the gospel opens to the source of all mind, "the Father of our spirits." One of the greatest minds that our country has ever produced observed after being introduced to his sovereign: "It does a man good to have an interview with the king." If a single interview with an earthly monarch was improving and quickening to his mind, how much more ennobling and enlarging must be a free intercourse with the King of kings! And the truths revealed afford a noble exercise for the mind of every man. In all their godlike grandeur and depth, there are yet a definite precision and simplicity in the main truths of the gospel, as in God being "just while he justifies the ungodly who believeth in Jesus:" than which man could imagine nothing more fitted either to commend itself to the simplest understanding, or to delight and exercise the highest. Yet this the natural man discerns not. Even the truths which are more nearly allied to natural religion, and of which the natural mind might be supposed more capable; such as the severity and eternity of future punishment, are to him amazingly dim and confused. A man may believe in future retribution as firmly at least as he believes in his own death, and yet have scarcely any grasp of

that punishment as everlasting. And then, that which more immediately belongs to the gospel he appears never at all to apprehend, although under the constant hearing of it, or even in its constant utterance by himself. The law of God gloriously obeyed by Christ, his justice gloriously satisfied, and the grace through him without money and without price; these things never enter into the natural mind. He destroys truth by mercy, and he destroys mercy by truth; but mercy and truth meeting together and exalting each other he never apprehends. Neither "the gift of righteousness" nor the "grace reigning through righteousness" can he discern. The righteousness that is of grace and the grace that is through righteousness, the gracious righteousness and the righteous grace, are to him alike unknown. Nay, so perverted is his understanding, that he would think it a sin to believe on Christ. His conscience convinces him of many sins, but never of the sin of unbelief. He may indeed be forced to see that he is an unbeliever, but he sees neither the guilt of unbelief nor the duty of believing. He would think it presumption in him to receive now the finished redemption and to trust now in the present Saviour. He would look on that as deadly sin; and so his blinded conscience, far from constraining him to believe, actually and powerfully scares him from believing. But the Holy Spirit enlightens—"when he is come he will convince the world of sin because they believe not on me—of righteousness, because I go to my Father and ye see me no more"—the redemption being completed and accepted. And what the man thought to be conscientiousness before, he now sees to be legality and bondage and sin; and what he counted presumption before and licentious denial of the law, he now sees to be meekness and submission and holy faith.

3. And further, the heart of man is adverse to the redemption and receives it not; "he receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him." The glorious things of God are foolishness to the natural heart; they are weak and insipid and loathsome. The very wisdom of the Most High, the very glory of his wisdom is foolishness to fallen man—

Christ crucified, the wisdom of God and the power of God, he cannot bear. He therefore receives not; he receives not the truth concerning Christ, and he receives not Christ, nor eternal life, nor the free forgiveness of sins. And this is not mere ignorance, it is deep aversion; it is not simple darkness of understanding, it is stubborn hatred of heart; it is not a mere clouded intellect, it is a perverse and ungodly will. It is true that error of understanding keeps the heart in a state of alienation, but on the other hand the alienated heart blinds the understanding. Misconception of God and of his mind toward us works suspicion and hatred, but this very misconception is the result of previous enmity. Each is at once the fruit and the seed of the other; the ignorance springs from hatred, and the hatred springs from ignorance. If we loved we should easily know, if we knew we could not but love. But we know not God, and therefore cannot love him; we hate him, and therefore cannot know him. In our hostile suspicion we misconceive of all his ways, we misinterpret all his words, we darken all his revelation; not only therefore must the understanding be enlightened, but the will must be renewed. Could the mind be instructed without the will being changed, man would only rebel the more; clearer knowledge would only serve to quicken the slumbering enmity. But the Spirit, while he clears the perception, always renews the will; when we receive the Spirit that we may know, then also "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost." The Spirit never does enable a man to know without persuading him to embrace Christ. In salvation, knowledge and reception are inseparably joined, because all true knowledge in spiritual things is the knowledge of a gift, according to the glorious expressions, "if thou knewest the gift," and "that we may *know* the things that are *freely given*." All that we really know is given, and all that we know therefore we receive. This may be illustrated by the promise made to Abraham of the earthly Canaan, by which was typified that better country which he sought, and that eternal life which is the gift of God to us. Jehovah bade him lift up his eyes and look northward and southward

and eastward and westward, while he declared, "For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it." It was the perception of a gift; he could look nowhere but on that which was his own; revealing was giving, and seeing was receiving. So it is in redemption. By the Spirit we know—not what is said, not what is done, nor even what is merely promised, but what is given, freely given. We know what is given, and we receive what we know.

IV. When the Spirit so works in the hearts of many there is a revival of religion, and nothing else is a revival. Under this head we observe,

1. That while the Holy Ghost is always present in his church, there are times when he draws manifestly nearer and puts forth a greater energy of power. Every believer is conscious in his own soul of changes corresponding to this; for the Spirit is always with him, abiding in him, and yet there are times of unusual communion and far more than ordinary life. And as the Spirit draws near to an individual, so does he draw near to a land, and then religion is revived, spiritual life is revived, spiritual understanding, spiritual worship, spiritual repentance, spiritual obedience. At such a time the Holy Ghost is peculiarly present with his people and powerfully striving with sinners. He takes his residence among men, and makes many living temples to himself. He enables many to pray, and he is found even of them that have not sought him. You may have found in yourselves an experience that agrees with this. In a time of much prayer on the part of others, have you not often recognised the special presence of the Spirit with yourself? In seasons such as that of your communion, when thousands are continuing in prayer and supplication, believers in other parts of the country, at the very moment of your solemnities, have unexpectedly found such access in Christ to the Father by the Spirit. Then they have asked why is it so, and have learned, on enquiry, that an exceeding great multitude were then engaged in worship. What does this prove? not merely that the separate prayers of separate persons are heard for themselves, but that there are outpourings of supplication which bring the Spirit himself near to the land, revealing the Lamb of God.

2. The energy of the Spirit thus put forth is sufficient for the rapid conversion of multitudes of souls, such as is witnessed in a revival. The conversions that take place at such a season are questioned by many, because they say there have not been means enough going before, nor fruits enough following; and the work itself has been too sudden and too general. These are the seasons of doubt which they assign. But the real and secret reason is that they question the power of Him who wrought the work—they inwardly think it too great a work for the Eternal Spirit. There have been means enough, but not such as they can recognise as adequate to the effect,—not sufficient teaching and teaming and preaching and manifold preparation. Because these secondary means fall short, therefore they doubt, not discerning the presence of the Holy Ghost himself—“this self-same Spirit who worketh all these,” and who is more than the mightiest of all means. The work again is too sudden;—yes for men, but not for God the Holy Ghost. The briefest time is ample for him, quite ample. What weak man could not do in eternity, the Eternal and Almighty Spirit can do in an instant. The work of redemption is finished; the Spirit who applies it is present; and it need not take long for the present Spirit to reveal the completed work. But the numbers are too great;—yes if with the Holy Spirit conversion were a matter of labour and effort; but if it is the work of omnipotent creating will, then the conversion of ten thousand is not more difficult nor more to be doubted than the conversion of one. But the fruits are not sufficiently manifest? This, however, leads to a third observation.

3. If the Spirit of God shall convert a soul, that man will be a mystery to the natural man: or if he convert a thousand, the work will be unintelligible. All “the things of the Spirit are foolishness to him”—the work of the Spirit on the soul of man is foolishness, and the spiritual man is in his estimation a simpleton and fool. “He that is spiritual is judged of no man”—“he is not discerned”—not understood, and therefore not appreciated. It were therefore good for a man to be himself renewed in a time of the Spirit’s power, if it were for

no other end than that he might be capable of discerning and admiring so glorious a work of God Almighty. Some men indeed say they will acknowledge a work of the Spirit when they see its fruits; when? in a month—in a year—in a life-time? But there is no better time for beholding the work of the Spirit than when his power is first put forth, for there is something peculiarly glorious in the first creation of the soul unto righteousness. The angels in heaven tarry not, but rejoice over the sinner that repenteth, seizing the first moment of his return. When Immanuel is born in Bethlehem a helpless infant, the hosts of light commence their song, the shepherds repair to the manger, the wise men adore. They wait not till they see him in his manhood walking on the stormy sea and stilling the waves with a word. Had they tarried they never could have so seen him again. He was perfect in his infancy and perfect in his manhood, but each period was distinguished by its own peculiar beauty; the loveliness of the infant was one, and the glory of the man was another. Ten years hence, in the parishes at present revived, you may see another sight, but you cannot see what you will see now. We trust there will be a progress in grace, but these men may be scattered, they may be tried in a fiery furnace and separated for the cause of Christ. After the Spirit was given at Jerusalem the disciples were dispersed everywhere, and there was many a noble sight, but it was not Pentecost. And if men will not see the work of the Holy Ghost now, they may never so see it again,—not from the Spirit withdrawing himself, but from his working in a different way. And besides, if you will not see the work of the Spirit now, your eyes may be closed and your ears made heavy, lest you should see, and lest you should hear. Christ says, “he who despiseth one of his little ones, despiseth himself;” and in like manner, he who despises the living temples of the Holy Ghost despises the quickening Spirit who dwells in them.

But if you could discover the work in another, it will be all the more sad if you experience it not in yourselves. A melancholy thing it is to hear of others made alive while you yourselves continue dead; a dangerous

thing to be interested in others yielding to the Spirit striving with them, while you are yourselves resisting the same Spirit striving with you. And therefore, by way of application, before concluding, suffer a word of exhortation to yourselves.

1. Believe in the necessity of the Holy Ghost to enlighten your eye and renew your will; that you cannot at first, and never can at any time say from the heart that "Jesus Christ is Lord but by the Holy Ghost;" that whenever you are trusting in Christ, rejoicing in him, or praying to God through his name, the Holy Spirit is of his own will quickening and teaching you.

2. Believe in the power and willingness of the Holy Spirit to teach you. If Christ, the eternal Son of God, was able to bear our sins, the Eternal Spirit is able to convince us of sin, to enlighten our darkness, to quicken our death. And his will is equal to his power; of his own free will hath he undertaken to reveal Immanuel, and he delights to glorify him. Of his own will he engages "to teach sinners in the way " for the love that he bears to sinners. Does he not love sinners? and how would he otherwise dwell in the sinner's heart? It is indeed a holy entrance, for he comes through the blood of the Lamb; a holy indwelling for the conscience is ever cleansed by that blood; but it is of infinite love that he undertakes to make the sinner holy by dwelling in his heart; entering where no fellow-man would stoop to approach; abiding where no creature would endure to remain. "Believe in the "power of the Holy Ghost," believe in the "love of the Spirit."

3. Believe in the presence of the Holy Ghost; in his special, personal, immediate, quickening presence. Particularly, in the reading and hearing of his own word, believe that he is present, interpreting and applying: "According to your faith, so will it be unto you." But. man will say this is imagination, if I think of him as f r off, and he is absent; and again, think of him as present, and find him near. It is not imagination, it is knowledge of the truth; it is not fancy, it is faith. Unbelief is a veil between you and God; on the one side all is dark, on the other all is

light; faith by the power of God, tears the veil asunder, and you are in the light. If you think of the Holy Spirit as distant—of the Holy Spirit as weak in power—of the Holy Spirit as of little love and condescension, this is unbelief and untruth; and if the Holy Spirit were thus to help you, would it not be an acknowledgment that your misconception was true? would it not be a denying of himself? He will help you, but for this believe in him as he really is, Almighty, all-present, all-willing.

4. Pray for the Holy Ghost: but pray believing that he will be given: "Ask in faith, nothing doubting." There is no promise that you can so plead as the promise of the Spirit; it is the great promise that remains after the gift of Christ. He is "the promise of the Father"—"The Holy Spirit of promise"—"The Holy Spirit, given to them who ask." The Father will give the Spirit, for he is "the promise of the Father;" and "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" and he is "the Spirit whom the Father will send in my name." Christ will give the Spirit, for he is "the Spirit of the Son;" and, "If I depart I will send him unto you." He will send the Spirit, for it is by the Spirit's work that "He will see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied:" for the Spirit "will testify of him;" and by testifying, "He will glorify him." The Spirit himself will come, for it is by the Spirit that you pray for the Spirit. If the Spirit did not wish you to come, he would not exhort you to pray for him, and he would not enable you; but every exhortation in the word, (which was given by the Holy Ghost,) and every prayer from your hearts proves his willingness. Pray for the Spirit for yourselves, that he may fill the temple of your hearts; pray for the Spirit for others; pray for saints; pray for sinners; pray for your families; pray for your parishes; pray for your city; pray for your land; pray for the distant heathen; pray for wandering Israel; that the Spirit may be given to all, till "the knowledge of the glory of the Lord fill the earth as the waters cover the sea."

Is it too much? When do you ask least? when you have least of the Spirit—when most? when you have most of the Spirit. What does this prove? That enlarged desires are of the Spirit—enlarged love of the Spirit—enlarged prayer of the Spirit—That the Spirit is not grieved but satisfied with great requests—that these are according to the mind of the Spirit—that they are his own mind, his own will, his own pleasure. If such love were not in him, he would never move you to it; and you need not be afraid of being moved too much; you never grieved the Spirit by ascribing too great power or too great love, but by quenching, straitening, limiting. Children of God, suffer yourselves to be “led by the Spirit of God;” let him “guide you into all truth;” let him “teach you all things;” he will guide surely and safely. And be not afraid to be led by him into the largeness of the love of God, “Who so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” You have strong argument to pray that “the *knowledge* of the glory of the Lord may fill the earth;” for the *glory* of the Lord is filling the earth already. Christ says, “I have glorified thee on the earth;” and the worshipping angels say, “The whole earth is full of his glory.” But “the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not;” pray, therefore, for the gift of the Holy Ghost, that all men may “know the things that are freely given us of God;” and that “the knowledge of the glory of the Lord may fill the earth as the waters cover the sea.”

LECTURE IV.

The Sovereignty of God, as connected with the Revival of Religion.

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“In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.”—LUKE, x. 21.

THE scene here referred to is not the least interesting and instructive in the history of our Saviour. It is one which may justly be recommended to the serious meditation of those whose minds are apt to rise in disgust at the very mention of election, and sovereignty, and distinguishing grace; and who are ready to impute severity or harshness to any who would venture a word in vindication of what they, in the pride of their hearts, spurn away as an unmerciful doctrine. Even were the doctrine unmerciful, they are not to be reckoned unmerciful surely who humbly propound, as an article of faith, what they do feel assured God has revealed; or who reckon that worthy of consideration, and good to the use of edifying, which, in the assertion and illustration of it, they believe to fill so important a place in the sacred volume.

But let them consider with themselves ere they pronounce the doctrine unmerciful. Who is it that speaks *here*? Is it one whose fervent love to the souls of men is to be doubted—whose heart was devoid of tenderness—or whose yoke was grievous and burdensome? And how speaks he? what is the subject of the Saviour’s thoughts at the time? It is just this doctrine of God’s discriminating or sovereign grace, in the enlightening and saving of some, and the passing by of others! And speaks He in the style of one hardly consenting to the doctrine, expostulating with God the

Father, or even grieving that the decree of God was unalterable? No: it is in the language of humble and profound adoration—of acquiescence in the will of the Father and Lord of all, as necessarily holy and good in all its determinations; nay, it is with more than acquiescence, it is with thanksgiving and joy. In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit—he even rejoiced; and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth. O yes! even while his bowels yearned towards a perishing world, and a little afterwards he looked on the infatuated city and wept over it, yet it not only reconciles him, if so I may speak, to the appointed course of things, but it yields him relief, satisfaction, and joy, to contemplate the will of God as the ultimate rule and reason of the distinction made; it is enough that so hath pleased God; it is a righteous thing that God should be glorified, though sinners should perish, and only some be saved. He knew that not only must the judgment of God be according to truth in the condemnation of any, but, moreover, that it is fitting that the holy and good will of the Most High should be exercised freely in the dispensation of the gifts of mercy. The sovereign will of God not only is, but ought to be, and with devout thankfulness and joy, as well as reverence, is to be acknowledged to be, the sole cause why the Divine benignity is extended to some and not to others in the one common mass of a sinful and guilty race; and why one is chosen and another left. Some may enquire how this is to be reconciled with Christ's weeping over the lost. We reply, that the tenderness of his human sympathy enhances the value of that homage which he renders to sovereignty, while it proves the consistency of the faith of this sublime truth with the most ardent concern for the welfare of mankind. Christ, as man, loved all men, delighted in the happiness of all, grieved in the misery of all. He had not otherwise been a holy man, obedient to the law of love. But while he thus commiserated with human sympathy the ruin of those whom he knew to be reprobates, yet in submitting this human affection to the all-wise decree of God, he only manifested the entire holiness of his nature.

There is no doctrine so revolting to human pride as that of the absolute sovereignty of the Divine will—none more opposed by the enmity of the human heart, and so slowly consented to by the yet unhumbled sinner. It is in reality in this attribute lies the peculiar glory of God; it is the most brilliant pearl in the crown of Heaven. And no wonder that the sinner's contest should be with this mainly; it is as acting from himself alone, as the only cause, and to his glory as the only ultimate end, that he claims to be God; "of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things and it is in this that he is removed to the farthest distance from all rivalry and imitation. The will of no creature is or ought to be uncontrollable by causes external to itself; and it is the highest dignity to which it ought to aspire to be under the entire control of God, and to move in harmony with his law; but on this very account—that sovereignty is the grand distinguishing difference between God and the creature—does the rebellious creature dare to deny it. He will acknowledge both justice and mercy to be in God; but it is the hardest of all lessons to acknowledge, as the ultimate rule of what we are to do and to practise and to believe, that so it hath pleased Him.

And yet as the acknowledgment of this was the very joy of the Saviour's heart, so it is the joy of all pure and perfect spirits. Election may be denied on earth, but it is confessed in heaven. "Thou hast redeemed us out of all nations," is their untiring theme of wonder! "Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." And it is with no hesitating response—it is with loud voice—that the ten thousand times ten thousand angels, and thousands of thousands exclaim, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain,"—and again, "Amen! Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever."

In leading your attention to this subject, on which, if on any, we stand in peculiar need of the leading of the blessed Spirit, I would,

I. Shortly define the term sovereignty, especially in its relation to the justice and grace of God.

II Show how, in its most absolute sense, sovereignty is manifested not only in the scheme of grace in general, but in all its unfoldings; and in the salvation of individuals as well as of the mass of the elect.

I. I believe that much mistake on this subject arises from confounding the free self-determining will of God with arbitrary and capricious acting. But no such imperfection or weakness can belong to one of infinite excellence. Holiness, wisdom, truth, and mercy, belong to the great Ruler of all, no less than power. His will therefore, though limited by nothing without himself, is, if we may so say, limited by his justice and wisdom; or rather, is never exercised but in full harmony with his other moral perfections. The apostle, while representing to the Ephesians the absolute freeness of the grace of God, says,¹ "He hath predestinated us according to the good *pleasure of his will*, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved: In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein, he adds, he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;" and again, "having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself;" and again, "in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will; that we should be to the praise of his glory." The inspired apostle speaks, you see, largely of grace, and of the purpose of God's good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself; but he speaks of Him who worketh all things in wisdom, and to the best end, *after the counsel of his own will*. It is not without counsel, but it is counsel with himself. For *who hath known the mind of the Lord, and who hath been his counsellor?* God never acts without a wise end, though he may not disclose that end to us further than that we surely know of all his procedure, that it accomplishes the manifestation of his glory; and to us it is not the needful defence of what He wills that the thing is seen by us to be wise; it is the proof that it is wise that He wills it.

¹ Chapter i., 5-9, II, 12.

Neither is the sovereignty of God ever exercised at the expense of justice. The righteous Lord cannot but love righteousness, and cannot but do righteously. I know that on the subject of election and reprobation this is the perfection that is most apt to be arraigned by the pride of man; but we may ask boldly, even in looking at what may be accounted the severer instances of his government, Are not His ways equal? Were we to say that God is the author of sin, we should indeed give occasion to the objector to take offence. And in the coarse way in which the objections to Divine sovereignty are often stated, this seems to be taken for granted, even that God creates many men to damn them. But let not the creature become a false accuser of his Creator—God cannot tempt any man to evil. However, then, it is to be acknowledged that sin is in the world by Divine permission; and while we hold that the sovereignty of God is manifested even in choosing to permit moral evil; on this the Scripture is express, that by man did sin enter: “By one man sin entered into the world.” And however unable we may be to reconcile this with the holiness of God, assuredly it is only of a holy and wise permission we are to understand whatever passages seem to connect the sin of moral and rational agents with any causal influence on the part of the Creator. Thus when our Saviour here recognises the Divine sovereignty in hiding the gospel from the wise and prudent, while he reveals it unto babes, we should err were we to consider him as meaning that God directly causes the blindness of unbelievers. Even where he is said to visit men with a spirit of blindness or strong delusion, it is not in mere sovereignty, but in righteous judgment.

Sovereignty, however, as well as judgment, is concerned in such dispensations thus far, that, while he might if he pleased reveal the truth to those from whom he hides it, he does not will to interpose in the gracious and saving manifestation of himself to every sinner. That is, in other words, he is sovereign in the exercise of his mercy; not arbitrary, however, but righteous, in his retributive judgments. “Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto

babes: Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.”

This leads me to observe, that sovereignty in respect of sinners of the human race is chiefly displayed in the exercise of His mercy and grace.* And that it is not with God's mercy as with his justice, that the exercise of it must be uniform and invariable. God must be just; He is just to all: But it is a presumption altogether unwarranted, to suppose that God must be merciful to all; I mean merciful in pardoning and saving every sinful and miserable creature. He declares otherwise. He saith to Moses, “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.” Thus is the grand distinction between these two attributes of the Divine nature clearly indicated. You never hear Jehovah speaking thus of his justice. He never says, ‘I will be just to whom I will be just.’ But though he cannot, as the judge of the earth, do but what is right, he claims to show mercy to whom he pleaseth. God forbid I should hide the mercy of God, or conceal his goodness. I know He is rich in mercy, ready to forgive; yea I know that it is a great part of the glory of God to forgive. I go farther, I hold that in the perfect freeness and sovereignty of the Divine mercy is found the very best refuge of the sinner. For, if the mercy of God were not sovereign, or He not sovereign in the exercise of it, the sinner who *most needs* mercy might most despair of it. It is the glory of God that he can be merciful, even to the very greatest sinner, as well as the least. There is this comfort hidden in the declaration, I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. Enough that God wills it. It does not go by the rule or principle of human merit at all; and therefore if God has promised, as we are sure he has, that the chief of sinners who believeth on his Son, shall be saved, the chief of sinners needs not despair; yea, may certainly believe that God will forgive him, for he has said he *will*, and his will is ever exercised in harmony with his faithfulness; and we are not claiming for Jehovah, under the plea of vindicating his sovereignty, a power of dispensing with his promises. But what we

affirm is that, except by his word and gracious promise, he is not obliged to exercise compassion to the sinner. Therefore his words, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious," while they speak blessed comfort to the sinner who flees to the provided refuge, rebuke at the same time the presumption that God must provide a refuge to every one who is guilty, or a help for every self-ruined one. The glory of his justice requires that sin be punished. He who passed by and proclaimed his name, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious," declared he would "by no means clear the guilty." So truly is *this* principle acted upon, that wherever mercy is extended at *all*, it is only on the basis or through the medium of satisfaction rendered to Divine justice. Now as it was entirely of himself to provide that satisfaction by a Surety, so it rests with himself to apply the benefit of it. To how many or to how few is a question only to be determined by himself.

And here it is that sovereignty is very specially concerned. God will manifest his goodness in such a way as shall not only be glorifying to his justice, but illustrative of his absolute and uncontrollable right to give or withhold his favour as seemeth good to him. It is striking to observe that, even in answering favourably Moses' prayer, who imploringly asked,¹ "I beseech thee, show me thy glory," He said indeed, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee;" but then, as defining its exercise, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy to whom I will show mercy;" as if the glory of God were not sufficiently seen in his dispensations of goodness, but when that goodness is seen to be exercised in his mere good pleasure; given or withheld in no consideration of the relative merits of the elect on the one hand, or reprobates on the other, but because "so it hath pleased him."

Many of the objections to the doctrine of sovereignty would vanish were it kept in mind, that the decree of Election does not merely contemplate mankind as *such*, but as *sinner*s; not men absolutely considered, but

¹ Exodus, xxxiii, 18, 19.

sinful men, meriting the wrath of God. This is what in ordinary conversation on the subject is often kept out of sight; but it is what the Bible never fails to keep foremost and prominent. And this being taken into the account, the whole question, as far as the character of God is affected, assumes a different complexion. It is no longer the case of a supreme arbitrary Being, deciding upon the fate of millions of rational creatures, and choosing them to happiness or consigning them to damnation, without rule or reason. It is the case of a Just and Holy Governor of all, contemplating a sinful and lost race of his creatures; and when the purity of his nature and the honour of his throne rendered retribution necessary; nay, when in strict justice that retribution might have been universally exacted, nevertheless, desiring to glorify his mercy in the salvation of some, yea, many, at the same time that for the glory of his other attributes he inflicts condemnation on the rest. There is here no act of injustice to complain of, but an act of mercy to admire. The wonder ought not to be that many perish, when all have sinned; but what through eternity will be matter of wonder and praise is that *some are saved*.

Hence too a difference may be stated here between the ground of the condemnation of a sinner and the ground of his reprobation, or his being passed by in distinction from others who obtain mercy. It is of the utmost importance to recollect that it is not sovereignty that is the cause of condemnation, though election is the cause of salvation. No reason can be given for the salvation of sinners but that so it hath pleased God. It is not so with those who perish; the reason of their condemnation is their sin. Yet, when again you ask, what is the reason why, *when all have sinned*, some perish and others are saved? (that is, not what is the ground of condemnation, but what is the reason of their being passed by?) our answer must then refer to sovereignty as well as justice: "So it hath pleased Him." This is the only solution our Saviour gives here. He refers it to the will of God. He might doubtless have said, that from many these things are hidden, because they love not the truth, or that, being

sinner, it is what they deserve, to be left to perish; but because he is here giving the reason, not of their condemnation, but of some being saved and some passed by, among those who, in *common are sinners*, his explanation is, "Even so, Father, for so it hath seemed good in thy sight."

We only add that the same explanation is given by the Apostle to the Romans, in that memorable passage in the 9th chapter of that Epistle, where he is holding discourse of the deep judgments of God. Having shown that all are not Israel who are of Israel, and that the children of the promise are counted for Abraham's seed, not by natural birth, but by grace, he refers back to the words of God to Moses, a little ago quoted, adding, "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." And then taking up the objection against absolute sovereignty as necessarily leaving the blame of our perdition at the door of God himself, he asks, "Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" It is observable that he here takes the high ground of absolute sovereignty; not, however, but that the cause of Israel's condemnation was their own sin, especially unbelief, as he afterwards shows; but when he would say, wherefore God, out of the one sinful mass forms one to be a vessel of mercy, while on another he shows his wrath, as a vessel of wrath, he seeks no other reason, he gives no other explanation, than that "So it hath pleased him."

II. The whole history of redemption, through all its unfoldings, manifests free and sovereign grace. I confine myself, in the present discourse, to the displays of God's sovereignty *in the salvation of men*; though it were easy to show that Creation and Providence, so full of the illustration of the wisdom and goodness of God, abound also with satisfactory testimony to God's absolute dominion. Creation! to what can it be attributed but to the will of God? He was under no necessity to give being to any creature: "Thou hast created all

things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Providence! the whole scheme of the Divine government in heaven and on earth, is just the development of the counsel of the Lord. Even a heathen king could say,¹ "I blessed the Most High—he doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what dost thou?" "Our God is in the heavens," said another; "he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased."² Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in the heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and in all deep places." Paul preached at Athens the sovereignty of God in the allotments of the time of life, and place in the world, of each individual: "He hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of our habitation."

But as the absolute sovereignty of God, as instanced in the dispensations of grace, is most affecting, so the proof of it is most ample. It is one grand object of the revelations, both of Old Testament and of New, to make it manifest. Grace! grace I is the constant theme—free, unsolicited, undeserved mercy, in opposition to every claim or pretension of human merit—*sovereign* grace, in opposition to any compulsion or necessity on the part of the Giver, or any supposed ground of preference in one guilty creature as compared with another!—this, the whole history of redemption, in its contrivance, accomplishment, and application, commends to our humble faith, and our grateful admiration.

1. The salvation of men, not of angels, illustrates it. That a Saviour was provided for sinners at all, was of the love of God, or his mere mercy: "Herein God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."³ "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he hath saved us."⁴ Thus we see *grace* asserted in opposition to all human merit. But lest any one should think that while Divine grace thus provided for the salvation of the guilty, it could not pos-

1 Daniel, iv, 35. 2 Psalm cxv, 3.
3 Romans, v, 8. 4 Titus, iii, 5.

sibly have been otherwise; behold the same gracious God passing by a nobler race than that of man, and fixing his regards upon an inferior rebel family! "Verily, he took not upon him the nature of angels, but he took hold of the seed of Abraham."¹ These sons of God, these morning stars, are suffered to go into everlasting darkness, while worms of the dust no less vile morally, far inferior intellectually, are exalted to the dignity of children, and inherit all things.

But then, among the human race themselves, look at the distinction again! "He showed his word unto Jacob, his statutes and judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation."² Wherefore this distinction? can it be referred to merit? can it be traced even to a comparative merit? So far from it, the Jews were a nation singularly perverse and foolish. They were foreknown by Jehovah as a people who would deal treacherously: "I knew," says he, "that thou wouldst deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb."³ "They did worse than the heathen, whom the Lord had destroyed before them:" so testifies the sacred historian.⁴ When God set his love upon them, he saw in them no moral beauty; nay, only pollution, as well as helplessness: "Thou wast cast out in the open field to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born," says Jehovah by his prophet.⁵ It was not that they were better than other nations in their *origin*. Lest they should think so, he addresses them thus: "Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite and thy mother a Hittite." It was not for their *virtuousness* they were singled out from among the nations: "Not for thy righteousness, says Moses, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go in to possess their land;" and he adds what strikingly illustrates our position a little ago stated, "for the wickedness of these nations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee," election being held forth as the sole cause of Israel's salvation and blessedness, but the destruction of the Canaanites as no less a demonstration of justice than of

1 Hebrews, ii, 10. 2 Psalm cxlvii, 19. 3 Isaiah, xlvi, 8.
4 2 Chron. xxxiii, 9. 5 Ezek. xvi, 5.

sovereignty. In fine, as little can we refer the distinction to their *number* or *greatness* as a people: "The Lord did not set his love upon you," says Moses, "nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people, for ye were the fewest of all people; but because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers."¹ The faithfulness of Jehovah, or his adherence to his word of promise, is introduced as explaining his wondrous interpositions in behalf of Israel; but his free love is the cause or spring to which even the promise itself must be traced up; for there is no promise of God, which mercy was not as much concerned in the making as truth in the fulfilling. "He loved you because he loved you," is the short sum of the matter.

It might be shown, too, how, in the forbearance of God with that people of Israel, and his returning to them in the manifestations of his favour and reviving presence after seasons of controversy with them for their sins, sovereign mercy still appears in a most affecting manner. See in proof of this, Isaiah, lvii, 17, 18: Thus he speaks of Israel, "I have seen his ways and will heal him; I will lead him also and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners." One would think, to hear such a promise, that it must be meant that Israel had so amended their ways, as that Jehovah could again return with favour without injury to his glory; but how stands the fact? The preceding words are, (verse 17,) "For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth and smote him; I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart." No amendment—yea, progress in declension! yet in this very connection occur the words, "I have seen his ways and will heal him." Let us not mistake. It surely is not meant that without reformation and independently of it, the tokens of Jehovah's complacency could be realized to the full. Reformation must, in the order of things, precede the external blessings promised; and hence these are often represented as hingeing upon national righteousness: "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the fruit of the land."² But let it not be

1 Deut. vii, 7, 8. 2 Isaiah, i, 19.

forgotten, nor the proof we are referring to be unobserved, that the very reformation of national manners is itself a fruit and manifestation of grace; and that the healing of the people takes rank among the unmerited and unsolicited gifts of sovereign love: "I have seen his ways, and will heal him."

The twentieth and thirty-sixth chapters of Ezekiel may be consulted for illustrations of the same thing: "I wrought for my name's sake, not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O ye house of Israel, saith the Lord God."

Now Israel was typical, in its election by God, of the election of grace every where; and though even the choice of that nation *us a nation* is irrevocable—and their preservation to this day is a proof that the gifts and calling of God in this respect also are without repentance—yet the apostle reasons that the particular and individual election, both of Jews and of Gentiles, is that chiefly in which this great national election terminates. There existed even all along, as he shows, a particular gracious election of individuals as distinguished from the nation in general. God had reserved to himself out of that people, seven thousand men in the days of Elias: "And even so," he concludes, "at the present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace."

How striking is the display of grace and sovereignty in the families of the patriarchs! We might go back to the earliest of them. In the family of Adam himself we see a distinction made—Abel accepted and Cain passed by. Faith, indeed, constituted the grand points of difference; but what is faith but a gift of God? Again, special favour rests on the line of Seth. But his descendants sink into degeneracy. Then Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Again, in the family of Noah, the line of Shem is chosen. It was long after, that God was to persuade Japheth. In the family or line of Shem, at length permitted to lapse into idolatry, mercy rests upon Abraham. *He* is singled out from amidst an idolatrous world—himself, for aught that appears, an idolater. What peculiar, yea infinite favour, bestowed upon him for no other reason but that so it

pleased God! "Who raisea up the righteous man from the East, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? who hath wrought and done it? I the Lord, the first and the last; I am he."¹ Again, in the family of Abraham, see Ishmael passed by, and Isaac chosen: "My covenant will I establish with Isaac." But of all instances supplied by those earlier records, the case of Isaac's family sets in the most impressive light the Divine grace and sovereignty. This is the apostle's chosen illustration. Jacob and Esau, twin children of common parents; the same mother as well as the same father; of one birth as well as one womb; enjoying the like advantages of religious culture—behold of these one is loved of God, the other hated! that is, passed by—hated comparatively—not loved with the same peculiar favour as he—HATED, not as a creature, but as a sinful creature: "For the children, being not yet born, neither having done good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth, it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger."

In immediate connection with this illustration the sacred writer introduces the mention of Pharaoh.² In him God would show his power and make his name known; in his holy and sovereign dispensations He hardened his heart; or if it is thought safer so- to express it, permitted Pharaoh to harden his own heart, and to become the victim of his guilty obduracy; mercy not interposing to dispel bis illusion nor to prevent the judgments which he provoked from taking their course upon the haughty oppressor. "So then," reasons the apostle, "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. *For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this purpose have I raised thee up,*" &c. "Angels must be here," says one, speaking of the sovereignty of God's dispensations, "to show the reach of God's sovereignty to heaven. So, as extending to the highest and most glorious among men and angels, Beelzebub and Pharaoh must be here."³

1 Isaiah, xli, 2 2 Romans, ix, 19.

3 Blackwell's Sacred Scheme.

But in every case of conversion and revival the fact holds. It is not in the consideration of the moral worth or the excellency otherwise, of any individuals, that we are to find the reason of their salvation: it is in God's sovereign appointment. Whatever the means or instrumentality may be, these are included in the arrangements of the eternal purpose: "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation," says Paul to the Thessalonians, "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."¹ To the Ephesians he says, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love,"²—to the Romans, "Whom lie predestinated, them he also called,"³ &c.

Let it be observed how, in these passages, the whole work of salvation, the whole chain of privileges possessed by the individual believers, is traced up to the purpose of God. Faith itself is a gift of God, and work of God in us—a fruit, not the cause, of election. And the same may be affirmed of all those preparations to conversion, in the serious attention which may have been given to the word, or earnest and fervent prayers. We see that the word of the truth is the grand appointed mean; but it becomes effectual by the power of God only. *He calls* whom he predestinates—*calls* rather than is sought. Conversion is fitly designated thus, just to remind us the more that it is wholly in obedience to a movement on God's part that the sinner bethinks himself of moving towards God. Prayer too is of the inspiration of his own Spirit: "I will pour upon them the Spirit of grace and of supplication." The whole history of churches and of individuals called by the grace of God, illustrates sovereignty.

That the will of the creature is as little the cause of salvation as the merit of the creature, what a proof have we in Saul of Tarsus, in Lydia, in the members of the Corinthian church! Saul, exceedingly zealous of the traditions of the Jews, and furious in his opposition to the cause of the gospel, becomes a thankful humble vessel of mercy, and a zealous preacher of the faith be destroyed. See too in what circumstances he was

¹ 1 Thess. ii, 13. ² Ephes. i, 4. ³ Rom. viii, 30.

chosen—on his way to Damascus in company with others embarked in the same impious design, but himself the very ringleader of the band. It is he who is “the chosen vessel”! Him the voice of Christ addresses. The others, less guilty it would seem, hear a voice, but see not who speaks. They are amazed but Saul is converted: “It pleased God,” says he, (no wonder he thus speaks,) “who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me.”¹ “Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you,” says the apostle to the Corinthians; “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.”

On the same principle we may perceive that the subjects of conversion still are in many cases the most unlikely persons; or when a day of divine power is experienced, let it not appear surprising that you behold or hear of scoffing infidels receiving the humbling truths of the gospel with obedient minds. God chooses some of such, the more to impress us that all is according to his purpose. He reveals these things even to babes, persons illiterate it may be, some of them foolish, very simple ones: “Even so, Father, because it seemeth good in thy sight.” The wise man glorying in his wisdom may stand by amazed or incredulous—the thing revealed to others may be hidden to him. There is partly justice and judgment in this, it is true; God thus punishes human presumption: “For judgment am I come into this world, that they who see not may see, and that they who see may be made blind.” But let us not view it as an act of mere judgment: it is mercy, mere mercy which chose the one; it is in sovereignty, mere sovereignty, that God, who could, did not choose the other: “Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence.”²

¹ Gal. i, 15, 16. ² 1 Cor. i, 26.

Sovereignty appears in the choosing of the places where he is pleased to manifest the power of his grace. The apostles or ministers of the word are directed to go to one people or country, and even forbidden to go to another. Just as for a long period "he showed his word unto Jacob," and as the preachers of Christ and of his kingdom were not at once permitted to go "into the way of the Gentiles; so again the Gentiles, despised by the Jews, are chosen to inherit the blessing when Israel is in righteous judgment "blinded," "the diminishing of the one " becomes "the riches " of the other. Again, among the Gentiles, in one city rather than another, the apostles are appointed to labour, the Lord having "people there." Mark how the suggestions of the sovereign Spirit of God overrule the purposes of Paul and his companions: "When they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; but the Spirit," says the sacred historian, "suffered them not."¹ Asia (proconsular) indeed afterwards received the word—the time to favour it came. Meanwhile the appointed season for its entrance into Europe had arrived; and Paul obeys the signal to pass into Macedonia.

Further: sovereignty appears in the means and instrumentality by which conversion or revival is accomplished. It is ever the word which God honours, but it may not always be the likeliest exhibition of that word. The man of eloquence may be blessed, and has been blessed; but the simple statement of the truth of God, in unostentatious style, may prove the weapon of greater power. It has often been so from the beginning. It is so still. "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit." "Paul may plant, and Apollos may water; but it is God alone that giveth the increase." But that no man may glory, not only the same word, but also ministered by the same person, is the power of God to one, and falls ineffectual on another. Under the ministry of Paul himself, "Some believed the things that were spoken and some believed not."² The Spirit bloweth where it listeth.

¹ Acts, xvi, 6, 7. ² Acts, xxviii, 24.

To humble the pride of man, too, it has sometimes happened that the same individual minister, blessed to gain many souls to Christ *in one place*, has proved himself comparatively fruitless in *another*. The celebrated Livingstone, so successful in his ministrations at Shotts, found himself without sense of his Master's presence, and almost without power of utterance, when ministering elsewhere some time after. It is said of Dr. Stewart of Dingwall, that he perceived little or no effect of his preaching the same kind of doctrine at Dingwall whjch God had owned so much at Moulin.

And when I speak of doctrine, I must add that, even as we have already shown, that sovereignty is never exercised at the expense of justice; so, although God does bless sometimes an imperfect ministration of his word, and it may be, at the same time or in the same place may seem to honour with success those who differ in sentiment on some articles of the faith, as well as differ in their mode of stating the truths in which they agree; this is no proof, nor ever ought to be so interpreted, that soundness in the faith is of little importance. We are to beware of deducing sweeping conclusions from scanty premises. God may bless the fidelity of an Episcopalian, without setting his seal to Episcopacy: But I must not, in forming my estimate of the truth or error of the system of Episcopacy, look to the blessing attending a faithful minister here and there; I must look at its workings on the whole, and, above all, compare its pretensions with the Scriptures. God may bless an Arminian. I believe, some who even conceal or deny the very doctrine I now preach—that of absolute sovereignty—have done good: but I cannot compute the harm they have done. And I think it probable, that they might have effected tenfold more good had they declared the whole counsel of God. I the rather touch on this point, because of the sensitive jealousy of some, lest the exhibition of the doctrine of election should prove a hinderance to conversion, by stumbling and discouraging those who may happen to misunderstand it. Away with such time-serving policj! If God may sometimes bless those who in ignorance withhold this doctrine, I believe he will frown upon

those who thus advisedly dissemble or keep back his counsel. Are we wiser than *pod*? I know the doctrine requires to be handled with caution; but I know too it may be preached so as to prove consolatory and confirming to the saints of God, and a means of awakening and stimulating sinners. I am happy to add here the testimony of that good man, Mr. Robert Haldane; who, speaking of some partial revival on the continent of Europe a few years ago, says, "There was nothing brought under the consideration of the students of Divinity who attended me at Geneva, which appeared to contribute so effectually to overthrow their false system of religion, founded on philosophy and vain deceit, as the sublime view of the majesty of God presented in the concluding verses of the 11th chapter of Romans, ending thus, 'Of him, and through him, and to him are all things.' &c. Here God is described as his own last end in every thing that he does. Judging of God as such an one as themselves, they were at first startled at the idea, that he must love himself supremely, infinitely more, than the whole universe, and consequently, must prefer his own glory to every thing besides. But when they were reminded that God in reality is infinitely more amiable and more valuable than the whole creation, and that, consequently, if he views things as they really are, he must regard himself as infinitely worthy of being more valued and loved, they saw that this truth was incontrovertible."

The *time* of conversion and revival manifests sovereignty: The time, I mean, both of its occurrence, and in the case of a revival, of its continuance. It is true of the individual believer, that the spiritual comfort or grace which he seeks may not be bestowed at the time expected. It may be delayed till hope deferred maketh the heart sick. So also the prayers of churches may be so long in being answered, that when the answer comes they may be like men that dreamed. A good and eminent minister of God has been found to labour long in his place in- the vineyard with little success though with much prayer: Another has scarcely begun the work when a full reward is given into his bosom: Again, while the means are plying by the same indivi-

dual with equal industry, or it may be greater, Christ may seem to have withdrawn himself and to be gone.

As regards conversion, the time of its occurrence has often been not the least impressive proof to the individual that the mercy of God is exercised sovereignly. Not only has the scoffer become the subject of converting grace, but sometimes in the very scene of his contemptuous manifestations. It was thus, if we may credit history, in the experience of some individuals, who went, in past periods of revival, to scoff at the word which was to be addressed to assembled multitudes, but were apprehended of divine grace, and became the willing captives of the Saviour they despised. What more expressive instance of this than Paul's conversion on the way to Damascus? The furious persecutor might, if it had so pleased God, have been made to yield to the sceptre of the Lord Jesus before. His journey to Damascus might have been prevented; his very plans anticipated; but it is not till he is in the midst of their execution that mercy arrests him.

Surely the very first of our practical reflections on all this ought to be—What gratitude, what unbounded gratitude and praise is due to God from those to whom he has given reason humbly to feel assured that grace has triumphed through righteousness in their salvation! that a boon so unspeakable, withheld from many, is conferred on *them*, not more deserving!

Our very next reflection may well be—What humility becomes them! for whomakeththemtodiffer? Let pride be for ever far from the vessels of mercy; nor let them even under the garb of humility, of professed humility, pronounce upon the justice of God, or his mercy, as being but barely manifested through a scheme which does not effectually secure the salvation of all men and all angels. Remember that salvation is not the only end, nay, we are justified in saying it is not the first end of the scheme of Providence. God's ultimate end in all his counsels is his own glory. He doth all things for himself; nor can he who is infinite, do otherwise.

What an affecting view does the whole subject present of man's dependence, and of Jehovah's supremacy! How does the creature appear nothing, and God all in all! And yet is not this the fitting station for the creature to occupy in the presence of the Creator—the worm of a day, before the Eternal? "What is man, that God should be mindful of him? Behold all nations are before Him as nothing; yea, less than nothing, and vanity!" Is it fitting then, that in the arrangements of *infinite* wisdom, or in the dispensation of an *infinite* bounty, the paltry merits of any creature should be of serious account? Who can define the rights of the creature but He who made him? Is he not absolutely dependent? And is it not the due homage to the Almighty that man should feel and confess this dependence? Nay, is it not the creature's happiness to know and acquiesce in God's absolute dominion? Pride, a desire to be independent of God and his will, has been the spring of all misery. It is the purpose of God to hide pride from man; to subdue this towering spirit of false self-sufficiency, and to bring him to see that, as the glory of God is the creature's chief end, so the will of the Creator should be his only ultimate rule. Nor does this end of all the Divine dispensations subserve more surely the vindication of the rights of Jehovah than the interest and well-being of man himself. It is when most abased before the Lord; it is when most brought off from self-dependence; it is when most denied to his own wisdom, his own righteousness, and his own strength; and clinging the most to God as his stay, his hope, his portion; it is when seeing himself to be nothing, his interests and his glory utterly insignificant, when viewed apart from the glory of God; it is then man is most truly blessed. By pride came destruction; and by humility is the pathway to honour again.

But while the appropriate use of the whole subject is to lead us to see that God is in all things to be glorified, it is necessary to guard against the practical abuse of the doctrine; and the explanations which have been given may enable us to see how ill-grounded are those prejudices which are taken at the Divine sovereignty, or

the pleas founded on it, whether to extenuate an indolent neglect of the means of salvation, or a heartless despondency and distrust. It is not indeed for us to pretend to clear up the dark mystery of God's ways. He giveth not account of this matter. If all were plain and intelligible to the human mind, the Apostle had not exclaimed, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" But though we cannot fathom the depths of the Divine purposes, we may remove some of the adventitious difficulties which owe their existence to human misconception.

First of all, sin is of man, not of God. In vain we seek to charge it upon our Creator: He disclaims it. Our consciences pronounce in accordance with this; they accuse and condemn us; and men accuse and condemn one another. If our wills are not free to choose the good till they are made free, it is sin that has bound and enslaved them. Let this be remembered.

And again, the grace of God in the manner of its operation, or the decree in the manner of its accomplishment, harmonises with our rational nature. It does no violence to our real liberty. It neither supersedes the exercise of reason and understanding, nor the habits of attention, and least of all, our duty of obedience to the calls and commands of God that are addressed to us.

And this leads to the remark, that it is the invitations, the promises, the precepts of Scripture, that constitute our rule of duty and warrant of faith and hope. It is with these, not with the decree and purpose of God, that we have, in the first instance, to do. Not that the decree is to be disbelieved, nor the doctrine of the decree to be concealed; but it is all-important to bear in mind that the invitations to faith in Christ are addressed to us freely and particularly, and beyond all doubt, sincerely and ingenuously; and it is not for us to neglect compliance with these, in a dependence on the promised aids of grace, on any pretence of our ignorance of God's purposes. The secret purposes of God, we may rest assured, will ever be found to be in harmony with his revealed purposes; and the word, the very oath of God, makes it certain that he that

cometh shall not be cast out; that he that believeth on the Son of God shall be saved.

Let us not for a moment suppose that election denotes God's sovereign choice of one or another from among those who seek his face, to the passing by of the rest. The election will be found to embrace all who truly seek God: yea, as election takes effect only by our calling, and as effectual calling implies the outward or common call of the gospel, addressed to every hearer of the word of life; so it is just by hearing and believing, not otherwise, that any man can know his election. The earnestness of the believing seeker is the very sign of his interest in God's eternal purpose of grace. Nay, it is election which is the cause of all; nor, but for God's merciful determination to renovate the corrupt will of the sinner, would he ever have asked in earnestness, or so much as knocked at the door of heaven and of salvation. How then shall it be feared that the God of heaven shall refuse the prayer he has himself originated—the wish he has by his own grace inspired?—But as our prayers of faith will not be refused, so neither are they dispensed with in the arrangements of Divine wisdom and sovereignty. The decree of God embraces the means with the end, we have seen; therefore, so far from being justified, either as to conversion or revival, in neglecting prayer, or attendance on the word, the ordination of God shuts us up to the use of these and every appointed mean of grace, and is our encouragement to expect success. Whom he *predestinated* he *called*. In vain we shall fold our arms in security, and say, If we are elected to be saved, we shall be saved, whether we believe or not, and whether we seek or not. No mistake can be more ruinous than this; none more unjustifiable. We know, on the one hand, that those who are ordained to eternal life will believe; we know also, on the other hand, that they who believe shall be saved.

I have often thought, therefore, that the doctrine of election, so far from being a doctrine fitted to encourage either inactivity or despondency, is, when rightly understood, the very doctrine which renders either inexcusable. The fact that, as surely as God's purposes

are unchangeable, he has chosen many to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, may well inspire with hope, and rouse to action, both the ministers and hearers of the gospel. If we had no knowledge that there is an "election, who shall obtain," we might well hang down our hands, discouraged and fearful. For how universally is man blinded and deceived; and predisposed to resist the message of life, and all the appliances of God's truth. The elect themselves are a little inclined, by nature, to believe and repent as others. I beseech you to see that it is a merciful ordination which has provided for dispelling the darkness of their minds, and overcoming the resistance of their evil hearts. What is election but just a determination of the infinitely wise and gracious God that many *shall* receive the truth and obey it? It is as knowing that such a determination exists and shall be accomplished, that the ministers of the gospel may go forth with hope and joy on an errand which else might look desperate. Election has opened a door in heaven; a joyful light is thus sown in the field of a dark and perishing world; and the messengers of Christ go forth to gather the promised harvest. Not even the deplorable opposition of men to the word of their salvation will discourage altogether him who believes that the ministry of reconciliation is the divinely appointed method of bringing men to God; and with which the effectual grace of the Spirit will be concurrent to the effect of bowing the sinner's will by an influence as welcome as irresistible. The decree gives him confidence; and the sovereignty of that decree, while it calls for a humble reference of the whole effect of his ministrations to the Divine purpose, assures him, at the same time, that wherever God has a people, no resistance from hell or earth shall hinder their conversion; nay, even their own hard and obdurate wills shall yield; and though not against their consent, yet without their previous preparation, and independently of their merits, the most degraded captives of Satan may become willing in a day of the Redeemer's power. Of course diligent preparation, in waiting on God, belongs to our duty, and is indispensable. But often is God found

of them who seek him not. His ways are not our ways.

Again, the sovereignty of God is misunderstood, when Christians are supposed to have any reason in this doctrine for relaxing in their watchfulness against sin. On the contrary, it supplies an urgent motive to Christian diligence. Holiness is the evidence of faith, as faith is the evidence of election. Whom God has foreknown he has predestinated to be *conformed* to the *image of his Son*. This is the end of God's electing purpose; and just in so far as they discern the evidences of this progressive conformation, can the heirs of promise be assured of their happy interest in the everlasting covenant. It is not the doctrine of our dependence on sovereign grace which teaches men to be content with a low standard of duty; it is rather that which, presuming on human power and sufficiency, is driven to bring down the rule, to meet and accommodate the offers of self-sufficient righteousness. He who believes that his salvation is according to God's eternal purpose and love, will find himself urged by the very thought of such a cause and origin of the work, to attribute corresponding importance and magnitude to the work itself.¹ The fruits of righteousness *he* looks for are such as are worthy of the eternal design, and of the Divine agency, to which he refers and attributes every step of his sanctification. Hear the apostle adducing this consideration as a motive to diligence, not an excuse for indolence: Work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure.¹ Nor does he allow of any evidence of conversion as satisfactory but what demonstrates the great power of the Divine Spirit. "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God,"² says he to the Thessalonians; but it is followed up by this: "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance;" and it is accompanied with this testimony, moreover, "We give thanks to God always for you all; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father."

¹ Philip, ii, 12. ² 1 Thess. i, 4.

In fine, while the decree of sovereignty requires, in order to our assurance, such decisive tests of the good work of God in us, what stability does it impart to our consolation and hope, when we are enabled to trace to such a lasting and unchangeable source our spiritual experience, instead of having to regard our religion as dependent on our unstable and capricious will! He who hath begun the good work will perfect it. The foundation of the Lord standeth sure.

In truth, the habit of reflection on the sovereignty of God is also calculated to inspire the Christian with joy and comfort amidst all the changes and trials of his present state. It is the part of a wise man, as in reference to salvation, so in the discharge of the ordinary duties of time, to be active and conscientious, knowing that the care and blessing of the Almighty are not promised to indolence and to imprudence. But if, at the post of duty, vexations await us; if disappointments which sagacity could not foresee, and industry could not prevent, thwart our honest plans; we will And in the consideration of the Divine purposes, and counsels, no small relief to our hearts, in being able to recognise in the events that befall us, a presiding will which is ever designing no less wisely and faithfully than powerfully and irresistibly. "The Lord reigneth, let the earth be glad."¹ "We know that all things shall work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose."²

¹ Psalm xcvi. ² Rom. viii, 28.

LECTURE V.

The Word of God,—Preaching—Character of Preaching fitted to produce a Revival,—Subordinate Means of making known the Gospel—Parochial Visitation, Sabbath Schools, &c.

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“Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you.”—2 THESSALONIANS, iii, 1.

The great end of the gospel ministry is that the word of God may have free course, or may run, and so be glorified. Of that word, it is said by the Psalmist¹ that it runneth very swiftly: and as it runs, and in proportion to the freedom and swiftness with which it runs, it is glorified. It accomplishes that which God pleases, and prospers in the thing whereto he sends it. To the word of God having free course and running swiftly, we find all the wonderful success of the early ministry of the apostles and their fellow-labourers uniformly traced. To the word of God we find all the glory of that success ascribed. Thus² in all the great things done at that first time of refreshing, when God visited the earth and watered it, the word of God had free course, ran swiftly, and was glorified. And that word is still the same, and if similar effects are now or at any time to be anticipated, it must be in the same way as of old, by the same word having the same free course.

The word of God then is the instrument in every truly religious movement, whether on a large or on a limited scale. It is the truth contained in that word which alone can savingly enlighten and impress either individual minds in slow succession, or an entire congregation or community together. In every work of the Holy Spirit this instrumentality is employed, and the work is

¹ Psalm cxlvii, 15. ² Acts, vi, 7; xii, 24; xix, 10.

genuine and trustworthy only in so far as it is a legitimate effect of this cause. Various agencies may be adopted in order to bring the word of God to bear on the souls of those whom it is intended to move. It may be directly taught and enforced, by reading and expounding, by preaching, by conference and meditation, by the catechising of the young, by pressing it, in short, in every form of persuasion and of warning, on the hearts and consciences of all. Its truth may be symbolically represented, sealed, and applied, by sacramental emblems. It may be indirectly commended and carried home by circumstances fitted to give weight and beauty to its lessons, as by providential visitations, by the example of those who adorn its doctrine, or by the sympathy of a general spiritual awakening. Still in every case, if the effect produced is really divine, divine truth must be the immediate cause; and the word is that truth.

Now, viewing the word of God, or the truth which it contains, as the great cause or instrument of every work of the Spirit, of every religious revival, it may be proper, I. To observe that it is in itself an instrument fit and adequate for the production of such an effect; and II. To consider how it may be best employed, directly, for that end. And, while we examine as inquirers the nature of this heavenly weapon, and the manner in which it may be most effectually wielded, may the Lord grant, that we may ourselves feel and submit to its power.

I. Where a great effect is to be produced, it is satisfactory to discern an adequate cause. Where a great work is to be done, it is most important to have a sufficient instrument. The revival of religion is a great effect, a great work. Is the word of God a sufficient instrument? To ascertain this, consider how that word deals with men who are the subjects of this work; how it grapples with the different parts of their mental and moral constitution—how its doctrine appeals to the reason, the conscience, the will, the heart.

1. The word reveals the glory of God, as Creator, Sovereign, Lord of all, infinitely worthy of all reverence and esteem, entitled to universal and unreserved allegiance. Its whole end and aim is to magnify God, to unfold his excellencies and perfections, to assert his

absolute supremacy. This is its leading feature; and in this respect it is in the strictest sense reasonable: it is fitted to command the assent of every intelligence. What the Bible reveals of God, of what he is in himself and what he is in his claims over us, is such that reason may most legitimately approve of it, embrace, accept it; and is such, moreover, that when fairly apprehended it may well invest the question of our relation to God with an importance in the eye of reason that must make all other questions give way. In the peculiar doctrines of the gospel—in the great leading fact and principle of the word of God, the shedding of blood for the remission of sins—in the cross of Christ—the central article of revealed truth to which all the rest point, and with which they all harmonise, God appears in such a light of surpassing glory, that it might seem, if man be a reasonable being at all, he may well recognise, realize, here, the great, the only ruling principle and object of his life. Apart from the discoveries of the divine word God may be and is misunderstood, and partial conceptions are formed of his character and of his manner of dealing with us. He is regarded by turns either as a severe and hard master who cannot be loved, or as so weakly indulgent that he can scarcely be respected or feared. Thus the god of this world blindeth the minds of them that believe not, and thinking of God as if he were very much such an one as themselves, they find it easy to put him in a great degree aside, and to give to what concerns his claims over them, and their relation to him, a very subordinate place in their regard. But, let the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ really shine in any heart. Let his word reveal his perfections and his sovereignty as the just God and the Saviour. Reason at once acknowledges that this must be the true God, and that if so, he himself and all matters connected with him must be entitled to far more earnest consideration than men commonly give to such consideration;—indeed, as may well engross and excite every reasonable being to the very uttermost. If the Bible be true, and the God of the Bible be the true God, there is enough in the thought of his holy supremacy, as Creator, Governor, Judge, to

stir and move the spirits of all, to break every sleep, to startle the very dead. Every rational principle within is roused to instant and anxious and energetic concern. Indifference alone is unreasonable and strange.

2. The conscience also is moved. "For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The sovereignty of God as the Holy One, asserted in the word and assented to by the instructive response of enlightened reason, at once reveals the condemnation of sin and compels the conscience to recognise that condemnation as just. Every refuge of lies is swept away—every vain presumption of safety dashed to the ground. All hard thoughts of God's righteousness—all loose calculations in his mercy vanish when He appears, and we no longer feel as if surely he must of necessity spare us, as if it would be hard in him to judge us. On scriptural views, what really appears most unaccountable and unreasonable is the fact, that responsible beings, conscious of having offended, in whatever measure, the sovereign Lawgiver, and aware of their liability to the penal consequences of their offence, should live so entirely at their ease, without any express assurance of forgiveness on his part, or of an interest in that forgiveness on theirs. The only explanation of the fact is to be found in their inadequate views of the God with whom they have to do. They know and feel that he is in strict justice entitled to far more reverence and regard than they actually render. They know and feel that in strict justice he might be warranted in dealing very summarily with those who have in any degree transgressed his law, and in subjecting them at once to all the horrors of the threatened penalty. But then they think that this would be the extreme rigour of severity and cruelty. They conceive that, as the kind, the bounteous and beneficent Parent of all, God is bound to deal more leniently with his frail and imperfect creatures, and they can give many plausible reasons to show that fulfilling the terms which they prescribe to themselves, and coming up to the standard which

they look upon as attainable, they may fairly reckon on a certain measure of indulgence now, and anticipate a mild and merciful deliverance at last. With these sentiments, it is not wonderful that their conscience is very calm and undisturbed. The truth is, their conscience is not fully subjected to the influence, either of the justice or of the mercy of Him to whom it makes them accountable. For this part of our constitution, the conscience, while it is peculiarly delicate and sensitive, if it is pointedly appealed to, is cold and callous under a coarser treatment. Mere displeasure in an offended party, especially if it have in it anything of the character of passion, irritates and provokes. Mere impunity, on the other hand, produces a certain careless and insolent presumption, a disposition to claim, almost as a matter of right, or to expect as a matter of course, that the holy government, which conscience cannot but acknowledge, shall yet be modified in accommodation to what is, rather than to what ought to be. But the idea of equity, of justice, of perfect righteousness, alike inflexible and imperturbable, overawes the conscience. The idea of grace, unexpected, unmerited, unreserved, softens and subdues it. The enmity of the carnal mind, which will not be subject to law, its dislike of arbitrary and sovereign authority, its suspicion, its pride—these natural feelings hinder the conscience from duly recognising the real position of a sinner before his God. But the Bible, the truth therein contained, the truth as it is in Jesus, presents God in an aspect which removes them all. The infinitely venerable and terrible righteousness of God, as it is manifested in a way which precludes the very possibility of any personally vindictive emotion—for who can question the Father's unchangeable complacency in his Son in the very instant of his laying on him our doom?—but in a way which on that very account more awfully magnifies the calm majesty of law—for He spared not his own Son—the love of God, seen to be no ordinary and simple, and as it were, commonplace exercise of easy toleration, but a love passing knowledge, a love the more wonderful, almost the more incredible, the more the manner of it is really perceived and felt: God himself, in short—when he is

known through his word—so starts forth to view, that the conscience, surprised and amazed, marvels at its own quietness, is ashamed of the injustice which it formerly did to its Ruler and Lord, and cannot conceive how the thought of having sinned against such a God should have occasioned so little distress, or the thought of his holy disapprobation so little sorrow and so little shame. The word of God, revealing God himself, truly touches the conscience, and has in it enough to call forth the most acute and poignant and passionate feelings of which that faculty is naturally susceptible.

3. The word of God deals also with the will—with the active energy, as well as the passive sensibilities and susceptibilities of the soul. Man has a power to will, and when that power is fairly stimulated, in whatever direction, it becomes a force which cannot easily be either measured or withstood. He has willed evil, chosen it spontaneously, and so, in a certain sense, caused it to be. Ever since, he either wills not, as we might almost say, at all—living rather as one acted upon than as one acting—by impressions and instincts rather than by volitions; which is no uncommon state: or he wills and works according to some pleasure of his own, not according to the good pleasure of God. His will may be powerful to embody and enact some idea of his own independent and ambitious spirit; and in so doing, the energy of his volition may overcome all obstacles, and rule the world—either the world without or the world within. But his will is powerless in regard to God. And it must be so; for he stands in a relation to God which at once enslaves and paralyses him. He has willed evil: and the evil which he has willed he cannot undo. It clings to him as a body of death, which he cannot shake off; and however he may see and approve of what is good—as of the holy law of the Holy God—his will, under the burden of the evil which that very good condemns, is feeble and inoperative, and cannot in any degree realize it. Nor is it helped much by ordinary religious views. These deal, for the most part, with the conscience alone, and in the lowest style of it; either vaguely alarming or indolently soothing it; either exciting its merely instinctive apprehensions of danger, or ministering to

its easy dreams of security. But they scarcely stir up the will to a real and decided choice and determination on the side of God and his law; for they fail to show how the obligation to will the perfect good, which is God's, can be spontaneously acknowledged, without fixing always anew, and more hopelessly than ever, the condemnation of our own evil. Hence the natural conflict between the conscience and the will. If the will is really for God, to the full extent of his claims over us, then the conscience sinks and is overwhelmed. If the conscience is to be appeased and pacified, the energy of the will, in so far as it reaches beyond ordinary and average attainments, must be relaxed. In this last alternative most of us acquiesce. Our will is not earnestly bent towards what is perfect. If it were, we feel that we would be most miserable. It is enough that we will—if we will anything at all in religion—it is enough that we will some decent routine of respectability which we may satisfactorily work out. But now there is in the word of God a far more urgent and far more effectual appeal to the will—to the free will of man; and there are in that word the means and elements of its emancipation and awakening. First of all, the conflict, so far as conscience is concerned, is settled and set at rest; and it is made plain that I may consent to the law that is good, without sealing of necessity my own ruin and condemnation. I am free, so far as that consideration is concerned,—by virtue of the free grace revealed in the word, and the full atonement there offered to my acceptance—I am free to choose perfect good, or which is the same thing, the perfect God, and to direct the whole force and fervour of my voluntary determination towards him. And that word unfolds the full import and significance of the great salvation, as a salvation to be wrought out with fear and trembling, by one in whom is truly wrought a power both to will and to do. Salvation is described, not as a shower of soft and genial influences, which we may suffer gently to alight upon us, but as a business to be most energetically prosecuted, taxing and straining to its utmost intensity the nervous and active principle within. Thus the word of God, rightly understood, summons us to a mighty enterprise,

and puts us in a high position for conducting it. And this is the explanation of the fact, that when scriptural principles do obtain possession of any man's soul, they bring the man out in a new character of promptitude and decision. Weak and irresolute before—weak and irresolute still in all other matters—he is clear-sighted and quick-sighted in all that concerns the new plan and purpose of his life—he shakes himself free of all the hesitations and embarrassments which usually impede and entangle him—he moves right onward as one sure of his way—he acts as one conscious of power—he speaks as one having authority. Take him while under the influence of his natural temperament, and you may find him yielding and unstable, wilful and wayward by turns, the creature of every impulse, swayed by every wind. But take him again when he has apprehended the truth of God's blessed word, or rather when that truth has apprehended him, and he is no giddy child, but a man, with a man's purpose of heart and a man's resolute determination of will. He is no more the slave of circumstances and of the thousand scruples and falterings, misgivings and fears, which make men halt and stagger at every step. His eye is single—his will clear and strong. Yes, there is in this blessed book, if you did but lay hold of its solemn realities, or suffer them to lay hold of you—if you would but know your election of the grace of God, and your high calling in Christ Jesus the Lord, there is enough to transform a whole congregation of listless worshippers, receiving some impressions, but retaining none, into a noble host, each man in which shall in every movement not merely have the soldier's instinctive bravery, but the clearness of perception and the intelligent energy of purpose which fit the soldier to command. Then prophecy still upon the bones, thou son of man, dry and dead as they are, and say to them, Hear the word of the Lord, and let none marvel or be scandalised, if there should be a noise and a shaking, and a breath as of the mighty winds, when the bones start to life—an exceeding great army, each one now resolute to work out his own salvation, and having power and energy to will and to do of God's good pleasure.

4. The word of God deals with the heart, the seat of all the affections, the emotions, the sympathies, which agitate and animate the soul. There is here not merely a demonstration satisfying to the reason, an appeal convincing to the conscience, a call to which the disenfranchised and emancipated will responds. There is much that may fairly stir the very depths of the heart's wellsprings and floods of feeling—the source and fountain of all its tears. The system of truth itself which the word contains is fitted to awaken all the heart's various passions, of grief, joy, fear, hope, hatred, love, admiration, reverence, most holy awe, most rapturous delight. See how one single feature of it, the view which it gives of sin, has power to thrill the whole frame through all its compass, from what is most vehement and violent in its sensibilities, to what is most plaintive and pathetic. Hear what the apostle says: "Behold, this self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea what indignation, yea what fear, yea what vehement desire, yea what zeal, yea what revenge."¹ &c.; hear also what says the prophet: "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon."² And this is but one of the emotions which the truth, when apprehended, may awaken. What shall we say of the fear, the horror, the dismay which may well burst upon the sinner, when the whole appalling meaning of the scriptural threatenings of wrath flashes in all its tremendous reality on his soul, and he opens his eyes to see at his very feet the yawning gulph of *lvdl*? Or how shall we assign any measure to the softer but still more poignant sorrow that may be called forth by the first real apprehension of that mercy against which we have offended, and which is still waiting for us; or to the intensity of that bitter hatred with which

1 2 Cor. vii, 11. 2 Zech. xii, 10, 11

they for whom Jesus died may well loathe all that is connected with the sin which crucified their Lord? Then, again, in the full and free offer of instant and complete forgiveness—when it comes home as a healing balm to the broken and wounded spirit; in the honest, child-like, unquestioning acceptance of that offer; in the removal of the last difficulty, the laying aside of the last lingering scruple of unbelief—when, venturing at last on the simple testimony of the word, the soul returns unto its rest; in the glad relief of escape from condemnation; in the peace of reconciliation; and in the new discoveries which every day thereafter may be made of the depth of the Father's love and the unsearchable riches of Christ: in all these states and moods of mind, which are but the acting out of what is written in the word, the heart is stimulated to activity, its pulses beat with quickened force, and with various elements of moral fervour it glows and burns within us. Then again, not only in its own nature, but in the manner in which it is set forth, the truth contained in the word is fitted to work these effects. The different kinds of composition employed in the conveyance of its truth evidently show that the Bible aims at and strikes at the heart. Its simple, touching, and affectionate narratives—its solemn legislative enactments and sanctions—its noble strains of most sublime devotion—its indignant tones of remonstrance and complaint—its plaintive and elegiac strains of woe—its experimental delineations of all the deep workings of a man's spirit, and the deep searchings of the Spirit of God: the oracular voice also of its prophetic warnings—the resistless cogency of its doctrinal statements—the earnest and paternal anxiety manifested in its counsels and consolations—all the various modes in which it exhibits the saving truth of God, and applies it to the various exigencies of man's history, and the various elements of his moral being—all prove, that when the word has its free course, when it works its due effects, if men have hearts at all, they must needs be kindled to a degree of intense interest and excitement—far, immeasurably far beyond anything that the world ordinarily witnesses among the cold formalists who profess to believe it.

Thus then the word of God, testifying the truth as it is in Jesus, deals with all the various parts of our mental and moral constitution, as reasonable, responsible, active beings, and as beings subject also to emotions and passions. It has in it a sufficient power to convince the understanding, to convict the conscience, to convert the will, to move and stir the heart. In all views of it we might expect great results to follow from the application of such an instrument either to solitary individuals or to social masses and communities. Not only does experience show what in particular instances it has done. It is seen to be in its own nature, by the matters of which it treats and its manner of treating them, fitted to accomplish remarkable and extensive effects. Nor are these to be traced merely to the operation of vague terror or fanciful excitement, or to be explained by the single consideration, that where their eternal interests are said to be involved, especially when there is the sympathy of numbers equally affected, men are easily brought under temporary feelings and fervours, of which no very distinct account can be given, and of which frequently few traces long remain. We have endeavoured to point out that the word of God, as the instrument of revival, operates in a way that can be traced and followed satisfactorily—that can be seen to be in accordance with all the principles of man's nature, to which it appeals, as well as with the solemn realities of his condition, by revealing which it appeals to them.

II. And here we might be expected to enter at some length into the question regarding the best mode of using this instrument in order to its working its due and legitimate effects. Especially we might speak of the pastor's office as a preacher of the word. But we almost shrink from discussing this subject, and seeking to determine what kind of preaching is most likely to be instrumental in reviving the work of the Lord. We feel our incompetency for the task, and we feel also the danger of appearing to connect the work, which is the Lord's, with any particular style or method of discourse which men may adopt. The remarks already made on the manner in which the word of God is in itself fitted to work on the souls of sinners may in part

determine the manner in which it should be handled. Thus, 1. We must deal with it as addressing itself to the reason—the understanding of the hearer. Not that our discourses should be argumentative and disputatious. On the contrary, what was said on this point was designed to show that the system of the gospel, the revelation of the Bible, carries its own evidence along with it; so that it needs only to be fairly and fully stated to approve itself to every created intelligence;—its main principle being an uncompromising assertion of the holy sovereignty of the Creator, and that being a principle which created intelligence cannot but recognise as right and true. The preacher, therefore, may proceed upon the faith, not only of the scheme of the Bible being reasonable in itself, but of its being felt to be reasonable by all who intelligently hear. His business is to state it in all its completeness of plan and unity of design—not, of necessity, always formally and systematically, but yet always as one speaking as to wise men capable of judging, speaking wisdom to them that are honest. Let him declare the whole counsel of God, and let him declare it as the counsel of God, not embarrassed by any hesitating fears and misgivings, but bold in the consciousness that he wields a weapon, which may be resisted indeed by the pride of a half-learned philosophy — a philosophy conscious of self, cognisant truly of very little beyond—before which, however, real wisdom reverently bows, because it bows before the supremacy of the only-wise God. 2. Again: In preaching the word we deal with men's consciences. Let us therefore deal plainly, closely, faithfully; reproving, rebuking, with all authority, but with all meekness. There must be no shrinking, no sensitive delicacy in our approaches to men. The case is too clear and too urgent. We plead with them the cause of their offended God. We can give them no quarter. We must use all plainness of speech. As true and faithful to the Master whose ambassadors we are, we may not trifle with our commission, or deal delicately with those who are rebels against Him, and who, however callous they may seem, have yet consciences that do secretly misgive them, and may be made openly to condemn

them. 3. We address men who must be made *to will*, to make a moral choice, a vigorous determination. We therefore ply them not merely with doctrinal statements and convincing demonstrations, but with direct practical appeals. We present motives to influence them, and we peremptorily call upon men to be up and doing—to act, to be on the alert, to be alive, to close with God's offers, to enter on God's service. We address them as those who *can* will; for we know that the people shall be willing in the day of the Lord's power. 4. We speak to men who have hearts. We must needs therefore speak tenderly, affectionately, pathetically. We do and must seek to move men's passions—not by vague declamation, not through their imagination, but through their reason and conscience, by topics well fitted to affect and to arouse them. In using the gospel weapon—the sword of the Word—we must have continual respect to its capabilities in this respect. Not cold ourselves, passionless, reserved—but moved and melted by the glorious and awful things which the word reveals to faith,—we speak not to stocks and stones, but to men who have hearts to feel, if only the heart can be reached.

These few hints may suffice. Or if any would desire to know more particularly how the word of God should be handled by those who are his ministers, we would desire them to do for themselves what, in searching the Scriptures in regard to this subject, we have found much interest in doing. Proceeding upon the principle suggested by our Christian poet,—

“Would I describe a preacher such as Paul,
Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own,
Paul should himself direct me,”

we ask you to collect and collate at your leisure the various passages in his writings in which he speaks of this department of the ministerial work, of the manner in which he dealt with the word of life, and by means of it, with the hearts of men. You may arrange and class them under three heads: Placing, 1. Those passages in which he describes his own manner of proceeding in this matter; 2. Those in which he counsels and directs his fellow-labourers; And, 3. Those in which he solicits on his own behalf and on theirs, the

intercession of the churches to whom they ministered. And considering these passages, thus collected, in the light in which the general views which we have suggested will present them, you will perceive how this great apostle thought that ministers should hold forth the word of life to their fellow-men: 1. Plainly, clearly, intelligently, as being sure of carrying the assent of their understanding; 2. Faithfully, as commending themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God; 3. Powerfully and authoritatively, as having a right to command the will; 4. Affectionately, persuasively, as being of like passions with those whom they address, and as dealing with the tenderest and most delicate as well as the strongest of their emotions: whence there will of necessity spring, in handling the awful and deep things of God, a certain sympathy with whatsoever is human, which, instead of lessening the weight of the uncompromised righteousness and truth of the Bible, may invest it only with a more affecting pathos—a graver and more solemn awe.

2. The same principles may be applied to the more private ministrations of the pastor; and while they very clearly show the importance and necessity of such private intercourse between pastor and people, they go far to determine also of what character it should be. If indeed we deal with a weapon, so admirably and exquisitely fitted to the various elements of force and of feeling, in men's nature, then clearly the more closely we have access to that nature and to its workings in particular minds, the better may be our hope of success. If by our instrumentality the word of God which we handle is to have its free and full course, we must assist in bringing it to bear, not on men congregated in masses merely, but on families apart and on individuals apart. Hence in all cases in which the word is running swiftly and working powerfully, there will be an increased earnestness in seeking for such private and confidential ministrations on the people's side, and increased alacrity and delight in granting them on the side of the pastor: And not merely in cold and formal visitations, but in meetings and communings of two or three, where reserve is laid aside and hearts are laid bare, there will

be openings for the most precise and pointed applications of Divine truth—opportunities of speaking a word in season. Would that there were more of this frankness and friendship in the fellowship of the saints generally, and especially in the fellowship of pastors and people—in the going in and out of the Lord's servant among the families to whom he preaches the word, and the application of one and another in these families to him, each laying open his own secret case, that he might prescribe to each his own suitable cure. Thus would we know better how the work of God is going on, and how it fares with your souls: And thus by our better knowledge and better understanding of one another, by the freer communication of your wants to us, and the better adaptation of our ministry to you, we should be mutually stimulated and revived, and the word of the Lord would have freer course; and in the deepening of many an impression, which is now suffered to fade away; in the following out of many a conviction which is now apt to be soon forgotten; in the right direction given to many an impulse and awakening, which men know not how to improve; in the confirming of many a purpose of those almost persuaded to be Christians; in the completion of many a conversion half begun; in the driving home of many a shaft, which else must soon fall powerless away, and the pouring in to the wounded spirit of many a healing cordial which it may be apt, when most it needs it, to refuse; in these various ways of reviving, awakening, soothing, sanctifying, the word of God, having freer course, would be more signally and effectually glorified. We might apply these general remarks to many of the details of the ministerial work, as it may be carried on among the old and the young, in the various forms of catechising—visiting—Sabbath teaching; but we hasten to conclude this lecture with a single practical observation.

In considering the present state of the church of Christ, and the prospects of his cause in the world it is often very satisfactory to think that there may be an element of hitherto untried power, in store and in reserve, for the full accomplishment of its final triumph, For there is much in what we now see, but too well

fitted to discourage hope and to try faith. The slow and doubtful progress of the truth, and the feeble stand which it makes against ignorance and error and sin; the uncertain sound which the trumpet gives; the sad disorder and disunion in the ranks of friends; the various resources of emboldened foes; the little influence which vital Christianity really has on the management of affairs, and on the conduct of the multitudes who bear the name; and the sort of quiet understanding which seems so extensively to prevail, that—a decent compromise being made with religion, more earnest in some quarters, more formal in others—the routine of civil and social life must not be too much disturbed by its interference; these and similar features in ‘the aspect of the church and the world suggest painful questionings and doubts, in the midst of which it is a relief to call to mind that it may not be altogether on the system of forces now in operation that success is ultimately to depend, but that there may be a new era and a new energy. It is to be observed however that this idea may easily be pushed too far, and may be made to minister to a dangerous practical error—the error of evading present duty on the faith of future means and opportunities. Thus the Jews in our Lord’s days required a sign. They would not be convinced by what they saw and heard. They waited for their own particular sign from heaven. They postponed and put away from them the instant and urgent obligation of giving heed to the claims of a present Saviour, vainly and presumptuously reckoning on some other method of interposition to save them—on some more convincing token, or some more awakening and irresistible call. Thus also the rich man in the parable, speaking of his brethren on whom ordinary motives and influences had been brought to bear in vain, still clung to the hope that a new event might make a new impression: Alas! it is too common a delusion; and one to which too many of you may be liable, adopting in regard to yourselves while yet on earth the vain notion which haunted the wretched man in hell when he desperately caught at one last chance of saving those whom in his lifetime he had contributed to ruin. You have Moses and the Prophets, and you

confess you do not hear them as you ought. But surely if one rose from the dead you would repent. You may not be quite so serious now as you think and feel that you should be. But you have a vague sort of expectation that something will yet occur to rouse you to timely concern. You think that surely on a sick-bed, or under the visitation of God's chastening hand—when time and its vanities fade from before you, and eternal realities are pressed on your regard, you will be more in earnest and more alive. Or perhaps you fancy that if God were more signally working in the place where you dwell and the church to which you belong—if he were more manifestly, and in a more remarkable way, interfering to quicken the dead souls and to move the dry bones—if you witnessed tokens of revival, you would cease to be so cold and careless as you are now, you would be awed and solemnised. Surely if one, and still more if many were seen starting up into new life under some new and powerful movement of the Spirit of God, you would not be unconcerned; your minds would be stirred with new thoughts; your hearts would burn with new fire. Somewhat of the same feeling may arise in regard to the cause of Christ at large. And in both cases, in reference both to individuals and to the general church, it is a feeling which, unless very wisely regulated, is apt to become most mischievous. It may be doubly mischievous, 1. As encouraging a certain distaste and disaffection towards the more ordinary means and movements of grace; and, 2. As hindering and frustrating the right improvement of extraordinary signs and extraordinary seasons, when these do occur.

1. The idea, that surely if one rose from the dead you would repent, may encourage your neglect of Moses and the Prophets—seeming to lessen both your obligation to profit and your expectation of profiting by them, and reconciling you to a very scanty measure of fruit, as if it were all that you could reasonably be required to reap from them. In this way you come to excuse and almost to justify your present indifference and want of zeal, and your easy acquiescence in a comparatively low tone of feeling, a very low standard of principle and of attainment. This is a grievous evil in

the case of individuals. You enjoy unspeakable advantages in the means and opportunities of improvement with which you are every day and every week so highly favoured: but are not these apt to pall upon your spiritual taste—to become stale and weary—unprofitable and uninteresting? You feel that there is a sameness, a commonplace insipidity about them. They do not greatly arouse or affect you—indeed you would think it somewhat strange if they did. You are conscious of a considerable degree of listlessness and languor in your ordinary sacred exercises. They have not the zest which you would like them to have, nor have you that vivid sense of reality which should give substance to things hoped for and evidence to things not seen. Surely the fault must lie partly in the way in which these things are presented to you. At all events, familiarity somewhat blunts the keen edge of sensibility, and it can be scarcely thought wonderful that you do not tremble and weep and burn and rejoice, when the song is old and the tale thrice told. Still your mind is not altogether carnal, your heart is not hard; you are on the whole as much impressed as your circumstances now seem to require; and when God does visit you more closely in some striking dispensation of Providence, or by some special sign or awful warning, you will be more deeply moved and stirred. Nay, but be assured that you may be thus grievously sinning against the Holy Spirit of God. Even when there seems to be an entire absence of every thing fitted to awaken and excite—when matters are going on with the most dreary uniformity—when day after day and Sabbath after Sabbath bring still the same unvarying round of common duties and common influences, alike for good and for evil, even then there is enough in every verse of the Bible on which you meditate, or over which you pray, to revive your souls, and every hour spent in your closets may be a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. O! beware of the infatuation of requiring a sign, or waiting till some wonderful interposition takes place to startle and to save you. You have Moses and the Prophets, hear them. Be sure that now is the accepted time—now is the day of salvation. Nor is this evil less,

in the case of the church at large, if she should seek thus to palliate her present inefficiency, and to reckon on a future awakening. Let none say, for example, when the Jews are brought in, or when this or that new impulse is imparted, then there will be life and unity and enlargement to the church, as if her present deadness and disunion and straitness might thus be the less blamed, or as if her efforts might in the meantime be suspended or relaxed. For in all this we tempt God and limit the Holy One of Israel. To acquiesce in any of the evils of a low state of religion, as if they were inevitable, and to assume the insufficiency of the influences now at work, and the necessity of something more, as if God were under some sort of obligation to interpose in some wonderful way, to break the long silence of his ordinary providence, and to speak out with a voice that may startle the dead—what is this but a vain and impious attempt to shift the blame away from ourselves, and to charge God foolishly—a presumptuous refusal to be converted, unless we see signs and wonders?—although we profess to believe that there is enough in the still small voice of the gospel of peace—enough in its feeblest utterance, enough in its faintest echo, to tame the wildest of human passions, to soothe *he bitterest of human woes, to inspire every soul with zeal, and to knit all hearts together in love? Surely at least, something more may be done for turning to account the present resources of the church, the gifts which her great Head has received for her, the riches of his grace and truth in his word, the unexhausted treasure in heaven on which she may freely draw; and not till the very utmost has been made of these resources, for the purpose of revival—of union—of enlargement—not till then may we sit down in helpless indolence and wait for better days and better means and men.

2. But this is not all. The feeling of which we are speaking, unduly indulged, may not only tend to take your minds away from present means and opportunities, to palliate the sin of deadness in religion, and to encourage you in relaxing effort and restraining prayer; but it must unfit you for rightly discerning and improving the very interpositions for which you wait, Ye hypo-

crites, said our Lord to the Pharisees, ye cannot discern the signs of the times. Yet these were the very persons who were continually requiring a sign. Having fixed in their own minds what sort of sign would satisfy them, they overlooked all other signs, however numerous and convincing. But even supposing the sign which you expect to be given, or a sign of the same kind, may you not but too probably be disappointed in regard to the effect which it should produce? For, may you not be looking for profit from these visitations in a way in which they were never fitted or intended to yield it? May you not be overlooking what they have in common with more ordinary means, though doubtless in a greater degree, and fixing your thoughts on what they have peculiar to themselves? Whereas it may be what they have in common with all other ordinances that is alone essential. What they have peculiar to themselves may rank in a great degree among the mere accidents, and circumstantials of the work. You have Moses and the Prophets, but you think that surely if one rose from the dead you would repent and be revived. And what is it in this sign that you reckon on as likely to produce so great and certain an impression? Ah! it may not perhaps be the substantial message which one risen from the dead would have to deliver. That would be as old and ineffectual as the weary tale of Moses and the Prophets. It may be the mere marvel of his resurrection, and the strangeness of the voice issuing from the tomb.

In the case of individuals, how often does this delusion operate and how often is its vanity felt; and in reference to the church at large, and her expectation of times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Surely any thing approaching to carnal indifference, as to desponding unbelief, in our estimate and use of present influences, such as they are, is the worst possible preparation for improving these times of refreshing when they come, and the worst possible method for hastening their coming. There is no new gospel to be preached, no new name to be given under heaven whereby men may be saved. But the efficacy of the old gospel will be more signally manifested, the saving power of the old name will be more widely and

wonderfully felt. And when is it that, as a church or as a congregation of a church, you are most likely to be in a frame and posture the best fitted for turning to account the dispensations and visitations of God—the signs and tokens which may be given? Is it when you are looking merely or chiefly to the things wherein they differ from what you have been accustomed to see and hear, or when you are looking mainly to the things wherein they agree? In the former case you are likely enough to be excited—to be overawed—to be perhaps alarmed and aroused, by the strange and wonderful work of the Lord. But surely it is when you are wholly engrossed with the old theme, which is the real staple of all this new awakening,—it is then that you are most likely, by the blessing of God, to be converted and to be quickened. The word and the Spirit of God are at all times within your reach. You have Moses and the Prophets, and it is when you are in the very attitude of hearing them, that you will be most sure of receiving good, if one should rise from the dead. It is when you are using the word, and stirring up the gift of the Spirit that is in you, that you are most certain to be in the way of a blessed renewal and revival, when any event in providence, or any act of the sovereignty of God causes a freer course of that same word—a more abundant outpouring of that same Spirit.

Continue ye then in the things which ye have learned, and have been assured of, and have known from childhood, even in the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus—not as if you should be satisfied with the present amount of influence which they exercise either over you or over your children, or should cease to look and pray and wait for times of refreshing when a new impulse may be given, but in the humble conviction that so doing you are in the way of grace and in the path of duty now, and that you are in the best position to turn to account—by the help of him by whose inspiration all Scripture is given, and by whose sovereign will all events are ordered and all spiritual blessings dispensed—whatever more extraordinary means of revival He may be pleased to send. Amen.

LECTURE VI.

Prayer—Private, Family, Social, Public,—Its Spirit, Character, and Objects, as connected with the Revival of Religion,—Prayer for Ministers—for Believers and Unbelievers.

BY THE REV. ALEXANDER CUMMING,

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IN all the institutions which God has framed we discover the glowing traces of divine wisdom; he has adapted them to the nature of man with an exquisite skill which shows how deeply he knows its hidden secrets. Prayer is an ordinance remarkably suited to the exigencies of our fallen condition, because it tends to preserve in our minds a vivid impression of the divine agency. We are too apt to let our views terminate in the operation of secondary causes, and to forget that Almighty power to which they are indebted for their energy and existence; but when God suspends the communication of his benefits upon prayer, he compels us to recognise his providence in the economy of human affairs. When they are bestowed upon importunate petitions being preferred, and withheld upon the omission of this duty, we see that God wields the whole machinery of second causes, which is so apt to veil him from our notice, and that he does what he pleases in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of this lower world. And if prayer has been appointed that he might be acknowledged as the author and distributor of temporal blessings, much more is it necessary that the same mean should exist as the accredited mode of recognising him in conferring more precious mercies, such as the spiritual transformation implied in renovation of heart.

We learn from Scripture that the exhibition of omnipotent power made in the conversion of a soul is

equivalent to that implied in the creation of a new world, or in the resuscitation of a dead body; and if his agency should be marked in the common occurrences which are productive of comfort to us, much more should the impress of his hand be discerned in those mighty changes in a human soul, which are much more glorious in their nature and lasting in their consequences than the formation of a new sun or any revolution in the material universe. Hence if prayer is an established medium by which God transmits to us temporal gifts, much more is it necessary as the channel by which enriching favours to the soul should flow. If sinners were reclaimed from darkness and ignorance by the instrumentality of the preacher, without the intervention of such an ordinance as prayer, the transformation would be attributed to the eloquence, piety, or skill of man, and God would be defrauded of his glory. Now, that any thing should be ascribed to man so disproportioned to his powers, as the infusion of vital spirituality into a soul, would be in the highest degree unbecoming; for it would be arrogating to him one of the most transcendent displays of omnipotent power; and yet so prone is he to lose sight of his Creator, and to transfer to the creature or to secondary causes the honour with which his holy name should be invested, that unless prayer had been instituted, the crown would have been snatched from the head of God. It is true that, in the heavenly world, where God shines in the full blaze of his perfections, and where he is seen to be all-controlling and all-pervading Ruler of the universe, prayer may not be necessary to remind the angels and glorified saints, that God is the animating spring of inferior causes: *There* praise for benefits conferred supplants prayer for needed favours; *there* that communion with God, which it is one great end of prayer to create here, is upheld, not by petitions, but by a ceaseless shout of adoring hallelujahs; but in this shadowy scene, where God is shrouded from our view by the mists of carnality and unbelief, that institution is indispensably requisite. God has sometimes heard the prayers of unregenerate men, not that they were embued with the immortal principle of faith, but because their prayers

implied an acknowledgment of his supremacy and providential sway, just as Christ enabled men to work miracles because they believed in his power, though no operation of saving faith was put forth.

But while prayer is necessary as a recognition of God's agency in the world, the various forms and degrees of it cause an acknowledgment of all the perfections which adorn his nature: our penitential confessions do homage to his immaculate sanctity and immutable justice; our ascriptions of adoration—to his awful majesty, and our persevering importunity in demanding the fulfilment of his promises—to his truth and love. When we persist in the exercise of prayer, notwithstanding all discouragement, we do honour to that loving kindness which will not frustrate the anticipations that are formed upon the basis of his written declarations; and the longer the perseverance is maintained, and the more unpromising the symptoms against which it is upheld, the greater is the lustre reflected upon his character. Hence blessings of great magnitude are associated with ardour and perseverance in prayer; for the more splendidly these qualities shine, the greater is the attestation borne to his fidelity and love. It is the invariable constitution of the kingdom of heaven that blessings of great magnitude are not imparted except to prayers of the deepest urgency. When the disciples asked Jesus why they could not dispossess the demon he had ejected on his descent from the mount of Transfiguration, he said to them, This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting. This language intimated, that though the more common class might be easily expelled, that stubborn description could not be driven out except by great assiduity in supplication. When the two disciples were traveling to Emmaus, our Saviour met them, and unfolded to them the full lustre of the Scripture promises that related to his sufferings, till an expansive glow of heavenly emotion was diffused over their souls; but he did not discover himself as their risen Redeemer till their ardour for communion with him was severely tasked. He made as though he would have gone farther; and when they urged him to take shelter during the night

in their abode, he seemed to repel their kindness, till it is said they constrained him to turn aside with them; then he made himself known in the breaking of bread; and this is in exact harmony with the way in which the Saviour acts in every age: he heaps many blessings even on his feeblest saints, who soar not to the sublime height of holy confidence which prompts the Jacob-like wrestling of others; he makes their hearts burn within them by gilding some cheering promises with a ray of celestial brightness; but it is to those who, by their unconquerable ardour and inflexible perseverance, compel him to turn aside, that he gives the sweetest glimpses of his reconciled countenance. The frame of mind then acquired is such as renders it compatible with the procedure of God's administration to grant the particular boon that may be desired. If benefits of vast magnitude are to be bestowed, they must therefore be preceded by prayers of fervid pathos; and God often delays an answer to supplication, not that he despises the anxious voice of our humble entreaty, but because he waits till our desires gain an accession of strength, and are somewhat commensurate to the vastness of the mercy that is stored up for us; and for this purpose he sometimes encircles us with an array of troubles, that they may enhance the frequency and earnestness of our addresses to the throne of grace. Jacob saw God face to face at Peniel; and was dignified with a new name, even that of Israel; but he might not have been graced with so illustrious a distinction had he not been hemmed round by a circle of troubles, and driven to God by the impending fear of death from his brother Esau. The intense flame of prayer kindled at that time, and the humble confessions poured from his penitential bosom, rendered it consistent with the laws which the Almighty has established, that something more should be vouchsafed than an immunity from threatened evil; and accordingly he was favoured with a visit from God, far more condescending than that which gilded his slumbers at Bethel. Hannah prayed for a man child, and she was goaded on to burning importunity by the unrelenting taunts of her adversary; but God had in reserve for her something far more stupendous than she

had ventured to hope. She was to have six children, and her son Samuel was destined to be the most illustrious saint who figured in his day; and God used the cruel inflictions of her neighbour's tongue to stimulate her to unfaltering energy, till it was in accordance with his general procedure to grant her the boon that was prepared. And perhaps the recent effusion of the Holy Ghost dispensed to some favoured localities in Scotland may be partly owing to the spirit of earnest prayer awakened by the danger in which our establishment has been involved: At the time of the meeting of the last General Assembly the zeal of many in this exercise received a powerful quickening; a lowering conjunction of circumstances gave a fresh impulse to a prayerful ardour previously roused: And blessed is any dispensation, however frowning, by which we secure the prodigal supplies of his grace. We see then the paramount importance of inflexible continuance in prayer, since without it we shall fail of realizing mercies of vast dimensions, either for ourselves or others. When we are ready to complain that a listless languor taints our petitions, let us remember that the best remedy for languor in prayer is to prolong our devotional applications. It has been said by an elegant writer, in reference to this subject, that the chariot wheel grows warm by rolling. When we first commenced our petitions our prayers may be cold as the iron of the chariot wheel, but as it becomes more fervid at every revolution, so our petitions will acquire a greater intensity of ardour, till they mount up to heaven in an all-consuming flame. It is true, even after we have attained due ardour in our petitions, God may keep us soliciting his favours for some time before he makes them descend on us, but every moment they are delayed, the stream of blessing, which is only dammed up, will swell into constantly accumulating stores till it overflows every barrier, and rushes on in ample abundance. No prayer ever ascends to the glorious fountain of mercy without some favour being wafted to us in return, just as no vapours ever ascend from the sea without afterward coming down in refreshing humidity on the soil: The vapours may ascend unseen, but they will; return in

softening and visible showers: Vapours may continue to ascend for days and weeks without any rain descending to fertilize the ground; in due time, however, they will be condensed in the aerial regions, the atmosphere will become loaded with dark clouds, the treasures of heaven will be poured down, and every particle that has been attracted upwards by the sun will rush down in exuberant showers to irrigate and fructify the parched earth. So it will be with the prayers which we breathe upwards for mercies to ourselves and others: they may remain for weeks unnoticed; but the store of mercies is every day increasing, and will in due time be bestowed. These remarks apply peculiarly to prayer for ushering in the glory of the latter day: From the beginning of the world supplications have been offered up for that blessed consummation; the church of old sang, "God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us; that thy way may be known upon earth—thy saving health among all nations," &c.¹ The New Testament church for eight hundred years has been saying, "Thy kingdom come;" thousands of expiring martyrs have breathed out their souls to God in aspirations for the extension of Christ's kingdom: hence vapours have been rolling upward for thousands of years; the sky is charged with daily augmenting treasures; at last the gathering mass will begin to pour down, conferring on an arid wilderness the blessing of luxuriant fertility.

Sometimes God answers petitions immediately after they are preferred, to show that he is the hearer and answerer of prayer: "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."² At other times he keeps the petitioner bowing at his throne for weeks, and months, or years, as if he would not deign to listen to his cries; but he rewards his faith and perseverance with a mercy proportional in value to the term of the delay. We have an illustration of this in the answers which God wafted to Daniel's prayers on two different occasions. The prayer of Daniel when confessing his sins and the sins of his people was heard as soon as it was offered;

1 Psalm lxvii. 2 Isaiah, lxv, 24.

at the very commencement of it provision was made to answer it. The angel Gabriel was commissioned to fly with urgent haste and bear God's answer. The first word of Daniel's prayer reached the throne of God the moment it was uttered; but the angel took some time to travel from the New Jerusalem to the hallowed spot where the prophet was prosecuting his sacred task, showing that prayer wings its way through the clouds to the throne of God swifter than the speed of a seraph's wings. In the tenth chapter of Daniel we are told that he spent three successive weeks in absorbing communion with God, before receiving any indication of his favour. He might perhaps wonder why God, who so promptly answered his former suit, deferred granting him a second communication; but when it was vouchsafed it was more animating than that previously bestowed; for instead of seeing Gabriel conveying a message of his grace, he beheld the Angel of the covenant himself in dazzling majesty—instead of a visit from the servant he was privileged with an interview of the master. He was at the same time informed, that from the first day he had set his heart to seek God he had been heard; and an angel sent from heaven to promote his views at the Persian court, and counteract the designs of Israel's enemies, which, it has been supposed, cost him so much anguish at this time. We may go to God and solicit the three loaves of bread with unwearied importunity; a term of mortifying delay may elapse, but when he rises to obviate our wants, he will give us not the simple number we implored, but as many loaves as we please.

There is a degree of importunity in prayer, which God expects us to reach, and which is represented by the wrestling of Jacob, who saith, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." Doubtless one of the most remarkable lessons taught us by that transaction is the amazing condescension of God. 't hat the wrestling was corporeal is evident from the fact, that Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with the angel; this injury which was inflicted was intended to show him that he had not overcome the angel by his physical energy, but that he had lingered beside him

soothed and delighted by the melody of his supplications. He had made as though he would go farther—as though he would break away from the society of the patriarch without granting his benediction, and Jacob seized him with the view of prolonging his stay until it was granted; and as he still seemed bent on disengaging himself, a wrestling ensued. Now it would have been an instance of deep compassion on the part of God to have permitted Jacob to prostrate himself in deep abasement at his feet, and to invoke, as a miserable suppliant, the interposition of his grace; but that he should have assumed for a time the appearance of humanity to permit a mortal worm to use corporeal violence with him is altogether astonishing. The high and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity stooped from his august elevation above all creatures, to permit a creature to lay a restraint on him; and indeed he has used the remarkable phraseology, “concerning the work of my hand, command ye me.” Moses commanded God when the latter exclaimed, “Now, therefore, let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them.”¹ Never do we honour God so much as when our faith towers to such a heroic pitch of trust in him as prompts a boldness which will not be satisfied with any thing short of the boon that is implored, for we believe there is so much love in the yearnings of his paternal bosom that he will not continue to repel our requests. And it is at the time when we confer the greatest honour on him that he honours us most in permitting us as it were to lay fetters on his omnipotent arm. Let none argue that such a posture of mind in prayer implies an irreverent familiarity with Jehovah; for never did Jacob evince more lowly abasement than when “he wept and made intercession with the angel.” Abraham, when pleading for Sodom, increased in boldness and humility at the same time. When he began to attempt averting the storm from Sodom, he said, “Paradventure there be fifty righteous within the city; wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? ” He then deducted five from the specified number, and waxing bolder he abated tens from it; but

¹ Exod. xxxii, 10.

as he proceeded he became more pierced with a sense of his unworthiness, "I who am but dust and ashes," &c. And it is easy to understand the reason of this: the very element which prompts the ardour of our prayer, namely the impression that God will not despise the unworthy and the sinful, abases us under a sense of our guilt. It matters not though we are unable to clothe ourdesiresin eloquent phraseology; the wrestling and the tears of Jacob were more emphatic indications of his animated fervour than any language, however elaborate, he could employ. There are prayers in which there are no words, and words in which there are no prayers. The desires of the believer sometimes burst forth in a groan that cannot be uttered.¹ Language in all its range and copiousness can supply no expressions sufficiently powerful to picture the burning emotions then generated. The flame lighted up in the soul is too divine and ethereal to have any thing commensurate to it in the imagery of human speech; and nothing but a groan issuing from the inmost depths of the heart can convey any adequate impression of it, and undoubtedly such a groan is as sweet in the ears of God as the mellifluous warblings of an angel's harp. The Spirit is more frequently spoken of as giving assistance in prayer than in the discharge of any other duty; and one reason why prayer, in its intensest form, proves so acceptable to God is, that it indicates much of the fire of the Spirit as being present in the soul.

As the auspicious time seems approaching when God is to take to himself great power and reign, there is an urgent call upon us to rise from the nerveless languor that generally taints our petitions, to burning zeal. We might naturally have concluded, from the preeminent grandeur of the blessings in reserve for the church in the latter day, that their descent would be preceded by prayer of extraordinary fervour. Now this point is the subject of prophetic announcement: "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence; and give him no rest till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a

¹ Romans, viii, 26.

praise in the earth.”¹ Here there is an allusion to the Levites, who not only praised God with their melodious instruments during the day, but who, as we learn from Psalm cxxxiv, breathed their adoring strains during the night. These pastors will embark with such resolute and unflinching determination in the work that they will give him no rest, they will not let him go until he blesses the church. “When the poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them,”² &c. Men under the impression that there is no water, that is, feeling the comparative destitution of living water, will pray with an earnestness, painted by the tongue failing for thirst, and then a prodigal supply of living water will be granted to enrich and irrigate parched spots. And why will the God of Israel postpone the descent of the living water till this perception of moral desolation prompts such intense prayer? “that men may see and know and consider and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.” That is, that the moral transformation wrought on multitudes of mankind may be ascribed not to the eloquence or wisdom of man, but to the might of God’s outstretched arm.

And it is not to be supposed that we shall be exempted from the general law by which fervent prayer is made the precursor of spiritual blessings, when we remember that the Lord Jesus Christ was not an exception from its operation. He frequently consecrated whole unbroken nights to supplication; such as the night which preceded the calling of the apostles. After the Sabbath, which is generally denominated the great Sabbath, from the resplendent array of beneficent deeds which signalled it, he rose next day a great while before the sun ascended the horizon, and held his sacred vigils of supplication. But no instance of this in his life is more remarkable than that exhibited towards the close of his pilgrimage. In the garden of Gethsemane he offered up prayers and supplications, xvith strong crying and tears. We read in the twenty-second Psalm of the words of his roaring;

¹ Isaiah, lxii, 6, 7. ² Isaiah, xli, 17–20

and this is still more remarkably referred to in the sixty-ninth Psalm, where he says, "I am weary of my crying, my throat is dried." This statement was probably verified in a literal manner. His cries were most vehement when the sunshine of his Father's countenance was mantled from him; and perhaps he was occupied a considerable time in impassioned appeals to his heavenly Father. For although we have on record only a short prayer, "Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me," which he offered in the garden, this may refer merely to the basis or topics of his petition. Nehemiah, and the Jews over whose labours in building the temple he presided, are said to have made a contrite acknowledgment of their sins during the protracted period of the fourth part of a day, while all that is recorded of their prayer may be read in a few minutes; we are therefore to regard the prayer ascribed to them in Scripture, not as embracing the whole range of their petitions, but merely as furnishing an abstract or summary of them. And so it was with the supplication our Redeemer presented in the garden. When he returned to his disciples and upbraided them for their culpable remissness in falling asleep, he said, "What could ye not watch with me one hour?" he did not say, Could ye not watch with me a few minutes, which was more likely to have been his language if he had not been absent from them a considerable time. Besides, as he thrice left them and thrice returned, it is not likely that they would have been thrice lulled into slumber if his absence had been continued only while he uttered a short prayer deprecating God's wrath, especially as his reprimand must have stung them severely after their confident protestations that they would never desert him. We can easily understand how his prolonged struggle and pathetic cries in the garden would make him say, "I am weary of my crying, my throat is dried," when we remember the declaration, "who, in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared."¹ When the Saviour first entered on his

¹ Hebrews, v, 7.

tempestuous conflict, his mind appears to have been stunned and laid prostrate by the terrible shock of God's wrath, so that he was afraid his strength would altogether desert him under the prodigious load of misery he endured.¹ Hence he said, save me, uphold, strengthen me; and at this time so energetic were his cries when afraid that the tempest of God's wrath would altogether crush him, that his throat became dried. And if Christ obtained extraordinary strength for extraordinary exigencies, only by such flaming earnestness of desire as covered him with a bloody sweat, and almost shook his material tenement to ruins, never let it be supposed that we will secure transcendent blessings without efforts of a kindred description. The holy missionary, Brainerd, who wrestled much in fervent petitions for the souls of the savages to whom he ministered, was once praying for them in a retired nook of a lonely wilderness under a cold and bleak sky, till his body was bedewed with profuse perspiration; but struck with the thought that his ardour, intense though it was, felt immeasurably short of Christ's, he said, "I have prayed till my body is drenched in copious sweat, but Christ prayed in agony till his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

And if wrestling importunity will constrain God to open his storehouse of blessings and pour down mercies, it is always to be remembered, that there is one signal benefit we may more easily secure than any other, namely, the Holy Spirit: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"² The image is here drawn from the instinct of parental tenderness, and assures us that it is not only probable but absolutely certain that we shall receive the Holy Spirit by proper applications made through the medium of our Intercessor. An individual may meet with a repulse from a brother or sister or friend, but a child applying to a parent for the necessary sustenance of life will not be dismissed empty. Our Saviour refers to the case of an earthly parent, not merely by way of comparison, but of contrast: If

1 Psalm lxix, 1, 2. 2 Luke, xi, 13

parents, though evil—though tainted with selfishness and sin, know how to confer good gifts upon their children, much more will a Father, of vast diffusive benevolence, give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him. He has not irrevocably pledged himself to grant any specific temporal enjoyment, but he has guaranteed the Holy Spirit; a gift that insures a blessed immortality. God is more willing to give us a mercy of great dimensions, whose consequences will be commensurate with eternity, than one whose effects will be limited to time. The exhaustless benignity of his nature has a wider scope and sweeter exercise when we solicit something large than when we restrict our expectations to what is small. The more we ask, the more successful we shall be; and hence it is easier to obtain the Holy Spirit, who brings in his train the treasures of everlasting ages, than any earthly acquisition. But let us remember, that to usher in the glory of the latter day, we must practise prayer in all its forms—private, family, social, public. Never can the heart be so fully unfolded to God as when, secluded from the society of men, we seek sublime converse with our Creator. Our Saviour frequently prayed with his disciples; but this did not supersede the dedication of hours or whole nights to solitary supplication. It was then he could most easily open to his Father in heaven those wants and cares which pressed on his bosom in the view of his impending sufferings; these were burdens which his disciples could not understand for they would never admit into their minds the idea of his death; but he could in secret pour all his sorrows into the bosom of his Father. In the garden of Gethsemane, when overpowered with horror and consternation at the dark gloom that overhung him, he retired thrice from his favoured disciples, and prayed that if it were possible the cup might pass from him. He could give vent to all his emotions before his heavenly Father, though he might not disclose them to others. And so it is with his people: they feel many soul-burdens which they would be unable to reveal to the most confidential friend; and they know well that if they were unfolded, they might encounter a severe or harsh judgment. But God, who is a being of infinite love, will manifest to

ward them a tender sympathy, show a kindness in and condescending to bear with them, equal to the knowledge he has of all their secret wants. Hence a saint finds in secret prayer a charm which does not invest any form of social worship; and, on the other hand, an unregenerate man feels a greater repugnance to secret prayer than to any public exercises. The latter is in secret devotion brought into close contact with the Being towards whom the natural enmity of his heart exists in full operation; and though he may go through a round of private exercises in order to pacify the restless throbbings of conscience, he generally betrays a lurking disrelish to them. He may evince something like animated zeal in family or social devotion because those who are linked with him in duty may admire his accomplishments; but in the closet his warmth will subside. A man will not feel so much embarrassment when meeting his enemy in a large society of individuals, as when encountering him alone in a wilderness; and when a soul imbued with no love for the supreme Being is ushered alone into his immediate presence, he is brought into most uncongenial society; and therefore considers that as an irksome drudgery which a believer regards as an alluring privilege. On the other hand, while a saint considers every form of prayer as an endearing and enlivening occupation, secret supplication is that to which he betakes himself with the greatest alacrity, just as a man will value intercourse with an intimate and confidential friend even in the society of others, but will appreciate most highly a conference with him alone, as it is then that he opens the hidden cares and emotions of his bosom. Some of the most successful instances of prayer recorded in Scripture are those where the petitioner was alone with God. This was the case with Jacob when the heavy woes overhanging him from the wrath of his brother Esau made him flee to God at Peniel to invoke the supernatural succour which alone could extricate him from his embarrassing position. His conduct on that occasion was very remarkable; he despatched his wives and servants and all that he had over the brook, and prayed, remaining alone during the darkness of the night, till his faith reached that pitch

of unflinching confidence which has signalled him ever since. And we must remember that though other forms of prayer could not be observed, though we had none to associate themselves with us in public devotion, we have still the mighty engine of private prayer with which we may freely operate; and never let us harbour the idea that our individual efforts may not be attended with splendid results. In the diary of President Edwards, we have the following insertion: "Determined that this objection is without weight, namely, That it is not likely that God will make great alterations on the whole world, and overturnings in kingdoms and nations, only for the prayers of one obscure person seeing such things used to be done in answer to the united earnest prayers of the whole church, and if my prayers should have some influence; it would be imperceptible and small." Moses alone stood in the breach to arrest the tide of indignation that was about to roll over Israel; Daniel's aspirations turned the captivity of Israel; and God said at a time when Israel was rushing with headlong precipitation into a gulph of idolatry and immorality, Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in the city, they should deliver but their own souls, implying that in cases of ordinary turpitude, they would save a whole nation. If therefore, our souls are impregnated with a principle of saving faith, we may, in the retirement of our chamber, achieve victories that will tell on the destinies of the nation. But let the secret duties of the closet be blended with domestic worship. It has been said that all the pleasures which men derive from the pursuits of ambition and public life, are far surpassed by those emanating from the family circle; and if such a store of sweets is derived from this little community, surely God should be honoured in it. Parents have, from the urgent emergencies of their own souls, strong arguments for prayer; but the welfare of each child is a strong additional cord drawing them to God; and how necessary is it then that they should commend them to him in social worship. The relation in which they stand to their offspring invests them with prodigious power in forming their sentiments and opinions; and surely, that influence

with which God has clothed them should be consecrated to his service; this is effectually done when by the regular observance of household worship they show them that the honour of God is the preeminent object of their lives. But let them, while invoking mercy for their own little circle, extend their sympathies wider than their own house, and embrace in their petitions at the domestic altar the wide family of mankind.

There is a special blessing associated with social prayer. "Where two or three agree concerning any thing it shall be done of your Father who is in heaven." There are two remarkable occasions specified in the Acts of the Apostles on which a rich effusion of the Spirit was granted, namely, the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost came down like a mighty rushing wind; and the time mentioned,¹ when the place was shaken where the small company was praying. Both these rich tides of spiritual influence were preceded by combined prayer on the part of the little company who were convened in the upper room. Immediately after Christ's ascension they received an invigorating impulse to the duty of prayer; instead of being dismayed by the loss of their master, as the world might have anticipated, they seemed instinct with new energy, and "they were continually in the temple blessing and praising God:" this language insinuates that the ten days intervening between the triumphant entrance of Christ into heaven and Pentecost were almost wholly absorbed by the duty of prayer: after such exclusive and engrossing dedication to that exercise, the Spirit's operations were bestowed with an amplitude that was intended to show how far the blessings of the New Testament dispensation outstripped those of the old. The second occasion above mentioned, was signalized by a more remarkable descent of the Spirit than even the day of Pentecost as was manifested by the pecuniary sacrifices made by the disciples, the greater harmony and grace diffused among them, and the increased boldness with which the apostles gave their attestation to the resurrection of Christ. It was preceded by a prayer which the hundred and twenty seemed to have been inspired to

¹ Acts, iv, 30.

offer up simultaneously in the upper room: "And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord."¹ Daniel engaged his three friends to wrestle with him in prayer for deliverance from Nebuchadnezzar's wrath; and Esther requested the Jews to join in prayer and fasting, before she made that application to king Ahasuerus on which was suspended the well-being of the Jewish nation. God has stamped the impress of his holy approbation on united prayer; and one of the most striking lessons we are taught by the history of the late revival at Kilsyth is the momentous place which prayer occupies in securing such a stupendous blessing. How important is it that groups of neighbours, consisting of six or seven, should associate themselves together for devotional exercises, in addition to their engaging in the solemnities of public worship: a small number is most expedient, for when many are admitted into such praying societies, the members are apt, when conducting their devotional exercises, to become a prey to the love of display which is inherent in our fallen nature, or to be damped by the fear of man, which bringeth a snare.

One duty imperiously incumbent on us at the present day is, that we should enter into that concert for prayer which has been repeatedly suggested of late in a Newspaper published in this city. We know that before, or about the time when the Jews will be converted, a most extensive union for prayer will take place, not only between individuals, but between cities, such as Glasgow and Edinburgh.² We are at present organizing plans for the conversion of God's ancient people; and as this concert is stated as one of the symptoms or peculiarities of the time when God's withering frown will be removed from them, we should feel a particularly strong obligation to concur in it without delay. There is a captivating beauty in such a social exercise, because it implies fellowship not only with God, but with one another. In heaven, when the glorious assembly who grace the streets that are paved with gold, sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, their shouts of praise enhance the sweet communion subsisting between them. Every symphony

¹ Acts, iv, 24. ² Zechariah, viii, 20.

which they combine to raise draws closer the bond which links them to each other, as well as the tie which binds them to the Lamb. In the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, believers feel much delight, from their having communion not only with the Head of the church, but with many of the members who compose his mystical body; and their bosoms thrill with a kindred pleasure, when, though dispersed through different parts of the world, they repair to him as the exhaustless fountain of all grace, at some special moment they may have previously fixed upon. It is observed, by a pious writer, that friends when about to separate have sometimes agreed to gaze at the sun at a particular hour of every day, and to think of each other while in the act of admiring its shining orb; and that in the same way believers, when praying to Christ, though severed by distance, have sweet mutual fellowship when they all invoke specific blessings at the same stated time: though insulated from each other by local residence, there is a glorious bond of union formed between them by the Sun of Righteousness, and God will honour those applications which reflect glory on his only-begotten Son as the centre of their union.

In the year 1744, a number of ministers in Scotland, having taken into consideration the decayed state of religion in the church in general, and the genial showers of divine influence granted to some isolated spots, judged it proper that all who were concerned for the welfare of Zion should unite in extraordinary prayer that God would appear in his glory, and grant an abundant effusion of the Holy Spirit on all the churches, and on the whole earth. After seeking direction from God, they determined to dedicate certain specified seasons to prayer for the furtherance of this object; and by private correspondence and personal interviews, they induced a great number of ministers and people, both in this country and America, to concur in the scheme. Besides that it was followed for years with special showers from above in Scotland, it was attended with a benignant smile from heaven in the fields of missionary enterprise. The illustrious Brainerd laboured under the auspices of the Society for Pronagat-

ing Christian knowledge in Scotland. Although a native of America, he was supported by the contributions levied for that institution; and it is remarkable that nine months after the concert commenced, that distinguished servant of God began that signal career of success which elevated untutored savages to the dignity of Christian brethren, and which has furnished to the church a model for the direction of ministers and missionaries in similar circumstances. Surely then we are called upon to unite in the concert of prayer proposed to be observed on Sabbath mornings. Is not the hour specified—viz. from eight to nine—one which many true believers, as well as nominal Christians, spend in criminal sleep? Will not the consciousness that several thousands are besieging the throne of grace at that moment rouse many from their slumber, or render it impossible that they shall enjoy it with comfort. Let all then who are congregated within this sanctuary feel themselves bound to acquiesce in the projected concert of prayer, and carry it into effect next Sabbath, as well as to do every thing that may forward the success of it with others.

The very hour during which we should engage in this occupation is enough to remind us that one prominent topic in all our petitions should be that God would bless ministers and candidates for the pastoral functions. The strongest incentive to prayer for those who sustain, or may yet fill this office, is that the character of an ambassador of Christ has an intimate connection with the spiritual condition of his audience; for when they lapse into a sinful decay, God often removes from them any zealous champion of the cross who may have presided over their spiritual welfare, and sets over them either a dead pastor, or one in whom the divine life is in a state of listless inactivity. We learn from Amos, viii, 11, that God sometimes sends a famine of the bread of life to his own people. Their roaming from the north to the east is an evidence of a spiritual appetite, as unregenerate men soon subside into that apathy which renders them satisfied with the frozen ministrations of their pastors. In Isaiah, xxx, God says, that though he would give his people the

bread of affliction and the water of affliction, he would not remove their teachers into a corner any more; implying that the greatest of all evil is the absence of spiritual instructors, and that God sometimes withdraws them in judgment from his own people. What is said of David, king of Israel, when his people provoked the anger of Jehovah, is often paralleled when congregations are vitiated by the encroachments of the world; it is mentioned¹ that the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel. Many of the nation might exclaim against David's aberration from duty, but the turpitude of their own sins was the cause of all their woes, when the pestilence swept over them. And when congregations are addicting themselves to the love of the world, God sometimes permits their pastor to be lifeless and spiritless and careless, that they may be entangled in the subtle fowler's net. When, however, they are ardently devoted to prayer, their pastor will be copiously replenished with the dews of the Spirit; he will be marvelously aided in his studies, and come to them on the Sabbath in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. During the week he will be like the spies who searched out the promised land, and who, after traversing its luxuriant expanse, returned laden with a stately cluster from the vineyards of Eschol; his meditations will soar during the week to the paradise above, and on the Sabbath he will enter the pulpit displaying to them the exuberant produce of the better Canaan. So spreading and profuse was the cluster borne away by the spies, that it required two men to support its weight; and if congregations were to be in season and out of season commending their ministers to the God of all grace, he would be to them every Sabbath a spy from that land that flows with milk and honey, bending beneath the load of the treasures which he had plucked from the margin of that river that flows through the new Jerusalem. When the souls of a flock are expanded in impassioned breathings for their spiritual shepherd, God conducts him through that process of discipline and trial by which he may be trained for

¹ 2 Samuel, xxiv, 1.

efficient usefulness among them. It is not the will of the Almighty that those ministers who are to make successful inroads into the domains of Satan, and wrest from him the richest trophies, should propound the gospel by the mere dint of an intellectual effort, without a deep experimental impression of the truth they convey to others; and in order that they may comprehend the power and pathos of the many animating promises that spangle the pages of Scripture, it is necessary that they should be frequently reduced to those trying emergencies to which the promises of God are adapted. When the minister endures the fierce shock of temptation and affliction, and when, in the midst of dismay and conflicts, he finds his confidence immovably anchored on some luminous statement or endearing promise of Scripture, he knows how to unfold all its prodigal richness to a tempted and distressed soul. The apostle Paul informs the Corinthians that on one occasion, when a mountainous load of anguish crushed his spirit, he was pressed out of measure above strength, insomuch that he despaired even of life. He was often able to sustain himself under the complication of troubles that crowded upon him from various quarters; but he was then environed with such a dreary circle of woes, that he received sentence of death against himself; that is, he conceived his troubles so aggravated that his speedy dissolution would be the issue of them. Now what is the reason he assigns why his lot was darkened by such a fierce combination of trials? that he might be able to comfort others with the consolations which were showered upon his own soul. Though he was distinguished by transcendent endowments of grace and knowledge, though he had been wrapt into the third heavens, where words of the sublimest grandeur burst upon his ear, all this was insufficient to prepare him for instilling the balm of comfort into the souls of men without heavy and reiterated shocks of tribulation. For fourteen years previous to the time when he was invaded by the miseries detailed in the first chapter of his second epistle to the Corinthians, a thorn had rankled in his flesh to counteract any emotions of pride which might inflate his mind; and yet this long protracted trial was not enough to give him that sensible

acquaintance with trouble which might fit him to soothe the anguish of others. It is true the Holy Spirit was liberally imparted to the apostle, and enabled him to declare the tidings of eternal life; but it was meet that the Holy Ghost should bless most those instructions of the apostle which were dictated by his own personal experience. It is mentioned in the fifth chapter of the Hebrews, as an essential qualification of the priests who flourished under the Old Testament dispensation, that they should have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way; and nothing tends more to kindle in the mind of the pastor a feeling of commiseration for those who are stumbling on the dark mountains, than the recollection of those hideous precipices of ruin and misery over which he was nearly hurled in the days of his ignorance. And pastors must therefore expect that God will bring them a succession of fiery vicissitudes if he is to bless them, by enabling them to speak a word in season to him that is weary. They must drink of the cup of which the Saviour drank, and be baptised with the baptism of which he was baptised, that they may be attuned to an ardent sympathy for the souls of men, and attain that skill by which they may alleviate their woes. The celebrated Paysou was astonished at the diversified calamities of which he was the victim during the early part of his career; he was surprised that God made him to pass through so many visitations of the rod, till many members of his congregation were involved in the swelling billows of trial, and he was enabled to minister to their distresses by the experimental knowledge of Divine comfort which he had acquired through trouble. He then saw an end in all the various trials he had encountered, and which had worn such an unaccountable aspect in his eyes.

There is reason to think that God, who, to ennoble the office of high priest, which Caiaphas sustained, helped him to use unconsciously words that signified the effects of Christ's death, leads ministers to state the truth in a manner that is remarkably suitable to individual cases among their hearers with which they may be entirely unacquainted. We have an emphatic instance of this in the life of Joseph Maylim, or the

Runaway Orphan Boy. He heard the celebrated Dr. Carey in India, who during his discourse had directed his expostulations very strongly to the Europeans present, declaring that they by their avidity to amass wealth were idolaters as well as the Hindoos; "they, (said he, meaning the Hindoos,) have three and thirty principal gods; but some of you have forty or five and forty gods; only your gods are in the form of bags of rupees." This language struck him exceedingly, from the singular coincidence between the precise number of bags of rupees which Dr. Carey had charged the Europeans with worshipping and the number which he had frequently thought he would like to possess before giving up business, and returning to Britain; and the impression then made on him terminated in his acquiescence in the gospel message.

Little do hearers know the assistance they could render their ministers by wrestling for them in their closets. Baxter has mentioned it, in his *Dying Thoughts*, as an encouragement to saints in every age, that frequently when he was drooping under corporeal disease, which disabled him from his ministerial work, and threatened to extinguish his earthly being, some of his friends, who had been benefited by his pastoral labours, dedicated themselves to fasting and prayer; and immediately, contrary to all probability that was founded on second causes, he was revived from pining sickness, and restored to vigorous duty. It is to the want of energetic prayerfulness in behalf of pastors that they have so much reason to exclaim in the present day, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" The influences of the Spirit are indispensable to the success of the ministry. God has sent forth to the church many highly qualified pastors; but comparatively little of divine influence has attended their labours. They are like the row of numerous and well-constructed pipes in a magnificent organ, which breathe no sound till the blast goes through them; but let a stream of air be made to enter them, and then the sweetest melody will be heard. They are equipped with learning, and fired with zeal; yet the life-giving Spirit suspends his ani-

mating breath; but let the healing waters of the sanctuary flow through the land, and they shall bring multitudes of those that are ready to perish to worship the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem. If any are ready to complain that ministers blow their silver trumpets with so little fruit at present, let them remember that even the archangel's pealing trump would not awaken the dead on the last day if it were not seconded by the forthcoming of an omnipotent energy; and if the preacher's efforts are not seconded from above, they must prove abortive. But many followers of the Lamb, instead of imploring God to make rivers of living water flow from their instructors to enrich and beautify their souls, lavish upon them an idolatrous affection; and the time that should be employed in commending them to God is consumed in extolling their real or supposed accomplishments; and hence God is provoked to withhold from them the promised blessing. If I were asked, to what I would compare the feelings men should cherish towards their pastors, I would say they should regard them as the wise men from the east did the star which guided their course towards Bethlehem. They rejoiced in the auspicious glow of the star which cheered their tedious wanderings; it was not, however, for the mere radiance and loveliness it beamed, but because it marked the path by which they might find the adorable Saviour who was to rescue the earth from misery. Every moment they fastened their eyes upon the star their bosoms heaved with emotions of transport; but their ecstasy arose from their contemplating the birth of that mysterious stranger whose advent was to ennoble this wretched wilderness. In like manner, men may and ought to attach a high importance to the ministrations of their pastor, but it is only while they consider him as a star whose genial lustre will guide them towards the glorious Emmanuel. While he unfolds to them the unrestricted freeness and exuberant fulness of the gospel, he will be like the star of Bethlehem when, after winding on in its radiant course, it stood over the very house where the young child lay; but when men put the instrument in the place of Christ, then he dims the brilliancy of the star; and hence they

are not guided as they would otherwise be to the adorable Redeemer.

We have thus attempted very feebly to exhibit the necessity of importunate prayer, in order that the windows of heaven may be opened; and as God appears to be diffusing a general spirit of prayer, we have reason to expect a general revival. It is true that our earnest aspirations for the spread of religion, and the introduction of the latter-day glory, may be answered in a way very different from what we may anticipate. God may answer them by "terrible things in righteousness;" by commotions and convulsions that will "shake terribly the earth," and interrupt our external comfort, while they will make the strongholds of Satan crumble to the dust. The enemy has come down in great wrath, knowing his time is but short; he will put forth all his resources to stem the progress of the living waters emanating from the sanctuary; and in the fierce strife he will wage, he may make inroads on our peace and quiet; but he will not arrest the glorious march of righteousness and truth. We know from the pages of prophecy that the universal extension of Christ's kingdom is to be preceded by the storm, the earthquake, and the tempest, by struggles of unparalleled magnitude; but let us be comforted by remembering that God often answers our petitions by permitting events to occur which put an end to our outward ease, and yet promote his glory.

As an instance of this, look to the apostle Paul: he implored God to grant him a prosperous journey to Rome, that as a herald of the everlasting gospel he might waft the enlivening tidings of salvation to Satan's strongest fastness. God answered his prayer by sending him a prisoner, and loading him with fetters. When Paul was approaching Rome some of the Christian brethren who flourished there met him with a cordial welcome at Apii Forum, where it is said "he thanked God and took courage:" this language implies that a saddening depression loaded his spirits when he was journeying to the scene of his imprisonment. Yet his forlorn condition constituted a remarkable answer to his prayer for a prosperous expedition to Rome: for

although his chain was adverse to his personal comfort, it was highly conducive to the advancement of Christ's cause. He tells us in his epistle to the Philippians, that the things which had happened to him turned out for the furtherance of the gospel: first, his chain obtained for him access to the palace of Nero; for when summoned to vindicate himself from the charges preferred against him, he made the imperial palace resound with the joyful intelligence of eternal life, so that several of his domestics were converted: thus Paul says to the Philippians: They that be of Csesar's household salute you. Secondly, his intrepid avowal of Christ emboldened many to preach without dismay the glad tidings of eternal life. Several of the apostle's most animated letters were written from the prison of Rome to the different churches: and the joyful strains pervading them, though penned in what would seem a most desolate condition, would invigorate those believers who were pining under the iron rod of persecution, and fortify them for the endurance of all the fiery trials they were to undergo. Remember my bonds was an injunction that would kindle a thrill of holy solemnity, and a resolute contempt of suffering in the minds of the Christians to whom he wrote. And though God may answer our prayers for the progress of his cause by changes and revolutions that will sweep away many of our temporal conveniences and possessions, let us rejoice that he will glorify himself by any dispensations however inimical to our personal quiet.

We see then the mighty engine which prayer puts into the heart of every believer; by it a cottager becomes a prince, and the most indigent follower of the Lamb is armed with a power which will effect the most important events that are rushing onward in this sublunary scene. It is the lamentation of many saints; that in consequence of their having been placed in an obscure position in the scale of society, they have little influence to exert for the promotion of Christ's cause; and the only time when they breathe any aspiration for rank or riches is when they reflect how much they might have accomplished for the honour of his name had they been exalted to a more prominent station.

But they should remember that, in the seclusion of the closet, they can put forth an energy, which will control the incidents and vicissitudes of human affairs more decidedly than the deep contrivances of the statesman as the vehement eloquence of the orator. Three individuals of the sublime faith of Noah, Daniel, and Job, though poor like Lazarus who lay disfigured with loathsome sores at the rich man's gate, might alter the fate of an empire, and rescue it from ruin when deserving such a catastrophe; and there never was a time when men of this stamp had a more thrilling impulse to ply this effective instrument than at the present moment. For God has given us some gleams of the latter-day glory in the revivals with which he has recently ennobled this land; but before a general effusion will be granted, he expects that more general and ardent petitions will be preferred. The great Head of the church has come into the midst of us and he expects to be invited to remain; the King has been walking through the galleries, and he expects that by fervent entreaties he will be held there; the voice of our Beloved has sounded over the mountains and hills which so long severed him from our church, and, if we hail it with joy, we shall soon have cause to cry out, Behold he cometh leaping over the mountains and skipping over the hills. He has, as it were, turned aside to tarry for a night, but let us say to him, "O the Hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry only for a night?"

Let us therefore, by unfaltering assiduity in prayer, constrain the Saviour to turn aside. If any believer here present should say that his hours are so crowded with the avocations of business that he has not time to allot to prayer for the extension of the Saviour's kingdom, I would remind him that he should act towards Christ as Christ did towards him. The Saviour had room for all his people in his heart when he was going to endure the floods of the divine wrath in Calvary and Gethsemane: in his intercessory prayer which he put up when on the verge of that terrific scene of misery

which wound up his gloomy pilgrimage, he makes mention not only of his personal followers, but of all who in every age should believe in his name,¹ and every individual here present who is united to him in the bonds of the everlasting covenant must have been then in his mind. It might have been supposed, that when his hour of withering desolation was impending, he could have had room for nothing but the anticipation of his anguish; but so deeply was our immortal happiness entwined with the strings of his heart, that he could not dismiss that pleasing subject from his meditations, even in the hour of his dreary abandonment. And if he could think of us when the fire of God's wrath was about to scorch him, we may appropriate some time to think of him, and pray for the prosperity of his cause amidst the multiplicity of the human pursuit; if he could think of us not only when the dark cloud was about to burst upon his head, but when the thunderbolts which lay hid in its bosom were expending on him all their fury; if the hope of our eternal felicity was so sweet and soothing as to uphold him amidst the bitterest throes of his anguish, surely amidst the greatest hurry and distraction of business, and amidst the most saddening vicissitudes of life, we should separate some intervals to concert schemes for his glory, and to implore the speedy prostration of every antichristian authority

¹ John, xvii, 20.

LECTURE VII.

The Godly Life of Believers,—Christians the Light of the World,—Discipline of the Church, &c.

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*c Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."—ISAIAH, lx, 1—3.

It is good to ascertain and bear in mind the precise position, in the execution of God's decrees, occupied by the Church¹ of Christ now existing in the world. It is not enough to think, on the one hand, of the relation in which she stands to a world lying in wickedness: nor is it enough, on the other hand, to think of the relation in which she stands to the Lord her Redeemer. She must look both ways, if she would know her own position. A believer, turning upward his eye of faith, can see, though it be but darkly, through the glass of Revelation, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the God of his salvation. Looking downward, by help of the same word of truth, he sees a multitude of men living without God, and dying under his wrath. It is not enough for such a one to know his own safety, and luxuriate idly in the present hope of a future inheritance. If he is adopted into the family of God, he is, by that very fact, constituted a soldier of Jesus Christ. He looks upward to a Master in heaven; but he also looks downward to the work which that Master has given him to do. While he rejoices in being freed from the dominion of sin, he acknowledges himself the servant of God. The field is the world. He is in the

¹ By the church is meant "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ"—the whole "household of faith."

field; and that very thing he accounts a sufficient indication that he is called to labour.

The world—all this wideprovince of God's dominion—had risen in one combined revolt. One city—Zion, the place of the tabernacles of the Most High—has been overcome by the power of the King, freely forgiven, and fully restored to favour. But the citizens must not indolently bask in the unmerited goodness of their Lord. He who has done great things[^]or them, will do other great things *by* them. Having reclaimed that one city, and established his authority there, he will make it the centre of his operations for reducing to submission those who still maintain an attitude of defiance. There he has planted his standard,—there promulgated his law,—there he manifests his power, and wisdom, and love. The Lord reigneth in that city, and the inhabitants thereof are glad. They account themselves not their own, but his. They enlist under his banner to subdue his enemies—they offer themselves heralds to proclaim his grace. They have been made willing to spend and to be spent in his service. On that question there is no dispute. Their inquiry assumes another form. It is, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"¹

Citizens of Zion! many things your Lord would have you to do, and he has recorded his will as to the manner of doing them. God has a purpose of love towards this fallen world, and ye must be instruments in effecting it. His name *will* be hallowed,—his kingdom come,—his will be done on earth. His own mighty power will do this; but that power will be manifested in them that believe. In the conversion of a sinner there is an internal operation of the Holy Spirit, imperceptible as the winds of heaven, and inexplicable as the source whence these winds proceed; but in the conversion of a sinner there is also a series of means—necessary, for God prescribes nothing in vain—means that must be applied by the agency of willing men.

One of the means to be employed is the Word read and preached—"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."² Another is the recognition of God's

1 Acts, ix, 6. 2 John, xvii, 17.

sovereignty, in prayer for the conversion of sinners. Thus Paul—"My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved."¹ These two means—the Word and Prayer—prescribed by God, and by the church employed for the conversion of the world, have been explained and enforced in the two immediately preceding lectures. Another—THE GODLY LIFE OF BELIEVERS—resting on the same authority, and equally fitted to aid in accomplishing the same end, remains the special subject of this discourse. It is a mean of divine appointment: "Ye are the light of the world: let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" ² Here the disciples of Christ are enjoined to live a holy life, for the express purpose of affecting thereby for good them that are without: and in the text there is an instance of the effects produced in the world when that injunction is obeyed. When the church arises and shines—when she reflects the glory of the Lord, then the Gentiles come to her light, and kings to the brightness of her rising.

There is in the mean thus prescribed, a natural fitness to accomplish the desired end. A false pretension to holiness of life has often been made by hypocrites to secure some selfish object. This proves that the thing itself is found to be effectual in influencing the minds of men. A life uniformly regulated by the precepts of the gospel, and exemplifying all the graces of the Spirit, is in itself the most likely, as well as practically the most successful method of arresting the ungodly in their downward path. A silent reproof thus administered is felt to sting most poignantly. There is nothing that can be laid hold of as a pretext for eluding its force; and the conscience is left to deal with the thing just as it is. Nothing so much annoys those who love the darkness, as the contiguity of a bright and steady light, in the person of a devoted disciple of Jesus. Nothing so much tends to keep alive the fading faith and love of a backsliding disciple, as the contemplation of strong faith and burning zeal, in the conduct of another who is growing in grace. It was thus that the primitive

¹ Romans, x, 1. ² Matthew, v, 14, 16.

church increased in the fires. The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church. The tortures which the saints endured just gave them an opportunity of exhibiting their character in higher relief, and thereby making it more legible to all—an opportunity of exhibiting it in more striking contrast with that of their cruel enemies, and thus making a holy example, at all times powerful, then more than usually efficacious in alluring men to the belief of the truth.

From the frequent application of the term “light” in Scripture, to indicate the influence of a holy example, it is evidently implied that there is a close analogy between it and the laws of light in the material universe. We are thus invited to look to that analogy for help to understand and apply our subject. Christ is “the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,”¹ and yet he says of his disciples, “ye are the light of the world.”² In the analogy of nature, we find a clear exposition of the different senses in which Christ and his people are said to be the light of the world. The light of day, in which every living creature rejoices, proceeds entirely from the sun; but we do not always receive it direct from its source. If we could receive it in that way only, half our day would be spent in darkness. As the rays travel in straight lines, whenever any opaque body came between us and the sun, we would be wholly destitute of his light. But as the law is, all the material objects with which we are surrounded, are, to a greater or less extent, possessed of the property of reflecting the solar rays; and hence it is chiefly from these objects that the light comes to our eyes, while it is true that the whole comes originally from the sun. These objects have no light in themselves: they only serve as reflecting media for conveying the light that proceeds from another source. In this way it is that Christians afford spiritual light to the world. It has pleased God to cause the light of his glorious gospel to shine into their hearts, and thence it is obliquely communicated to them that are without. The rays of the Sun of Righteousness alone can spiritually enlighten a benighted world; but God in his sovereignty has decreed

¹ John, i, 9. ² Matthew, v, 11.

that these shall be communicated to the people who sit in darkness, by being reflected from the character of those who have already seen light clearly.

Hitherto we have been pointing out the influence of a godly life on the interests of religion generally: but the special subject of this lecture is its influence in promoting a *revival* of religion. Now, referring you to the first lecture of the course for a full exposition of what a revival is, let me here in one word remind you that a revival is not a different thing from religion, but a greater degree of the same thing. Consequently, it is to be produced, not by the application of other means, but by the more faithful and energetic application of the same means. Since the word revival has become current, let us beware of being led into error by its use. Beware of expecting, in a lecture on revivals, any thing different from what you would expect in a lecture on religion. There is no generic—there is not even a specific difference. The things are the same; they are one thing, but in different degrees—sinners converted in greater numbers than usual, and saints more lively in their faith and love. There is no other difference. Hence, having found that the godly life of believers is effectual in promoting religion, it is not necessary to alter it—it is not lawful to alter it in any way, in order to accommodate it to the special subject of this discourse. As we find it in the word applied to religion—the religion of Christ—we may take it, we must take it, Without alteration or amendment, in order to apply it to the revival of religion. Having found a right instrument, let us ply it with all our might,—push it as far as we can, if so be we may promote a revival: but beware of inventing another—beware of supposing that any instrument is needed other than those which are prescribed in the Word.

The need of a revival is acknowledged, and must be acknowledged by all who will look upon the present state of the world. A dreadful picture of it is written in the text. Whether a still more literal and appalling accomplishment of that prophecy is yet coming on, I know not: but it will be found that the present state of the world accurately answers the description. We

need not spend our strength straining down into coming ages, and picturing out some darkness thicker than any that has hitherto been felt, in order to find out a counterpart to this prophetic declaration. We must not put aside present duty by demanding a sign, and looking for it far in the distant future. If we could discern the signs of the times—the present times—we would find that already darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the peoples, not only those who worship many gods, but those also that are marked on the map, *Christian*. He must have a vivid imagination, who can conceive a more literal fulfilment of this prophecy than that which is actually exhibited in many thousand instances around our own dwellings. He must have a fertile imagination indeed, who can picture on it a darkness to come, yet more gross than that which pervades the homes and the understandings and the hearts of the godless men who move in multitudes amongst us.

There is need of a revival of religion, and from that we might argue that there must have been a defect in the application of the means appointed by God for maintaining and promoting religion. But it is not necessary to deduce it as an inference; we may look upon it as a fact. Other means have been neglected; but at present we are more immediately concerned to know, that Christians have not been bringing the *influence of a godly example* distinctly to bear on the unbelief of the world.

The commands addressed to the Church in the text suggest an accurate view of her present condition: "Arise!" He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the church. The condition which requires such an injunction is exactly her condition now. If not altogether prostrate, she is certainly not standing erect. Raised but a little above the clod, the attraction of earth is strong, and keeps her bent downward still. The sun is a more powerfully attracting body than the earth; but the sun is far distant, and the attraction of the lesser body, the earth, keeps us clinging to its surface. So with the Sun of Righteousness: he is not only in himself, but in the judgment of believers acknowledged to be by far the more lovely—the more attrac-

tive object: but the world is nearer—is seen better by the eye of sense, and draws downward the affections of the soul. Among the disciples of Jesus there is not a singleness of eye—there is not an undivided allegiance. There is, if not a halting in the understanding between two opinions, at least a halting in the affections between two objects soliciting their regard. As when a magnet is held over a needle—when it is brought near, a tremulous motion ensues—one end rises up, and quivers uncertain between two antagonist forces—the unseen mysterious attraction upward of the magnet, and the more common attraction of gravitation downward. Distracted by influences drawing in two opposite directions, it yields partly to both, and wholly to neither. Thus the church collectively, and in its individual members, is distracted by the simultaneous operation of two opposing laws—the law of the corrupt members, and the law of the now enlightened mind—the one pointing downward to the love of the world, and the indulgence of sin; the other pointing upward to the love of Christ, and the obedience of the gospel. Thus bent the church is, though not laid prostrate; thus entangled by the world, though not overcome. Although she acknowledges the right of only one Lord to have dominion over her, that one Lord is not made the object of all her affections, the source of all her hopes, the centre of all her aims; and, therefore, she must still be considered as bowing down, and still addressed in the command, “Arise.

“Shine”—This implies that the church is not emitting such a radiance as will easily distinguish her from the surrounding world; and that is eminently characteristic of the church now. This is the malady that impairs her beauty and impedes her growth. She does not shine; the shade of her colouring is not sensibly different from that of the world. They glide so naturally and smoothly into each other, that you cannot perceive where the boundary lies. The Saviour’s testimony regarding his first disciples is, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”¹ But where is this characteristic mark

¹ John, xvii, 16.

now? This distinction has not been kept up as it ought to have been, harsh and pointed and glaring, so that none could mistake it. The edge of it has been softened down, that it might melt insensibly and pleasantly away into the world. Instead of standing out to rebuke the unfruitful works of darkness by the substantial reproof of a holy example, there has been a dallying, and an accommodation, and an assimilation. Instead of being a light shining steadily in a dark place, the church actually existing in the world is like that flickering unsubstantial gleam that darts fitfully from the northern horizon across the winter sky—faint even where strongest; and every moment capriciously shifting its place, and altering its intensity, and changing its colours—so spread, and diluted, and melted away, that you can never tell where the edge of it is, nor what effect it may produce on the surrounding darkness.

It should make a Christian tremble for himself when he hears that darkness covers the earth. If there be not much difference between him and others, it is because there is no light in him. Where there is darkness, the smallest spark of light is distinctly seen. A renewed soul is a gem that should appear more brilliant now in the body, than hereafter in the Redeemer's crown; for, here it is set in a dark ground; there it will be lost in a radiance brighter than its own. Here surrounding objects heighten and set off its lustre; there it will have no glory by reason of the glory that excelleth. The world is a dark place—a believer's character, if we learn it from the mouth of our Lord, is a light in the darkness. He is not of the world; it is his enemy. He is separated from it by a broad, well-defined, intelligible line; there is not only a difference, but an opposition—not only a separation, but a contrast—such a contrast that, though he should never open his lips, his conduct is an abiding reproof of its wicked works.

Such is the character of a Christian, when we read it in the word of Christ. Could we read the same in the conduct of those who are called by his name? Look on this picture and on that. Can that be gold which is so dim? Is it not some adulterated, changed thing, that is freely passing current amongst us for fine

gold? Light of the world! Oh, look upon the visible church—upon that aspect of it which is exhibited to the view of men, and does it not seem a refined, cruel mockery to call it *light*? Does it not appear as if one would make merry with the glaring discrepancy between the name and its subject?

So much for the existence of the evil in general terms; and now, before descending to the particular symptoms of the disease, it may be good at this stage to point out the remedy. It will do no good to show how low we have fallen, if there be not held out at the same time something to encourage the hope of amendment.

Observe the connexion between the two parts of the command addressed to the church: "Arise, shine." In nature, it is generally necessary that a body should be raised up, ere it can be enlightened or shine. In northern regions of the globe, where the whole winter is one continuous night, it is said that the inhabitants, when the spring draws near, and the sun is expected to appear above the horizon, ascend together the nearest eminence, and greet with joyous acclamation the return of day. There is here a close connexion between the rising and the shining. Had they not arisen and gained a height above the level of their huts, they had not seen the sun. You may easily suppose that some—the infirm or the indolent, are left behind in the plain; and you can further suppose these looking up and seeing the faces of their companions glistening in the direct rays of the sun, while themselves experience none of his cheering influence. The very same connexion there is between "Arise" and "Shine," when considered as a command to a backsliding church. Those who refuse to be quickened will not be enlightened; those who cleave to the dust will not be cheered by the light of God's countenance. Ye must be willing to rise, otherwise ye cannot shine. But, in the case just alluded to for illustration, it would have been vain for the men to ascend the hill in quest of light had not the sun been shining. It is true that their ascending the eminence brought them within the direct influence of his beams; but it is also true that their ascending the eminence would have been of no avail, had not the sun been

above the horizon. So, when we are addressed in this imperative strain, there is hope concerning this thing: "Shine, *for thy light is come*, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee:" "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead:" and good encouragement there is to attempt compliance, for it is added, "Christ shall give thee light."¹ Our light has come, and it is required that we rise and look upon it. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."² The glory of God, then, is revealed in the face of Jesus Christ. That is the glass in which we can behold it. Observe the effect that follows from looking on it: "We, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory."³ By steadfast looking unto Jesus we acquire his likeness. Feature after feature is transferred as we gaze, until the image is complete in all its essential parts. The glories of the Redeemer are, one by one, imprinted on the believer's soul, until glory in the picture answers to glory in the great exemplar—grace corresponding to grace, as the letter to the type impressed upon it. And well may the saint thus illumined shine in the world. The impression stamped upon his nature is that which shines in the face of Jesus; and that which shines in the face of Jesus is the "glory of the Lord." Christians! this is your encouragement; your light has come; you need not wait for another; no brighter sun will ever appear on your horizon. You have only to yield yourselves to the influence of his light and heat. The great work is not to be done—the power not to be exerted by you. No man is required to save his own or his brother's soul. That were a hopeless task. When a man is commanded to work out his own salvation, the encouragement—the only thing that could have afforded a ground of hope—immediately follows: "For it is God which worketh in you."⁴ In like manner, when Christians are commanded to shine for the purpose of enlightening and saving others, they are not left to the hopeless task

1 Ephesians, v, 14. 2 2 Cor. iv, 6.
3 2 Cor. iii, 18. 4 Philip, i, 13.

of producing the light themselves, for, saith the Scripture, "thy light is come." Only be willing to let it shine on you, and it will produce its own work.

As we pursue this topic, we are writing out our own condemnation. The condemnation of the world is, that "light is come into it, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil."¹ Here is the condemnation, far more severe, of the church—we may read it literally from the text, "Thy light"—not merely "light" as it is in the world, and not appropriated, but "*Thy* light is come," and the glory of the Lord *shall* be seen upon thee. It is still among the things that shall be—it is not seen yet. The glory of the Lord not seen in us! And why? This is our condemnation, that all other things are now ready, and we are not. "They looked to him and were lightened; know, that if ye are not enlightened, it is because ye do not look. If ye are not radiating around you the very glories that shine in your Redeemer, it is simply because, cleaving to the dust, you are not looking to Jesus.

Let us examine now in some particular instances, by way of examples, how the glory of the Lord may be transferred to, and seen in believers—so seen in them, as to become the means of enlightening and converting them that are without.

One feature that would be transferred to the character of Christians, if they would look unto Jesus, is—a meek forgiving disposition—a temper never irritated, never yielding to passion—a charitable frame of mind toward all. One of the many graces that go to make up the fulness of Christ is, according to the apostle Peter,² that "when he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not." The apostle Paul had looked on the face of Jesus, and had thereby gotten that grace transferred to himself; (you know it was not in his character at first). Of himself and his fellow-labourers he testifies³—"being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat." How closely the picture resembles the original! O if the church would arise and receive this ray from her Light, she would shine in the world a very different

¹ John, iii, 19. ² 1 Peter, ii, 2, 3. ³ 1 Cor. iv, 12.

thing from what she has hitherto appeared. Of late years this glory—that of a meek forgiving spirit—seems to have almost “departed from her;” and for want of it, she has been hung up an unseemly misshapen thing—the butt of the world’s sarcasm, rather than a light attracting the world’s admiring gaze: “Jerusalem hath grievously sinned; all that honoured her despise her, because they have seen her nakedness.”¹ Looking to ourselves in this aspect, we may well be “cast down:” but we will not despair. This glory is in the face of Jesus: if we look to him, it will yet be seen in us.

Another grace which Christians may get from the same source is—the living, not for the world, but for God—not for time, but for eternity. “One thing is needful.”—That has been taught by the Lord, and acknowledged true by all his disciples: you may read it distinctly in the creed of the Church, but not in the conduct of her members. It would appear that an adulterated version of that grand doctrine had been engraven on the character of the professed followers of Christ: shut the word, and let an impartial observer read it off from the general aspect of the church, it will be found to run—“*many* things are needful.” We are cumbered about the “*many* things,” just because we habitually look to them. When we learn to look unto Jesus, we shall be found, in practice as well as in theory, accounting the things of this present life not worthy to be compared with the things at God’s right hand. Then in choosing our occupations, our company, our pleasures, all will be done for eternity. The interests of time, when they come into competition, will be resolutely and wholly set aside. The evident aim of life will be to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, despising in comparison all other things.

Another glory that would be transferred to the church and seen in her members were she to arise and look, is an aim, in the present life, not selfish but benevolent. In Christ all fulness dwells. If we look to him, we shall receive out of his fulness “grace for grace:” we shall get graces implanted in our own souls, corresponding to the graces that are in Him.² And one

1 Lam. i, 8. 2 John, i, 16.

of the graces of our Lord Jesus Christ is, "that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."¹ When this grace is conveyed to the church, corresponding to the same grace in the Redeemer; when this glory from the face of Jesus is transferred to believers, in such measure as to be "seen upon⁷ them, then there will be a shining in the darkness; there will be a visible standing out from the world; there will not be, as now, difficulty in "discerning between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not."² Were the law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," freely acknowledged, and fully obeyed, it would completely change the aspect of society; it would turn the world upside down; we shrink from looking at the law; we have not courage to think of its practical bearings: but that is because it condemns us. We treat it as Ahab did Elijah. When, in an unguarded moment, the obligation of that law starts up before the mind and touches the conscience, it is repelled with a thought, something akin to the confused guilty-like exclamation of the King of Israel: "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy!"³ A selfish aim in a Christian is a stain that dims the lustre of every other grace he may possess. We must not be contented with giving every one his due: our Lord has laid down another rule, his own example: "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you."⁴ His love to sinners was not measured⁷ by their deserving; neither should ours. If we look unto Jesus, we cannot long be contented to live without doing anybody harm. As in nature, "light is the vehicle of heat;" so a habitual looking on him who loved us, would not only reveal to the understanding the greatness and freeness of his love, but would melt the soul into a kindred flame.

Let me specify one other glory that the church may obtain by looking up, which is either not at all, or but dimly seen upon her now—a confident hope of a blessed immortality. As the eye of the believer is more steadily fixed on the light that has arisen, faith will in-

1 2 Cor. viii, 9. 2 Mal. iii, 18.

3 1 Kings, xxi, 20. 4 John, xv, 12.

crease; and as faith increases, the hope founded on it will be confirmed; it will grow on until it issue in assurance; and that assurance will beget a habitual rejoicing in the Lord, very different from the doubting, desponding condition of most Christians in the present day. When joy and peace in believing shall have become general in the church, the change from her present desolate aspect will be so great, that it will readily be seen upon her;—so seen, that it will be acknowledged an emanation from the glory of the Lord.

My object, all along, has been to show that Christians are deficient in holiness of life, and to urge them on to higher degrees of attainment. In accordance with the subject prescribed and the text chosen, I have, throughout, been preaching morality: but I have been trying to make it Christian morality. I would like to avoid the silly conceit of those modern moral philosophers who make it a point of honour, not to be indebted to the Bible for a precept or a motive; who make a parade of learned labour, in searching for light through the mazy records of heathen antiquity, but will not borrow from the record of God's word, except by stealth and without acknowledgment; who would account it an abatement from the true philosophic dignity to fortify an argument by a direct appeal to the gospel of our Lord and Saviour. Knowing that in our flesh there dwelleth no good thing, I could never expect to see any good there; unless I were able to point out a source, independent of ourselves, from which it may come. Knowing that nothing but roots of bitterness ever spring up spontaneous in the soil of the corrupt mind, I could never expect to see fruits of righteousness growing there, without sowing, in the first place, the good seed of the word. Knowing what the Scriptures and experience teach of the natural depravity of the human heart, it would have been a heartless, hopeless thing, to urge a multitude of my brethren to greater holiness of life, if I had not been allowed, at the same time, to point to a fulness whence they might all receive. It would, indeed, have been a heartless, hopeless thing, to proclaim in the hearing of fallen men, "Arise, shine;" if I had been debarred from proclaiming in the same breath, "Your light is come."

After so much of an expository character about the godly life of believers—after so much about what it is not,—what it is,—and how it may be attained; we should now be prepared to apply it more particularly to our prescribed subject,—to press it as a mean, intended and fitted to promote the revival of religion.

When the Church shall receive the glory of the Lord from the face of Jesus Christ, and reflect that glory around, the effect will be to dispel the darkness that broods over the earth—to remove the gross darkness that covers the people.

Recurring to the illustration already introduced;—suppose a few men placed on an eminence—that on them the sun has arisen—that there is a multitude on the plain below who see not the sun, but whose life depends on seeing him. Suppose further, that those below have no inclination to ascend—that invitations are addressed to them in vain—that they are prevented from making any effort by a secret sluggish doubt, whether it really be true that a sun has appeared above the horizon—that they are fast falling into a lethargy, and dropping, one by one, dead on the cold ground. Suppose that the effectual means of inducing them to come up to a place of safety were to let them see the sun's rays actually shining on the countenances of those who had already attained the height. What would ye think of those favoured few, if they should refuse to turn toward the sun as the signal and the means of safety to their perishing brethren below? Oh how shall we wash our hands from the guilt of our brother's blood!

Universally, without limitation as to time, place, or other circumstances, Christians are bound to let their light shine *for the good of others*; but with a view to the further illustration of the subject, and a more precise enforcement of the duty, let us look to its special bearing on some of the more important relations of life.

Observe, in the first place, how this command bears on professing Christians in their collective capacity as a congregation—a number of families associated for the conjoint worship of God, and administration of religious ordinances. As a congregation, Christians should come out

from among the unclean, and having come out should continue "separate." There should be a well-defined line of demarcation preserved. If such a body of Christians would in any degree answer the end of their being, they must be distinguished from the world. If they would not be an instrument in the hand of the wicked one to ruin many souls, they must be distinguished from the world, even as a light is distinguished from the darkness. If they would exert a purifying influence on those that are without, they must as a body be pure. In short, there must be an unceasing, untiring effort, after a rigid discipline and a pure communion. On this topic it would be out of place to descend to particulars; but it is within our own legitimate province, to throw out a hint as to the existence of the evil, and the method of correcting it. There is much need of zeal in this matter; but it is very necessary that zeal in this matter should be attempered with wisdom. There is danger of marring all, by beginning at the wrong end. If any good is to be done, we must begin at the heart. Get an increase of warmth and activity there; thence let it penetrate and pervade the members; and let the reinvigorated body then, by the impulse from within—by its own spontaneous motion—shake off those unseemly excrescences that may have stuck themselves on its surface, during a period of sickly prostration. This is a safer and a surer method, than the application, from without, of a system of rules which, however excellent in themselves, may be in advance, not only of the spiritual condition of those to whom they must be applied, but also of the spiritual comprehension of those who are to apply them. The continued maintenance of a form of admission, when the actual spirituality of the body has fallen below the standard of that form, is a most dangerous thing. It is just the danger of a disease which, leaving the extremities warm, and so lulling suspicion, lays a freezing grasp upon the heart. Having thrown out a caveat against what I conceive an error in the method of proceeding, let me again reiterate, that if our churches are to do any thing in their Master's work, they must exercise a rigid discipline. Let it only

proceed in the right way—let there be a movement within the Church—let her arise and shine—let her receive the enlightening and warming influences of her living Head—let the demand for the exercise of discipline come from an increased spirituality within, and thus called for, let discipline be enforced—severe, and yet more severe, as the increasing light within reveals new and hitherto undiscovered deformities.

These observations refer to a stage in church discipline after the first step has been taken. There is a first step, however, which we might all be prepared to take now—and which we must all take, ere we can in any degree become “instruments of righteousness unto God,”¹—I mean the instant excision of all who are known to be immoral or profane. Such sins as drunkenness, swearing, and sabbath desecration, must in every case be held to disqualify. Until this be done, conscientiously and sternly done—it is more than foolish to talk of Christians, in their congregational capacity, being the light of the world. Congregations who allow of such sins in their members, are not obeying their Lord’s command to let their light shine—they are not trying to obey it—they are hindering the coming of Christ’s kingdom. They are not *reviving* religion; they are caricaturing it, and holding it up to the scorn of the world. After this first step is taken, we shall not be producing so great an amount of evil; but still helpless for good,—still only beginning. I might go on to propose, as a second step, that the worldly should be excluded from the communion of the church; but alas! who are to exclude them? where should we begin, and where end? I say, if you should now begin by making a rule, that a worldly-minded man should not be a member of the church, I do not see how we could apply it; and yet it is true that worldliness is the besetting sin of the church, dimming her light, and preventing her from moving in the service of her Lord. We are not in a condition to apply such a rule; and yet we are not to fold our hands helpless and despairing. The church cannot get quit of worldliness by a process of excision from

¹ Romans, vi, 13.

without: but the church may get quit of worldliness by a process of extrusion from within. We must arise and shine—those who are Christ's must let their light so shine, that the distinction between them and the worldling may be clearly seen. *Then* we shall apply our rule, and exclude the worldling from the communion of the church. So on with other steps in the process. Let the rules be rigid and uncompromising; but the framing and enacting right rules will be labour in vain, unless, by an enlightening and enlivening process within, the actual spirituality of the church be raised to the point where the application of right rules becomes possible. Strict enforcement of discipline is a difficult thing, but it is essential: without it we have no good ground to expect a general revival.

This would have been the natural place to introduce the subject of union among different bodies of Christians, now kept separate by certain non-essential peculiarities; but the theme would necessarily lengthen in our hands beyond the reasonable limits of a discourse. Un this account I shall not attempt the illustration of it here. Let me just remark in passing, that the present disunion of those who hold by the head, is one of the strongest barriers in the way of convincing papists; and affords the infidel one of the most efficient of the weapons which he wields against the truth. Surely all who really desire the conversion of the world, should stand in awe and tremble, as they read the prayer offered up by a suffering Saviour, for union amongst his own as the means of attracting the world to the faith of the gospel: 'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.'

Descending now from the contemplation of the collective body, let us endeavour to bring the practical application of our subject more particularly to bear upon the different classes into which the body may be divided, according to certain relations in which they stand to each other; and of these, first, *ministers*.

1 John, xvii, 20, 21.

It is acknowledged that a minister's example is at least of equal importance with his preaching. Indeed, it is not right to institute a comparison between the two in regard to their importance. They are so closely connected, that the efficiency of the one is wholly dependent on the co-operation of the other. Better no preaching at all, than a preaching of truth which is contradicted by the daily walk of him who preaches it. If a minister would let his light shine for the good of others, he must,

1. Devote his time and his talents, zealously and assiduously, to the great end of his office—the saving of sinful souls. Though there should be no positive evil done, on which the most watchful adversary could found an accusation, the mere negative evil of indolence, inactivity, or dissipation of time and talents in other pursuits, will effectually counteract the soundest teaching. This negative evil is substantially a practical contradiction of the speculative truth taught, and must necessarily lessen its effect. The counsel of God, if faithfully declared, condemns the indolence of a minister; and conversely, the indolence of a minister opposes the truth which himself has preached, and so prevents it from having its own weight on the consciences of those who hear.

2. Again, if a minister would let his light shine for the good of others, he must not be of a worldly mind; he must not be secular in his aim. He must avoid both the evil, and the appearance of the evil. It is admitted that there is, among a certain portion of the community at the present day, a disposition to misrepresent ministers in this matter, and to judge of them uncharitably. There is, among not a few, a cruel disposition to grudge a minister even the means of a comfortable subsistence; a disposition to decry as avarice in a minister, what is in itself, and in other men would be acknowledged, a just and praiseworthy concern for the comfort of his family. This disposition on the part of the people—of those among them who entertain it—is their sin. It is a species of persecution to which a minister must submit; but let him remember that it is not enough for him that he make out a good case against those who use him unkindly. He

must take occasion, from their sin, to make a more strenuous effort to avoid all appearance of that evil which is a stumbling-block in their way. It is not enough that he can justify himself against the accusations of these men; he must become all things to these men, if by any means he may save them. There is room for a great addition to the influence which the example of the Church is now exerting on the world, by an increased spirituality of aim actuating the conduct of her ministers.

3. I am bound to point out, for the purpose of suggesting amendment, that in the conduct of ministers which has an adverse effect on the religion of the community. And if my own experience, before I was invested with the office, be any thing like a correct index of the feelings of the community in this matter, I would say that the manner, and tone, and spirit, in which ministers frequently conduct the business of church courts, exert in secret a powerful influence in preventing the cordial reception of their Sabbath ministrations. There may be in this too a certain amount of prejudice among the people; but after making all due allowance for the prejudice, and taking into account the great improvement which of late years has in many quarters been effected, there remains a substantial evil to be redressed—an evil that must be redressed, ere we can lay claim to the character, or accomplish the end, of lights in the world.

Finally, ministers must, in their private intercourse with the people, be themselves a comment on the doctrines which they teach. They necessarily meet, in various circumstances, the very people to whom they preach on the Sabbath. The two lines—that of their public ministration, and that of their private converse—are near each other: if they do not run parallel, they will necessarily meet, and cross, and oppose each other. Even the most ignorant of the people instinctively observe the inconsistency; and, unless the private intercourse is manifestly thrown into the same scale with the public preaching to increase its weight, they will take care to throw it into the opposite scale, and thus ease their consciences, by deducting so much from the force of the truth which would otherwise have troubled them. It is especially

required of ministers, if they would concur in promoting a revival of religion, that they keep their lights always burning.

The duty of letting their light shine for the good of others is especially binding in another class—*parents*, including masters, and superiors generally. Hut less of illustration will be needed here, as the principles that apply to the conduct of ministers may be easily accommodated to superiors of another class. I speak not at all of those parents who make no religious profession: neither by precept nor example do they promote the spiritual weal of their families. It would be premature to press on them the practice of the truth, before they have been brought to acknowledge it. But let professing Christian parents know, that in relation to the religious interests of their family, the acknowledgment of the truth is nothing—is worse than nothing—if it is not followed up by a consistent practice. Children inherit a corrupt nature; religious duties are wearisome; when conscience, enlightened by early instructions, represents religious duties to be imperatively binding, the most successful instrument which the wicked one can employ to weaken conviction and resist the truth, is to suggest to the mind of the child, in proof of the parent's insincerity, some discrepancy between his Sabbath-day teaching and his week-day acting. Christian parents! do not in this way give place to the devil; do not put into his hands an instrument, whereby to sever the affections of your child from you, and from God. Mothers! how much has been done by the holy example of a mother making an impression in earliest childhood—a first impression so deep as to keep its place, in defiance of many a strong current of temptation in after life! Not unfrequently the conversion in mature years of profligate men is in a great measure due to that impression, pertinaciously keeping its hold in spite of every adverse influence, and at length, by some remarkable dispensation of Providence, more vividly recalled. A godly mother, kneeling by the cradle of the child, is a light so clear, that it is seen when other events and other objects are shrouded in the darkness of the forgotten past—seen shining afar in memory's deepest

recess—so seen as to be felt—felt with such power as to *revive* religion in the soul of the grown man, after it has been smothered long beneath a multitude of sins.

Let me suggest the practical application of the subject to one other class—*children*, and others who may in various wds be in the condition of inferiors. Let no one imagine that only those, who may be eminent above others for their talents or station, are bound to become the light of the world. These have greater opportunities of doing good, and may be more extensively useful; but the humblest disciple may and ought to be a light in his own sphere. However private your station or limited your talents, there is some one or more who will be influenced by your example. Ye cannot prevent that example from operating; there is no neutral ground; it will affect your neighbours for good or for evil. Let not the weakest lamb of Christ's flock despair of helping in this way to promote the revival of religion. This is a weapon which may be used by those who are unable to wield any other. A child, if a child of God, may thus, without leaving the path of his duty, become the mean of shedding spiritual light into the mind of a benighted parent. It will not do for such a one to offer violence to nature by assuming the office of a teacher—the tone of dictation. A modest, loving, winning, holy life will be far more effectual. I cannot conceive any mean more likely, under God, to effect the conversion of an ungodly parent, than a practical exhibition of the power of godliness, in the daily conduct of his own child. Suppose a father has spent a day in worldly cares, an evening in sinful pleasures, and retired to rest unblessed, without a prayer to God, without a thought of his presence. Ere his eyes are closed in sleep, there falls upon his ear, through the stillness of night, a sweet, soft, inarticulate murmuring. It proceeds from the adjoining chamber—the chamber where rests the child whom nature has taught him to love. Louder and more distinct, the voice becomes, as the affections of the unconscious suppliant warm into fervour;—it is a prayer. The father listens. Arrested, he checks each rising breath, and strains to catch the sound. Louder now it

is, and still more clear;—it is a prayer *for him*. Hard indeed must be his heart, if it can resist such a constraining power as this. There will be a sting of remorse; but there may be more. On the wings of that sharp arrow the enlightening Spirit may enter. The man who resisted every other mean, may thus be taught to pray—may be induced to seek, and seeking, find a pardoning, reconciled God.

Consider your high calling, brethren, whatever your rank in the world or your station in the church; think of the honour conferred upon believers; they are not only instruments, they are fellow-workers with God, in the accomplishment of his eternal decrees. The elements of nature, the various orders of inanimate creation, all unite in showing forth the Creator's glory; but they are only the unconscious instruments of divine power. The service rendered unto God by a renewed soul is a willing service. The moment our minds are enlightened by the Holy Spirit, we are enabled to perceive what the work is,—to perceive the excellence of the end, and the fitness of the means; are allowed to exercise our own judgment and will, in the execution of that which the Sovereign Lord hath determined to bring to pass. But, to be intelligent, willing instruments, in accomplishing the divine decrees, implies a corresponding duty on our part, and lays upon us a responsibility, heavy in proportion to our intelligence, and the importance of the end to be accomplished. Let the disciples of Christ weigh well the station which they occupy among the creatures of God; his thoughts towards a sinful world are, and ever have been, thoughts of love; his offers of mercy are freely made to all; he waiteth to be gracious to every repentant sinner: many and various are the means he has set in operation to induce them to come; and among others you, ye followers of the Lamb, by whatsoever name ye may be called, have been placed in the midst of them to hold forth a practical exhibition of the beauty of holiness,—to show them, in your lives, how good a thing it is to draw near to God,—to exemplify the pure morality of the gospel, that men may be enticed to submit to its power,—to live soberly, and righteously, and godly in the world; that men, seeing your good works, may glo-

rify your Father which is in heaven. If you have been reconciled to God by the death of his Son, how awfully solemn is the station ye hold between your heavenly Father and those who are still his enemies. He has in great mercy brought you into the marvellous light of the gospel; and not being willing that any should perish, he has entrusted to you the task of communicating that light to them who sit in darkness. This consideration supplies one of the most powerful inducements to the careful practice of every Christian grace. If ye are not zealous of good works,—if your conduct is inconsistent with your profession,—if ye do not, in your intercourse with the world, exhibit the genuine character of children of God, is there no danger, think ye, that some sinner may be lulled asleep, or led into fatal error by the dimness or false colour of the light afforded in your example? Is there no danger that such a one may die in his iniquity, and his blood be required at your hand?

When the tempest-tossed vessel approaches in darkness the rocky shore, every thing depends upon the steady shining of the appointed signal lights. Trusting to these the mariner may thread his way through a thousand dangers, and safely come to anchor in the calm waters of a protected haven. If your king and country had entrusted one of these beacon-lights to you, ye would have felt a great weight of responsibility, increasing aye as the darkness deepened, and the storm arose; ye would not dare to desert your post; ye could not lie aown to sleep; you would be kept awake, if not by the howling of the tempest, by the imagined cry of distress. An aggrieved conscience would convert the whistling of the wind into shrieks of drowning men. Or, if from unconquerable indifference, or a malicious design, ye proved unfaithful, and lured to destruction a ship's confiding crew, ye would be called to a strict account before the righteous tribunals of the land. Blood for blood would be the demand; and the sentence of the judge, confirmed by the acclaim of an indignant people, would consign you to death unpitied for your crime. Such, in so far as things temporal can with things eternal be compared—such; the sight of God must be the guilt of those, who by their profession have assumed the

character of *lights in the world*, and then proved unfaithful to their sacred trust. The unconverted man reads in the record of truth, that the disciples of Christ are the lights of the world: he feels himself to be in darkness; he hears you call yourselves by the name of Christ, and looks to you for guidance; he looks to your conduct for an example of what Christianity really is. If your conduct be inconsistent with your profession,—if the glory of the Lord is not *seen* upon you, ye are holding out to him as the religion of Jesus—as the salvation of God—something altogether different. He cannot distinguish between the good and the evil; he embraces a false representation of the thing for the thing itself; he has grasped a lie, thinking it to be the truth, because he received it from you; he goes down to the grave with that lie in his right hand; he is cast away in his iniquity. This is the end of *him*, but how shall ye escape?—“*Where is thy brother!*” I cannot conceive of any question more dreadful issuing from the judgment-seat, on the great and terrible day.

By the subject prescribed, I have been led to address myself throughout to Christians, but I would not thereby be understood to assume, that all in this assembly are such. If anything like a faithful exposition has been given of a Christian's duty as a light in the world, it should beget in many here, a doubt, as to the class in which they should be ranked,—whether of those who are required to give the light,—or of those who must in the first instance receive it.

Ye who fear God,—who know that darkness covers the earth,—and acknowledge your obligation to become instruments in dispelling it, would you really desire to see a Revival of Religion? Know that it is in your own hands. All things are ready. In the Sun of Righteousness there is a glory sufficient to attract all nations. That Sun has arisen upon you. Ye are, by divine appointment, the reflecting medium; through you his beams are to be conveyed to the people who sit in darkness. Arise then, and shine. Receive the light, and diffuse it around. Shine, for thy light has come. The glory of the Lord has arisen: and when that glory is “*seen upon*” the Church, the Gentiles shall come to her light, and kings to the brightness of her rising.

LECTURE VIII.

ENCOURAGEMENTS TO EXPECT, PRAY, AND LABOUR
FOR THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION.

Encouragements from the Promises and Prophecies of Scripture.

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But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: for these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, (saith God,) I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams; and on my servants, and on my hand-maidens, I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy."—ACTS, ii, 14–18.

WE have now arrived at a very interesting stage in the course of Lectures on the Revival of Religion. We have seen what a revival of religion really is—what effects it is fitted to produce on the church and the world—the connection which it holds with the entire work of the Son—its relation also to the work of the Holy Spirit—its origin in the sovereignty of the Father, and the vindication which the same sovereignty supplies against difficulties and objections. Descending from these higher and more sublime views, we have seen what are the means by which a revival of religion may be promoted among men:—the faithful use of the word of God in all the forms in which it can be brought to bear upon different classes—the not less faithful use of prayer in all the appropriate ways in which it can be offered up—the holy lives of believers—the scriptural exercise of church discipline.

These varied steps have brought us a considerable

way in the course. Reviewing them as a whole, we are ready to say: "The revival of religion is a great scriptural work, most excellent and desirable;—means should be employed with all diligence to awaken and extend it." But here the question presents itself, Is there anything in the word of God to encourage us to expect or pray or labour for a revival of religion? It is not enough to know that a particular object is laudable and good, and also to know the means by which it may be most successfully accomplished;—such are the spiritual weakness and indisposition even of the people of God that they need motives to encourage. The mere excellence of the object itself will not suffice; there must be something more quickening and animating. Many will say: "Most desirable as revivals may be—most appropriate their means, is there any hope—any chance of their being vouchsafed? Look to the history of the church—see how rare and short-lived they are;—the result seems most uncertain, or rather success seems most improbable." It is plain that to men in this state of mind the effect, in point of practical working, is the same as if there were no possibility of such a thing as a revival of religion at all—as if we knew nothing either of its nature or of its means. What is it to us that revivals of religion stand closely allied to the work of the Son of God both when upon earth and now that he is in heaven, and that they are inseparably connected with the agency of the Holy Spirit in every age—what is it to us that there are ample, and suitable, and divinely-appointed means for awakening and carrying them forward—if we are not encouraged to make our knowledge available and employ the means which have been provided? We shall either not labour at all, or our labours will be cold, formal, transient. Hitherto then the course may be said to have been doctrinal and speculative—now it becomes essentially practical. The question is asked: Is there anything to encourage Christians to expect and pray and labour for a revival of religion among their fellow-men? The answer is, that there is very much to encourage them—that the department of motives is as large and clear and impressive as any other part of the course. I begin with the first

and highest of all encouragements—THE PROMISES AND PROPHECIES OF THE WORD OF GOD. I only regret that in so extensive a field I shall be compelled to content myself with little more than an outline. But may the Holy Spirit, who inspired the promises and prophecies of Scripture, and whose work we desire specially to honour in this course, bless even an outline, and so encourage us to pray and labour that the outline shall be enlarged and filled up in our own experience to a full and practical knowledge,—a knowledge embracing others as well as ourselves in the blessing.

It is unnecessary to make or to attempt to keep up any formal distinctions between the promises and the predictions of Scripture in regard to revivals of religion. There is a distinction between a promise and a prophecy. A friend may promise us a good thing who cannot foresee what is to happen in the future, and who cannot be said to prophesy, and a man may predict some future good as he foretells the beneficial action of a machine which has been set in motion, without himself feeling any real interest in the good, and who therefore could not with propriety be said to promise it. But in the present case there is no room for such distinctions; the promises and the prophecies of Scripture in reference to revivals of religion are nearly identical. God's promise to revive his church is equivalent to a prophecy that his church shall be revived; and the prophecy of revival with one who is so powerful, and who takes so warm an interest in the work, is equivalent to a gracious promise. In these circumstances I shall in the following lecture use the promise and the prophecy indiscriminately. It is the same Ever-blessed Triune Jehovah who is the Author of both.

What then are the views which Scripture holds out in connection with revivals of religion—present and future? Does it hold out any encouragement, or is it altogether silent? Some may think that there is no necessity for promises or prophecies on the subject—that the Church of Christ, on the force of other considerations, may carry forward her work without their aid. But even were this possible, success would not be so satisfactory: It would not be the result of pro-

raise—it might be interpreted as the effect of random influences. Besides, a promise from God is the expression of condescension and love: and as he does nothing in vain, so we may be persuaded that if he actually promise there is decided reason why he should do so. It is sad that there should be any need for a revival of religion—that religion should not always and universally be so warm and flourishing as to require no revival. But since there is such necessity for it, what reason have we and the church for gratitude that the Persons of the adorable Godhead have all in the word of truth stooped to supply us with so many and so cheering encouragements. We might have hoped that, since they take so deep an interest in the conversion of souls,—the Father devising the plan of redemption—the Son executing—the Spirit applying it,—since a general revival of religion in a country or congregation so illustriously honours their perfections—the glory of the Father, the love of the Son, the power of the Spirit,—that they would give forth some intimations and promises on the subject, and we are not disappointed.

1. The word of God teems with intimations, direct or indirect—with statements or inferences—*with assurances and prophecies of a day of coming universal religious revival*. It is difficult to arrange and condense materials so ample. The largest share of them is in the form of prophecy; and there is a peculiar propriety in this. The life which the Christian and the church are at present called upon to live is a life of faith; and no food is so appropriate for the exercise of faith as promises pointing to future blessings.

Unlike the false religions of men so prevalent in the world, which are contented to occupy the country where they happen to have obtained a footing without any desire for extension to other lands, true Christianity,—in other words, the gospel of Christ, is not only indestructible in its nature, and so permanent to the end of time, it is essentially diffusive. It is fitted, as it is designed, to be a universal religion. It contemplates universality. There is nothing in it of a local or temporary character. Its ordinances are so few and

simple that they admit of being observed in all countries—at the equator and at the pole. The gospel too can live and flourish, as the event has proved, under all forms of civil government—popular and despotic. It is compared to light, and to salt, and to leaven—to objects which diffuse themselves, and assimilate all which they touch to their own likeness. A true Christian cannot keep the gospel quietly in his own bosom as a thing of private gratification;—no: he cannot help making it known to others: sympathy impels him. He feels that it is a common blessing—a public trust. How different the feeling of the poor heathen. Hence there is a provision in the very nature of true Christianity for its universal propagation. Spread it from individual to individual—from family to family, it will at length fill the world. Had it contained in it any principle or institution essentially local and antisocial, it is easy to see that its universality would have been impossible, and that all predictions to that effect would have been delusive and vain.

But we have much more than the diffusive nature of the gospel on which to proceed: we have the positive declarations of the word of God. These are presented in a great variety of forms. We can choose but a few. What is the meaning of the first promise, that the Seed of the woman is to crush the head of the Serpent, if not that Christ is to establish a triumphant kingdom in the earth? Would that promise and prophecy be fulfilled if the gospel were never even to make an approach to universality—if it were always to be narrow, however excellent and beneficial within the limits which it occupied? To Abraham, standing at the head of the Jewish economy, essentially local in its nature, was it promised that in his Seed, namely Christ, all nations—all the families of the earth should be blessed. A similar promise was repeated to succeeding patriarchs. And does it not distinctly point to universality? What can be more comprehensive than *all nations*—all the *families* of the earth? At a later day we have similar intimations; and the former are never repealed. While in the burning but unconsumed bush Moses had a striking emblem, in the desert

of Arabia, of the indestructibility of the church of God amid the fiercest flames of persecution—in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt—their miraculous passage through the waters of the Red sea—their not less miraculous crossing of the Jordan in flood—their possession of Canaan under Joshua or Jesus, and the expulsion of the native inhabitants—we have impressive types and representations of the coming universal triumphs of the Christian church. And even to his countrymen, all prejudiced as they were, and at a season when their prejudice might naturally be expected to be strongest, he intimated that a day was approaching in which their peculiar privileges would be extended to others. Fifteen hundred years before the coming of Christ, Jehovah said by Moses: “I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation,”¹—a remarkable prophecy, which an apostle informs us² was fulfilled in the calling of the Gentiles, and their participation in those spiritual blessings of which the Jews, by their perversity, had deprived them.

Descending the stream of time to the days of David, how many and delightful are the predictions of the universal glory of Christ which burst upon the eye. In the twenty-second Psalm, in which the Saviour is not only spoken of but actually personated, apart from whom indeed the psalm is unintelligible, we read, “All the ends of the earth shall remember themselves and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him; for the kingdom is the Lord’s, and he is the Governor among the nations.” Nothing can be more comprehensive than this—the very ends of the earth, without exception, and the very tribes and families of the nations, all are to worship Messiah; and a reason is assigned, - because the world is His, and He is entitled to the homage of all nations. If we turn to the seventy-second Psalm, which was written in the first instance with an eye to Solomon, but which evidently points to a greater than Solomon, we meet with such glorious prophecies as these: “He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river

1 Deut. xxxii, 21. 2 Rom. x, 19.

to the ends of the earth; they that dwell in the wilderness—the most inaccessible and inhospitable quarters, “shall bow before him; and his enemies”—the most powerful and obstinate, “shall lick the dust; the kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba”—the most distant and unlikely parties, “shall offer gifts; yea, all kings shall fall down before him—all nations shall serve him: Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who alone doth wondrous things.” Under the review of the magnificent vision which passes before him, the Psalmist cannot restrain his gratitude and praise, and so he blesses the God of Israel, whose almighty power and grace alone can effect such changes as these. And then, turning anew to Messiah, he offers a similar ascription: “And blessed be His glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with His glory.” Amen and amen.

I might go on in this way and transcribe whole chapters from the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and no small portions from Daniel and Zechariah and other minor prophets, all substantially speaking the same language, but this is unnecessary, and would unduly protract this lecture. I cannot however altogether refrain from quoting a few passages and expressions: they may serve to recall your attention to larger portions, and the exercise is a pleasing one to my own mind. “*Look unto me,*” says Messiah by his prophet Isaiah, “and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else: I have sworn by myself—the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness and shall not return—that unto me *every* knee shall bow, *every* tongue swear.” Addressing the Gentile church the same prophet says,¹ “Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child; for more are the children of (he desolate than of the married wife, saith the Lord:” that is, the Gentile church shall have a much greater number of members than the Jewish. “Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations. Spare not:—lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shalt break

¹ Isaiah, liv, 1.

forth on the right hand and on the left, and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited." Nor is this all—a reason is assignee! in the fifth verse, "For thy Maker is thy husband: the Lord of Hosts is his name, and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel;—*the God of the whole earth shall he be called.*"

What can better describe universality unless it be the words of the same prophet, "Mine house," says God, "shall be called an house of prayer for *all people*" or again, "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea"? How do the waters cover the bed of the sea? Is it not so perfectly—so thoroughly that there is not a corner or a cavity to which they do not penetrate, and which they do not fill? Such shall be the completeness with which the knowledge of the true God shall pervade all the countries of the earth, however remote and inaccessible. To similar purpose, God says,¹ "It shall come to pass that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles." It appears then, that missionaries are to be sent forth to every country under heaven, preaching the gospel. There, is strong reason to believe that, by *Tarshish*, we are to understand the western parts of Europe; by *Pul* and *Lud*, Ethiopia and the vast extent of Africa; by *Tubal* and *Javan*, the northern parts of Asia and Ancient Greece; and by *the Isles afar off*, the immense islands which lie embosomed in the ocean—Australasia, and perhaps America. In other words, we are taught that the gospel is to be preached and obeyed throughout every quarter of the world: there is to be no exception to this blessed rule. Turning to a brother prophet, we hear Jeremiah say, that "All nations shall be gathered I unto the name of the Lord at Jerusalem, and shall walk no more after the imagination of their evil heart: that

¹ Isaiah, lxvi, 18, 19.

all flesh shall come and worship before the Lord.”¹ That “in that day they shall no more teach every man his neighbour, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least to the greatest of them, saith the Lord.” And what is the testimony of Daniel? He tells us, though a succession of vast monarchies may have held the dominion of the earth, some of them for many centuries, that another—a far more extensive monarchy—is to be reared up and spread over the world, even the Kingdom of Christ. At first it appears as a stone cut out of the mountain without hands,—in other words a spiritual power: but it becomes larger and larger till it passes into a great mountain and then fills the “*whole earth;*” breaking up and absorbing all other kingdoms. The same universal monarchy is pictured forth by the prophet in another vision, in which the Son of man is represented as coming to the Ancient of days, and receiving of him a dominion and glory and a kingdom,—that “*all people, and nations, and languages, should serve him.*” — What a wonderful kingdom is this! Not a few universal monarchies have, age after age, been stretched across the world; but in the hands of man enlarged dominion has almost ever been prostituted to the purposes of despotism, ignorance, and slavery. Limited space and limited numbers are in this world grand securities for the peace, intelligence, and prosperity of nations. Far different is the universal monarchy of the Son of God. His kingdom is not only much more extensive than any which was ever reared; but, strictly speaking, it is the most perfect of governments. There is no will save of ONE PERSON, and he is Divine; and instead of diminishing human happiness with the enlargement of the kingdom, the wider it extends, the more subjects it includes, the more thoroughly it is obeyed, the purer and more glorious are its felicities; and need we wonder? No: for the King is Righteous, and the empire Salvation, and the people Redeemed.

There is no meaning in words if those of Daniel do not most carefully and anxiously set forth to us the ideas of universal extent and authority. You remember also how

¹ Jeremiah, iii, 17.

Haggai, under the inspiration of prophecy, foresaw the Desire—not of some or many, but of *all nations*, coming to his temple, and filling his house with glory; and that Zechariah speaks of the time when “Holiness to the Lord” shall be written upon the very bells of the horses—upon the ornaments of their harness, and when the smallest and most common things shall be consecrated to God; when, in short, true religion shall be all-pervading, and the Canaanite shall be no more found in the land. What too is the language of Micah? “In the last days, the days of Messiah, it shall come to pass that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established on the top of the mountains”—prominent and conspicuous from afar; “and it shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow unto it;” the worshippers shall repair in crowds, like a full and fast-flowing river; and “many nations”—Gentiles—heathens, “shall come and say, Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for the law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem;” a prediction remarkably accomplished after the resurrection of Christ.

And what says Malachi, who closes the Old Testament canon? He may deal in severe reproofs on the Jewish people; but he tells also of the time when from the rising of the sun untill the going down of the same, the name of the Lord shall be great among the Gentiles, and when in *every place* incense shall be offered unto God’s name and a pure offering. Indeed, the faithful people of God in Old Testament times were seldom involved in circumstances of trial and discouragement—were almost never favoured with deliverance and restoration, but they were reminded of the more extensive and glorious salvation awaiting the church of God, and of the universal triumph of true Christianity. To this every image of grandeur and beauty was made subservient.

And if we pass from the Old Testament to the New, we meet with no change for the worse,—no repeal: we are gladdened with the same glorious prospects under new forms of language and imagery. The

Saviour himself informs us that the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the *whole* was leavened: he declares that if he be lifted up from the earth, namely, upon the cross of crucifixion, he shall draw *all men* unto him. Many he has already drawn—millions on millions; but he is destined to draw many more in the future—such a multitude that he may be said to draw all. As he has been unspeakably dishonoured upon earth, it is befitting and proper that on the same earth he should be not less illustriously glorified; and such shall be the case. He shall, as a Conqueror, draw all men in his triumphant train. In perfect accordance with these things the apostle Paul, in the eleventh chapter of the Romans, speaks of the success of the gospel among Jews and Gentiles in the primitive times, though embracing a multitude of churches, as but the *first fruits*—the pledges and the earnest of a coming, a golden harvest; and he speaks also of the Jews being brought in with the *fulness* of the Gentiles; implying that there is a Gentile fulness yet to be gathered; and what is the testimony of John, the most aged and last of the apostles? His book of Revelation is, from beginning to end, not only a magnificent prophecy of the perpetuity of the church, in spite of the heresies, aposfcacies, and persecutions of many centuries, but also a prophecy of the ultimate and universal triumph of the kingdom of Christ. It contains a picture of the glory of true Christianity upon earth before passing into the ineffable glories and beatitudes of heaven. First, we have a description of the destruction of Antichrist—of all the enemies of the Redeemer and his people; and what a destruction!—The reaped harvest—the gathered vintage—the battle field, where the birds of the air are invited to come and devour the corpses of the slain, are all employed to shadow forth its completeness and irretrievableness. A millstone cast into the sea—Satan shut up in the pit, and bound in chains, are added to deepen the awful idea; and in the meantime, what are the aspects of Christ? He is seen riding forth, with *many* crowns upon his head, with the titles—“King of kings and Lord of lords” inscribed upon his thigh;

and the angels of heaven are heard rejoicing over the fall of the foe, and exclaiming "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever,"

2. Nor do the Scriptures only testify to the universality of Christ's kingdom, but also to ITS DURATION AND GLORY. Amazingly wide-spread as it might be were it transient—doomed quickly to pass away, it would lose much of its interest and value; but it is destined to endure. There may be in some distant futurity a partial interruption of the blessings of its reign, but the prosperity is to be most protracted. It is only such a reign as this which is worthy of Christ, and a suitable reward for his toil, and the long reign of his adversary. The prophet speaks of the days of the church's mourning being ended—of Jerusalem being the joy of many generations. The psalmist, in the seventy-second Psalm, speaking of Messiah, declares that "He shall live Solomon may die, but Christ shall live; He is the First and the Last, the Living One; "and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba; prayer also shall be made to him continually, and daily shall he be praised; His name shall endure for ever; His name shall be continued as long as the sun," ay, longer than the sun and the whole frame of creation; "and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed." Ages after that luminary has ceased to shine, the Sun of Righteousness shall continue to illuminate the ransomed of the Lord in their heavenly abode. Their city has no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God does lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof; and the nations of them who are saved shall walk in the light of it Even in this world there shall be a lengthened reign: The Millennium shall have its thousand years of joy. Hitherto the reign of true Christianity has been very short; and the more lively and powerful it has always been the shorter; but it shall enjoy a long and continuous career; there shall be abundance of peace and spiritual prosperity as long as the moon endureth.

This brings me to remark that the reign of Christ shall not only be extensive and enduring, but *most*

glorious. The worst evils shall disappear, and the most precious blessings shall be conferred and enjoyed. The glory of Jehovah, which was comparatively hidden under the Jewish, and has been but partially revealed under what has passed of the Christian dispensation, shall then shine forth; his saints shall see it, and that not occasionally, now and then, but continually, without intermission; and so full and radiant shall be the glory, that, to adopt the language of the prophet, "the moon shall be confounded and the sun ashamed when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in mount Zion and in Jerusalem before his ancients gloriously."¹ All other glory, however excellent, shall be drowned and extinguished in the glory of the God of redemption.

There shall be the *glory of knowledge.* Every veil of ignorance and prejudice shall be taken away: even dimness of eye, imperfect hearing, the stammering tongue, shall be exchanged for their opposites; and comparing the church then with the church now or at any former period, "the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days." How glorious the radiance when the light of the sun shall be multiplied seven times, when the light of seven days shall be concentrated into one. How overpowering the glory!

There shall be the *glory of holiness.* Sin, in its multiplied and most offensive forms, shall in a great measure cease; idolatry, superstition, and crime, shall disappear; "The people shall be all righteous;" the very children shall rival the attainments of the most matured experience at present; the common affairs of life shall be marked with religious feeling and motive; "the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar; yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holy unto the Lord of Hosts."

There shall be the *glory of union.* Throughout the whole past history of the world there has been much strife among the men of the world—much war among nations—great divisions and dissensions in the Christian church; but in the days of universal Christianity there shall be wonderful harmony: the nations "shall beat

¹ Isaiah, xxiv, 23.

their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the lion and fading together, and a little child shall lead them; and their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; and the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall, put his hand upon the cockatrice's den." What a beautiful picture of the world! and not less beautiful shall be the aspect of the church of Christ. In that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one; there shall be but one sheepfold for Jews and Gentiles, as there is but one Shepherd. All the divisions about non-essentials, by which the robe of the Saviour has been so miserably rent, and the world scandalized, shall be brought to an end; and the whole body of believers, forming the vast proportion of the people of the earth, shall be united together as one holy family, acknowledging God in Christ as their common Father, and living together as brothers and sisters—heirs of the same privileges and hopes; then, indeed, shall the people of the Lord dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places.

There shall be the *glory of joy*. We have every reason to believe there will be a great and favourable change as regards a present world,—that the earth, freed from many evils, shall be much more fruitful, and that human life and health shall be much longer, and more secure to enjoy its bounties. The inhabitant shall not say "I am sick,—As the days of a tree so shall be the days of my people, saith the Lord." , And spiritual blessings shall be as rich, yea inconceivably richer,—the whole world shall resound with songs of joy;—all nature shall break forth into singing—the mountains and the hills, the forests and the fields, shall lift up their united and glad ascriptions. God shall prepare a feast upon his holy mountain,—the marriage-supper of the Lamb shall be celebrated. Not only the earth, but heaven shall be filled with exceeding joy: Angels and archangels—redeemed prophets and apostles and martyrs, yea Christ the King shall rejoice—the Lord thy God he will rejoice over thee with joy; he

will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing. The church on earth and the church in heaven shall blend their voices together, and with one heart exclaim: "Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains—O forest and every tree therein; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel."

What glorious prospects are these! What Christian heart beats not with longing desire to see them realised—to see the day when the kingdom of Satan, in its various forms of Paganism and Mahometanism and Popery and Judaism and Infidelity, and Prevailing Ungodliness, shall all be dissipated and destroyed,—when the peace and love of the true God shall fill every heart—daily worship ascend from every family—the word of truth be translated into every tongue, and circulated in every country,—when the holy law of the Sabbath shall be gladly and universally observed, and Christian worship, baptism, and the supper of the Lord, be co-extensive with the population of the world? Who longs not to see the day when "many and strong nations" shall unite themselves to the Lord,—when all shall know God, from the least to the greatest,—when children shall be remarkable for early piety,—when even the most ignorant rustics shall be consecrated to Jehovah,—when the poor shall be raised from the dust, and the beggar from the dunghill, and shall be set among princes, and made to inherit the throne of God's glory,—and when kings and queens and princes, and persons of the most exalted station, who have too often been bitter enemies, shall become nursing-fathers and nursing-mothers of the church;—in short, when no nation, or next to none, throughout all its ranks and classes, shall remain in a heathen or unconverted condition. Who longs not to see truth and knowledge and holiness and peace and joy, public order and prosperity, national happiness and honour universal?

O what a contrast is true Christianity to all the systems of man—intellectual or moral or religious, philosophical or superstitious! They can boast of no

age of future glory; they have no hope with which to cheer the hearts of their adherents. They may talk of a return of the golden age; but they delude themselves with dreams:—their age is an age of iron; and the longer they reign their darkness and tyranny are always the more despotic and hopeless. The gospel may be poor and unimposing in its outward aspects; its progress may be slow—the field which it occupies narrow.—it may often be thrown back and weakened by outward opposition and inward corruption; but when it does arise to its future triumphs, and when these are accomplished, how ample will be the compensation for all past tardiness and decay,—how will every prayer be then seen to be more than answered—every sacrifice more than repaid,—how will friends rejoice and enemies tremble, and all confess that it is the wisdom and the power of God to salvation.

Nor have we the mere assurance, in prophetic forms the most varied and impressive, that the knowledge of Christ shall fill and pervade the earth. We cannot doubt the assurance for a moment;—it is infallibly certain: But, as if to deepen our confidence the more, the very ground and foundation on which it proceeds is proclaimed to us. We are not only told that it *shall* be—we are taught that it *must* be. The universal and final success of the gospel is mixed up with the glorious work of Emmanuel. It is part of His reward, and that reward is guaranteed to Him by a divine oath. He has, as Mediator, been appointed heir of the world, that he might receive the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. The Father hath said unto him, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;” and moreover hath said, “I have sworn by myself—the word hath gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return—Unto thee every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear.” What assurance can be stronger than this;—yea, what assurance can be half so strong? The word—the oath of Jehovah, fulfilling a most righteous covenant! all truth is as falsehood to this.

Let us all be well persuaded of the coming—the universal glories of the cross. Let none imagine we

have been merely contemplating figures of Eastern hyperbole, or that any past success of the Christian church explains all that has been promised. Let us remember that the Scriptures are a book of truth and soberness; and that our narrow hopes and still narrower experience form no safe measure of their revelations, or of God's gracious intentions. Let us remember that the words and the images descriptive of the future glory of the church are far too numerous and harmonious to be explained away as an exaggerated expression,—that if Jehovah meant to declare the ultimate and universal triumphs of the gospel, he could not have employed more appropriate terms: And, upon an opposite supposition, he could not have used terms more fitted to mislead. And let us consider that all the success in primitive times, and at the era of the Reformation, and at the present day, extensive and most worthy of thankfulness as it is, is not once to be named with the magnitude and duration of the promise and the prophecy. What is the third part of the earth—now reduced to a fifth—much of it only nominal Christianity—and what are ten or twenty years of outward peace and prosperity to a government of all nations—to the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom, *under the whole heaven*, and to a duration which reaches as long as the sun and moon endure—from generation to generation—even for ever and ever? It is but in modern times that some quarters of the world have been discovered; millions of human beings are arising where not many years ago no form of man but a solitary savage of the wilderness was to be found. Is it to be imagined that the best promises of Scripture to the world were all fulfilled before immense portions of the world, destined to be most populous, were known at all? Surely not.

II. Having rapidly sketched the divine promises and predictions of the universal reign of the gospel of Christ, I come now to show THE BEARING WHICH THESE THINGS HAVE UPON THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION,—in other words, to show the application of what I have been propounding to the course of lectures now on hand. Aware, from the volume of inspiration, that

one day the gospel is to be universally diffused in its knowledge and influence; and then contemplating the narrow limits within which it is at present contained, and within which it has ever been circumscribed; the obvious inference which every thoughtful mind draws is that there must be an immense revival of religion before the prophecy of the glory of the latter day can be fulfilled. And when one thinks of the prodigious difficulties which lie in the way, from the enmity of the carnal mind to the truth of God—the prejudices of society, and the political arrangements of the world,—all of which it would seriously disturb—one must be not less satisfied that the work can be accomplished only by the almighty power of the Spirit of God.

But it is not enough to know that there must be an immense revival of religion, and that the Holy Ghost must be the Author: The question arises—In what way is the revival to be carried on which is to issue in the glory of the latter days? Does Scripture, in the form of promise or of prophecy, throw any light upon the subject? It is possible to conceive that the gospel may be made universal by the slow process by which it is advancing at present. This indeed would require a vast multitude of ages: Still, at the rate and in the mode in which it is making progress—leavening one individual and neighbourhood after another—it would at length, especially if its forces became accelerated, fill the earth with true religion, supposing there to be no serious days of heresy and declension to retard its course. Now, is this the mode of propagating the gospel and making it universal which the word of God leads us to expect? No. It does speak of a gradual advancement: It speaks of leaven, and of the sown ear and the springing blade, and of the ear and the full ear; and it speaks of the water of the gospel river, which at first reaches to the ankles, then to the knees, and then to the neck, and ultimately becomes such a flood of waters as to overspread the earth. And this accords with the gradual procedure of God in nature and in providence. But, happily. He does not limit himself to this course in the kingdom of grace: He cheers his people with a warmer encouragement. We are taught that while the progress

of the gospel is gradual, within this gradual progress there are sudden and remarkable expansions of religion—in other words, revivals,—that as in nature, so in grace, there is variety in the midst of uniformity. Many men—yea Christian churches generally have too often contented themselves with the belief as a whole that the gospel is one day to be all-pervading and universal. The church has not analysed the promises of God, and considered the *mode* in which the blessed consummation is to be brought about; and so a generality and vagueness have attached to her faith, not favourable to fervent prayer or devoted labour. But the Scriptures seem to leave no room to doubt, that, while there is to be a gradual progress—the result of the Divine blessing on suitable means faithfully and perseveringly applied—there is also to be the occasional outbreakings of sudden and singular revivals, which shall embrace a large body of people—it may be tribes and nations—at the same moment. This is a most cheering doctrine, and relieves the mind from the feeling of weariness and hopelessness which slow and protracted labour is apt to inspire.

1. One of the forms in which prophecy speaks of the progress and triumphs of Christianity is the SUDDEN DESTRUCTION OF THE ENEMIES OF THE LORD. There are many such enemies—many almost insuperable obstacles to the progress of the gospel. Till they are weakened, or taken out of the way, there is little hope of its advancement in many of the most important regions of the earth. What barriers to the diffused knowledge and influence of divine truth are the two great Antichrists of the East and the West—Mahometanism and Popery. Now the promises and prophecies of Jehovah assure us that they are to be utterly destroyed; and, as the fruit of this, that the gospel is to be blessed with signal success. But how is this destruction to be accomplished? Is it to be the slow work of many centuries? Are Mahometanism and Popery to perish piecemeal—so that when they actually die, their death shall scarcely be known? No. They are to be destroyed when giving manifestations of power,—suddenly and unexpectedly. This is God's usual course: to make his own arm the more

visible, and draw the attention of men more impressively, he strikes down the enemy when even his people are not looking for the blow. Thus it was, that Babylon, the grand type of all the enemies of the Lord, was destroyed. The Chaldeans were wrapt in security,—eating and drinking and making merry; but that very night the gates were unbarred—the river turned aside—and the city taken by surprise: So wonderful was the deliverance thus afforded to the Jews, that they declare “we were like men who dreamed and not less wonderful, doubtless, was the overthrow to the Chaldeans;—So it was with Jerusalem the great Jewish Antichrist. Whatever may have been her hazard at an earlier day, there was no prospect of unfavourable change at the time the destruction came. She seemed more likely to stand than she had done for many years;—there was no slow consumption;—she did not die of weakness. The assault of the Roman army was sudden and successful, and withall most terrible.

Thus also have we reason to believe will it be in the destruction of the existing Antichrist and enemies of the Lord. The awful picture of the seventh of Daniel, which some attribute to the day of judgment, so terrible is the scene, but which plainly belongs to the doom of Antichrist, does not indicate a slow and peaceful death: The thrones are set, and the Ancient of days, the* unsearchable Jehovah, whose garment is white as snow, and whose hair is of pure wool, comes forth and sits down upon his throne with Christ as Assessor;—his throne is like a triumphal chariot, whose wheels are of tire;—myriads of angels stand ready to execute his orders; and ten thousand times ten thousand stand as prisoners before his bar: the judgment is set, and the books are opened; and the guilty are given over to the fiery flame. Here there is nothing gradual;—there is the immediate and awful sentence of a judge, followed by an execution as signal and immediate. So it is in the prophetic visions of the book of Revelation. In the hour of doom Antichrist does not appear weak and emaciated like a skeleton—ready to die: She appears in pomp and power, sitting as a queen. The vials of divine wrath are not as we are apt to im-

agine—narrow-necked vessels, capable of inflicting judgment only in a gradual manner: they are wide, open-mouthed, capable of a full and immediate discharge of vengeance.¹ The images too, under which the doom is pictured forth, do not indicate a slow and gradual process,—they are the reaping of the harvest of the earth,—the gathering of vintage of the grape,—the plunge of the millstone into the sea: all are rapid. There may be much time occupied in ripening the two first—much long-suffering, till the sins of men are fully ripe; but when they are once mature, the reaping is rapid, and completed in a moment. No one needs to be reminded, that the descent of a millstone into the sea is sudden,—and as irretrievable as speedy: it is the doing of a moment, and yet is hopeless. It is worthy of notice too, from the eighteenth chapter of Revelation, that the plagues of Antichrist, her death and mourning and famine, are to come upon her “*in one day.*” The spectators too of her doom, who stand afar off for the fear of her torment, exclaim, Alas, alas! that great city Babylon I that mighty city! “*for in one hour is thy judgment come.*”

And lastly, the church of God is evidently not expecting the destruction,—she is exhorted to watch the fall, just as Christ exhorted the disciples to watch and be prepared for the fall of Jerusalem. This intimates that there is nothing in the outw'ard aspect of the enemy to warrant the idea of immediate doom, but the reverse. There would be no need to counsel the saints to watch, if the appearance of death were so visible and striking as to draw forth their attention without any warning.

It is plain then that Antichrist is to be destroyed suddenly: and what does this prove but that there will be a great and sudden manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit? It is only His power which can quickly and at once overthrow adverse influences so deeply rooted. It is accordant with His procedure, as the Spirit of Revival, to effect grand and unlooked-for changes; and there is a loud call for the exercise of his might in the overthrow of enemies, in as much

¹ See Parkhurst on the Greek word.

as the fall of Antichrist is immediately followed by a wide extension of the knowledge and influence of the gospel,—in other words, by a great revival of religion. It is said that the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away the dominion of Antichrist, to consume and destroy it to the end. And what is the result? Is a foe simply extinguished, and does every thing stand as before? No. Immediately after the fall of the enemy, the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom, under the whole heavens, are given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Similar is the picture in the book of Revelation: Immediately after the destruction of Antichrist, “The seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.” We have every reason to think too, that the conversion of the Jews, in its fulness, will not take place till Babylon has fallen. It may and doubtless will be realized in some measure, but it is not till their great idolatrous persecutor—Popery—is removed out of the way, and the Euphrates of Mahometanism is dried up, that we can expect the way for “the kings of the East” to be adequately prepared. And I need not say what an outpouring of the Holy Spirit the conversion of Israel will indicate, and what means it will supply for immensely spreading the religious revival which it begins. The conversion of the Jews is acknowledged on all hands to be connected with the conversion of the world in a manner altogether singular and preeminent.

2. But we can appeal to other evidence besides the sudden destruction of enemies, in proof of coming and extensive religious revivals. The speedy death of enemies w’ould, indeed, both indicate and lead the way to a blessed revival. What a happy day will it be for the gospel when Popery shall be overthrown, and the power of the false prophet broken in pieces: It will be a very jubilee. But we have much more glorious prospects in the word of God: there are many promises, ample and delightful, assuring us of the effusion of the Holy Spirit,

and teaching us to regard this is the way in which the glory of the latter days shall, in all probability, be brought about. These promises are to be met with in different books of Scripture—in different ages of the church: they are more general and indefinite at first, but become more full and defined as time rolls on, and the history of the church is unfolded. It is well known, that one of the great Scripture emblems of the Holy Spirit is "*water*." He is the Comforter and the Sanctifier, and water at once refreshes and cleanses. The Saviour assures us, that unless a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven the water of baptism is a sign of the necessity of the 'e-generation of the Holy Spirit. In the seventh of John, it is said, 11 In the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as (he Scripture hath said, out of his belly (that is, his heart and soul) shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive."

Keeping these things in mind, that water and rivers emblematically describe the Holy Spirit, let us attend to a few Scripture passages descriptive of the glory of the Church, and see whether we may not fairly infer that there shall be great, extensive, and unexpected revivals of religion in the future, and that thus in an important degree shall she be carried forward to her final and universal triumphs. David, speaking of the days of Messiah, says, "He shall come down like rain upon the mown (or pasture) grass—as showers that water the earth." Do these images not well describe the gentle but abundant communications of the Spirit? How often does the rain fall unexpectedly on the mown grass! Long is the pasture withered and ready to die; but the shower descends, and forthwith the whole aspect of nature is changed. "There shall be a handful of corn in the earth, upon the top of the mountains, yet the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon, and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth." What is it which can make a mere handful of corn, scattered, not in a fertile field, but on the rough top of a mountain,

grow at all,—much more shake like the cedars of Lebanon, strong, stately, and secure, defying every storm? What is it which can raise up so magnificent a crop in circumstances so unfavourable? It is only the abundant rains and blessing of heaven. And what is it which can make the grass of the valley to grow in luxuriance thick and strong? It is only the dew and the rains of the same blessed Spirit. Would not an abundant growth on the tops of mountains indicate a peculiar communication of the influences of heaven—of the sun and the shower? So shall the conversion of multitudes, in the most unpropitious circumstances, the regeneration of the Heathen and the Jew and the Infidel, argue the presence and power of the Holy Ghost.

The same sacred writer, the inspired Psalmist, upon another and an earlier occasion, says, primarily in reference to himself and his deliverance from the hands of Saul, but doubtless also with a distinct reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom he was a type,¹ “Thou hast made me the Head of the Heathen; a people whom I have not known shall serve me; as soon as they hear of me they shall obey me; the strangers, (those who were alien,) shall submit themselves unto me: the strangers shall fade away like leaves on the approach of winter, and be afraid out of their close places.” The points which are here particularly worthy of notice are, that some of the heathen, as soon as they hear of Christ, are to receive his gospel and serve him, and that the enemy are to fall away like autumn leaves. What images can better describe not slow and protracted, but rapid and victorious conversion; and what again can be the source of these but the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit?

Descending the stream of prophecy, we come to the age of Isaiah, seven hundred years before the coming of Christ: and what does he testify of the religious revivals of the latter days? In the thirty-fifth chapter, including the two last verses of the thirty-fourth, he gives us a brief but most beautiful picture of the church under a general revival. It is said “The wilderness and solitary place shall be glad for them, and

¹ Psalm xviii, 44.

the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,—the excellency of Carmel and Sharon: they shall see the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God.” Then, changing the image, the prophet goes on to say, “The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing.” And how is this blessed consummation to be brought about? Is it by science or philosophy, or political schemes of government? No: the cause is described thus: “For in the wilderness shall waters (that is the Holy Spirit,) break forth, and streams in the desert, and the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass, with reeds and rushes.” But this is only a single passage; and the book abounds with similar testimonies. The prophet on another occasion says, in much the same strain:¹ “When the poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them; I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water; I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together.” This is a most beautiful prophecy of the abundant effusion of the Holy Spirit in answer to prayer, and of the blessed and marvellous consequences with which the gift shall be attended. Instead of mere dew, or showers, however congenial or sweet, there are to be rivers and fountains; and in the most unlikely and necessitous quarters in the wilderness and dry land there are to be springs and pools of water. What images to a resident in the hot and parched countries of the East can convey ideas more grateful and refreshing: and what is to be the result of this divine gift of the Spirit? Instead of poor, withered shrubs, there are to be magnificent trees even in the

¹ Isaiah, xli, 17.

desert,—the fir tree, with its elevation of 150 feet, and the box, with its everlasting green; all nature is to be changed; there is to be a new vegetable world.

Take another passage from the same prophet, descriptive of the same glorious days:¹ “I will pour water, says the Lord, upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.” Here we have the same promise of abundant effusion; and that there may be no misunderstanding of what is meant, the counterpart immediately follows: “I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.” And what is the fruit? Does the world remain as ignorant, idolatrous, and ungodh as before? No: “And they shall spring up as among the grass or rather, “They shall spring up as grass in the midst of waters, as willows by the water courses.” How do grass and willows grow amid water in the sultry heat of Eastern climates? Most rapidly and luxuriantly. The course of rivers and streams may be traced from a distance by the line of vegetable, green—by the grass and the willow which grow on their banks. Adopting another image, the prophet goes on to say, “One shall say, I am the Lord’s; and another shall call himself,” or be called “by the name of Jacob.” He is God’s property, and shall like the slave bear the name of his Master. “And another shall subscribe with his hand,” or rather shall write *on* his hand “unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.” The allusion is to idolators, who made marks upon their hands and arms, and different parts of the body, in token of respect for their idols, and to denote that they are their attached servants. So shall men in the revival days of the church mark themselves with the name and ensigns of the true God, the God of Israel, and shall declare themselves his devoted people.

And these events shall not be long and slow in their progress; they shall be brought about speedily. Another prophecy,² speaking of Messiah, testifies: “Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people: Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not; and nations

¹ Isaiah, xlv, 3. ² Isaiah, lv, 4, 5.

that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He hath glorified thee." Here we are taught that not merely individuals or families, but whole nations, who have hitherto been most ignorant and opposed, shall run quickly and cheerfully to Messiah,—in other words, his gospel shall make great and rapid progress among them; and how, except through a sudden outpouring of the Spirit of God? The result does not seem to be the effect of a lengthened application of means, but of the speedy interposition of the Holy Ghost. Contemplating days, too, of darkness and opposition which lead to Messiah's final triumphs, it is declared for the encouragement of the church, that when the enemy shall come in like a flood, from many quarters at once, and with the overbearing power of a multitude of waters, that then the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. Thus we are informed, that in seasons of great danger and corruption there shall be compensating revivals of religion on the other side. And what is the effect of this outpouring of the Spirit? "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and shall turn away iniquity from Jacob." "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, my Spirit, which is upon thee, and my words, which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever."¹ So that here we have a promise of the perpetuity of the Spirit, and that in an abundant measure.

Turning, again, to the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah, how magnificent are the promise and the prophecy which run through the whole. Inspiration seems to be exhausted in finding images to picture forth the glorious and universal change. There is to be a prodigious assemblage: The sons of the Gentiles are to come from afar—the daughters are to be carried on the side—the camels and the dromedaries from distant lands, bearing presents, are to cover the whole face of the country—the flocks are to offer themselves willingly upon the altar—there is to be no hesitation or resistance—they

¹ Isaiah, 1 ix, 19–21.

are to fly as a cloud of doves to their houses, obscuring the sun by their numbers—the ships of Tarshish are to be among the first to bring God's people from distant lands. And what is to be the result? "The glory of Lebanon," says Jehovah, addressing his church, "shall come unto thee,"—that is, the cedar and the fir tree, the pine tree and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; "and I will make the place of my feet"—that is, my temple, "glorious." What do these things describe if not general and rapid movements? How swift is a dove upon the wing, and here there are to be clouds of them hastening to their young. What a flight! O the blessed operation of the Spirit! The prophet concludes by saying, "A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation. I the Lord will hasten it in his time." The work is not to be long and weary; it is to be speedy, and yet effectual. Work hastily executed is generally imperfect—but here it is to be strong and abiding.

I might quote largely from the concluding chapters of this noble prophet. These present the glory of the latter day of the church not only in general outlines and in the grand result, but in the leading details—with a minuteness and a beauty to which there is no parallel except in Scripture itself. This, however, would swell the present lecture beyond all reasonable bounds. But I cannot part with Isaiah without quoting one or two verses from his closing chapter. Speaking of the church, Jehovah says¹—"Before she travailed she brought forth, before her pain came she was delivered of a man-child . who hath heard such a thing; who hath seen such thing—shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day, or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed she brought forth her children." "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem and be glad with her, all ye that love her." Can any images better show forth the marvelous and most unexpected rapidity with which Jehovah shall carry forward his cause in the appointed season? It shall exceed any thing which ever was known or heard of among men. All ordinary difficulties and trials shall disappear.

¹ Isaiah, lxvi, 7.

There shall be birth without pain, and the harvests of the earth shall be matured in a day,—the day of sowing shall be the day of reaping. Nay, more,—not individuals, or families, or communities merely, but nations shall be born at once—shall cast off their superstition and idolatry and ungodliness, and embrace the truth and law of God, and stand forth in the light of regenerated people. What prodigious moral changes are these! How sudden and glorious! How shall they make up for past delay, swallow up all opposition, and array the world in new aspects—in the smiles of moral loveliness. The conclusion is very beautiful: “And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the Lord; out of all nations—upon horses and in chariots, —(the cradle thrown across the back of the camel,) and in litters and upon mules, and upon *swift beasts*, to my holy mountain, Jerusalem.” Here all sorts of conveyances are employed, such are the crowds repairing to Jerusalem, and yet the multitudes do not move as multitudes generally do—slowly, leisurely. Though some are carried upon litters, there are swift beasts; all intimating that the movement is rapid as well as all-comprehensive. Nor is this all: The Lord informs us what will take place when all are thus brought to Jerusalem, as a clean vessel for the house of the Lord: and “I will also, says he, take of them for Priests and for Levites; for as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain.” He will make provision for permanent worship; his temple shall never be shut or decay; its officers shall ever be engaged in religious exercise.

Leaving the promises and prophecies of the book of Isaiah, let us turn to a contemporary—a brother prophet, Joel: What does he testify regarding future revivals of religion, sudden and extensive? The prospects which he holds out are in perfect harmony with those of Isaiah; there is no jarring. The apostle Peter, in our text, distinctly points to the predictions of Joel: When many on the day of Pentecost were ready, like not a few in our day, to disparage the work of the Spirit,—when they were daring enough to say it was the

effect of intoxication, as not a few now say it is of mere animal enthusiasm and excitement; the apostle tells them that there is no need for wonder, and far less for such explanations,—that Joel had prophesied many hundred years before, that there were to be such manifestations of the Spirit's power, and that now these were realized. To oppose or ridicule the work of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost was then only to expose their own ignorance and folly. Speaking by Joel, Jehovah says, "And it shall come to pass afterwards," or in the latter days, "that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit." Whatever accomplishment there may have been of this prophecy on the day of Pentecost—though we have reason to think that so far as miraculous power is concerned it was completed on that occasion; yet the terms seem too comprehensive, to allow us to imagine that remarkable outpourings of the Holy Spirit are not still in reserve for the church. It is worthy of remark, that the Spirit is said to be poured out on all flesh without exception, and that the gracious influence is to extend to all ranks and degrees of men,—to the man-servant and the maid-servant. Large as were the donations of Pentecost, they can scarcely be said to have come up to these promises. And hence, we are permitted still to look forward to effusions of the Spirit not less illustrious than those of Pentecost, to effusions as sudden and unexpected, and far wider and more glorious.—Who rejoices not in the anticipation?—who would not sing for joy were the days of Pentecost to be restored? Blessed are the hopes which Joel inspires: he winds up his brief book of prophecy with the delightful words which surely intimate more than a Pentecostal blessing:¹ "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of

¹ Joel, iii, 18.

Shittim," or the valley of thorns, the land of briars and thistles. The Holy Spirit shall regenerate the most ferocious natures; where there was no water there shall be rivers; and where there was nothing but the transient mountain stream there shall be an overflowing of milk and wine.

Descending above two hundred years from the days of Isaiah and Joel, to the days of Ezekiel, what do we find,—do we meet with any prophecies of revival and of the Spirit? There are many. Take one or two specimens. Speaking of the restoration and conversion of the Jews,¹ the Lord says, "And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof, and all the abominations thereof, from thence. And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh." What can more truly or impressively describe the spiritual state of the Jews than to say that they have hearts of stone?—and what can better describe their conversion than to say that God will give them a new heart even the Holy Spirit? And if Jehovah thus revive the Jew, the most adamant and unlikely, will he fail to revive the Gentile by the same blessed agency? There is a prophecy to the same effect in the thirty-sixth chapter. Referring to the latter days of the church, God says to Israel: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh, and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." The prophecy of the next, the thirty-seventh chapter, may be peculiar to the Jews, and of the same import with those already quoted, though still more striking. The "Wind" we know, from the third chapter of John, is one of the Scripture emblems of the Spirit, and here in answer to the prayer: "Come forth from the four winds, O Breath, and breathe upon the

¹ Ezekiel, xi, 18.

dry bones." We are taught that the Breath or Wind did come forth and breathe upon them, and they lived and stood upon their feet, and became an exceeding great army; doubtless an army of the faith—an army of apostles—to carry forward the triumphs of the cross.

But if the present, the thirty-seventh chapter, speaks of a great revival among the Jews, the fruit of the effusion of the Holy Spirit, the forty-seventh not less plainly speaks of a great revival among the Gentiles, the consequence of the operation of the same blessed Spirit. Here the Spirit's familiar image of water is employed anew; and as he breathed upon the dry bones as the Spirit of life, so he flows forth from the sanctuary as a Spirit of revival and refreshing; and extending as he proceeds, from small beginnings till he fills the whole vision with a sea of waters. Wherever his gracious influence penetrates He heals—the dead he makes alive, and the result of the whole is that there is "a very great multitude of fish," and that the converts are "exceeding many." Do not these images intimate a very large effusion of the Holy Spirit, followed by fruits not less abundant?

Passing from the prophecy of Ezekiel, and turning to those of Zechariah, seventy years later, do we find any abatement in the promises of the Spirit in the latter days of the church? No: though the book of Zechariah extends to but a few pages, it is full of reference to the work of the Spirit in its most glorious forms. In allusion to the building of the second temple, which was carried forward amid unparalleled difficulties, the prophet says:¹ "This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and He shall bring forth the head-stone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace, unto it." Here we are taught that the erection of the second temple, in other words, the progress of true religion in the earth, is not owing to the learning of the wise, or the power of princes, however important in their own place, as subordinate instruments; that the agency of the Holy

¹ Zechariah, iv, 6.

Spirit is indispensable and supreme; that thus the most formidable mountains of opposition shall be levelled; and when the whole work is completed, the undivided glory shall be ascribed to the free grace and goodness of God. This is a strong general testimony to the success which is awaiting the cause of God in the earth and to the Holy Spirit as the grand, the appointed author. But if we turn to another passage,¹ we shall find the same event described more in detail: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts; I will go also: yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. What do these verses show if not that in the latter days there shall be a great visible extensive concert of prayer among the people of God in different places and countries; that they shall come speedily, and pray earnestly for the Holy Spirit, not for their own salvation, for that is already secured, but for the salvation of others, and so for the glory and honour of their King; and what shall be the effect of this? A wide-spread revival of religion. It is immediately added: "In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you." Men who are anticipating a great and unexpected good eagerly seize on any one whom they imagine can aid them in obtaining it: And who are the parties who are expecting spiritual blessing on the present occasion? They are men of all the languages of the nations. Few descriptions can be more comprehensive.

How glorious and delightful is another prediction of the same prophet:² "I will pour out," says Messiah, "upon the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplication; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for an only son;

¹ Zechariah, viii, 20-22. ² Zechariah, xii, 10-12.

and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for a first born: in that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon, and the iand shall mourn, every family apart," &c. The Holy Spirit, who is the author of acceptable prayer, is to be poured out. In consequence of his grace and power, there shall be conviction of sin, and repentance universal as the grief for the death of Josiah; and so intense that the dearest relatives shall be unable to communicate it to each other. What follows? We are informed—blessed be God—that the sufferers are not to remain in this state of dreadful anguish without the hope of relief. No: there shall be a fountain opened in the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness; in other words, the gospel of salvation shall be proclaimed to them, and proclaimed with effect; for it is immediately added: "The names of the idols shall be cut off out of the land, and the false prophets and the unclean spirits shall disappear:" that is, the whole country shall become Christian; all hostility shall be overthrown. See then the glorious result of the outpouring of the Spirit: there is deep conviction; a cordial reception of the gospel, and the universal diffusion of Christianity.

And now, taking leave of the Old Testament and passing to the New, what prophetic intimations do we meet with of religious revivals as the fruit of the Spirit's operation? Our Lord, exhorting his disciples to prayer, says: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." This not only teaches that the Spirit is supremely important and indispensably necessary alike to saints and to sinners, but also that there is no gift which we have greater reason to ask, or which God is more forward and delighted to bestow; and surely then He will not withhold the Spirit from the church or the world under the New Testament dispensation. Turn to the fourteenth chapter of John—w'hat says our Lord? "I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth."

Here is a gracious promise of the perpetual presence of the Spirit in the church. Christ himself may remove, but the Spirit remains. And what is the first fruits of his manifestation? Let Pentecost testify: Multitudes are brought under the deepest convictions; and of these three thousand are savingly converted on one occasion, and five thousand on another. We all know that it is only the Spirit who can make the preaching of the word effectual,—that Paul may plant and Apollos water, but that God alone can give the increase; and surely then, when we read in the book of prophecy of the wide-spread and successful preaching of the gospel, and of the blessed results with which it is attended, we are entitled to hold that the Holy Spirit is the author of the whole, and to render to him the unreserved glory. In the fourteenth chapter of the book of Revelation we read that an angel flew in the midst of heaven,—that is, throughout the visible church, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and “to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying, with aloud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made the heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of water.” This is a call to all nations to abandon their idolatry and to serve the one living and true God; and what is the result of the diffusion of the gospel?” And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen.” Hence it appears that the efficacious preaching of the everlasting gospel is to have a considerable influence in overthrowing the great Antichristian apostacy, and preparing for the glory of the latter days. And how is it, again, that the gospel is to be diffused and made successful? The answer is, Only by the effusion of the Holy Spirit of God. This is quite in harmony with the types of the Old Testament. The jubilee of deliverance from bondage, and of reinstatement in liberty and lost possessions, is to be preceded—by what? By the blowing of the gospel trumpet: and who is it that gives skill and strength to the trumpeter but the Spirit of the Lord, before whose blast the walls of Jericho fell? We see then from the revelation of the New Testament, as well as of the Old, that the Holy Spirit is to be im-

parted suddenly and largely in the future. The angel *flies*; and *all nations* are to share in the blessing. Pentecost, too, was sudden and far beyond the expectations of the hundred and twenty disciples. We have every reason to believe that it is the power and magnitude of the Spirit's work which will provoke Satan to gather his host together, and fight his last battle with the armies of the living God at Armageddon. The madness and desperation of his struggle are no mean proof of the liberality and abundance with which the Spirit shall have been communicated. Indeed, when one remembers that the Old Testament dispensation might be said to be the dispensation of the Son, he being the great promised object of the patriarchs and prophets of old; so that the present is peculiarly the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, he being the leading promised object of the gospel age, under which we live;—when these things are considered, we need not wonder that the Spirit should be largely given to the church under the New Testament; even though we should not be able to point to promises of his effusion in as many words. After the abundant revelation of the former dispensation of his coming, and the actual communication of the Spirit's grace in the gospel dispensation, it was not necessary to be repeating formal promises of days of revival. These were taken for granted as a matter of course. Hence the allusions are only incidental; but they are not on that account the less sure. Let me refer only to one: In the eleventh chapter of the book of Revelation we are informed of the sad history of the church of God under the image of two witnesses who prophesy in sackcloth for 1260 years, and who are slain, and their bodies left unburied, while their enemies rejoice with unbounded joy over their mortal remains. The interesting point to notice is that, in a very short time—three years and a half—"The Spirit of life from God" enters into them, and they arise and stand on their feet, and are called up to heaven, and their enemies are confounded, and the gospel is universally diffused, so that the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of God and of his Christ. I humbly apprehend that by "the Spirit of life from God" we

are to understand the Holy Spirit of God; and how impressively then are we reminded, under the New Testament dispensation, that the Holy Spirit is in the latter days to be richly communicated to the church and the world, and that a glorious revival is to be the result.

3. And now we have completed our sketch of the leading Scripture promises and prophecies bearing upon a revival of religion. We have seen from a multitude of passages, not only that one day the gospel shall be universal and triumphant over the world—from which we have drawn the inference that the Holy Spirit *must* previously be largely imparted—but we have seen that sudden and large effusions of the Spirit, leading to extensive religious revivals, are matter of direct promise and prediction. We are entitled then to look for religious revivals in the future days of the church. They are essential to the fulfilment of prophecy. If there be no revivals the prophecy fails, and with its failure the evidence of Christianity is compromised. Has there then been any accomplishment of the prophecies of revivals which we have been surveying? Though as yet there had been none, we could not have inferred that the prediction was false,—they might be still future. It is in the future that we are taught to look for them in a large degree. It may be expected that as the church approaches the great and universal revival of the millennium, there shall be frequent and decided indications of the blessed work which terminates in the millennial glory; but happily we are not left altogether to the future: we can appeal to past and present proofs that the promised work of the Spirit of God is in course of fulfilment.

Here I am aware I am treading on the borders of a subject allotted to the brother who succeeds me, and I am unwell to anticipate; but let me ask whether there was not a remarkable revival of true religion among the Jews in the Maccabean period, under the persecutions of Antiochus,¹ and whether the successful propagation

¹ Vitringa, the celebrated commentator on Isaiah, regards the Maccabean era of Jewish History as the type of the primitive Christian church in its sufferings and graces, so high and devoted was the religion of that day.

of the gospel in primitive times may not be considered as a great revival? Did not the planting of so many churches in so brief a space of time, and the endurance to the death of so many martyrs, hundreds and thousands, and tens of thousands, indicate an accomplishment of the promise that God would pour out his Spirit? Was there not also a great revival of true religion at the period of the Reformation from Popery? Most rapid and extensive was the work. Edwards, in one of his standard books,¹ says, "Many of the princes of Germany soon fell in with the Reformed religion; and many other states and kingdoms in Europe, as England, Scotland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, great part of France, Poland, Lithuania, Switzerland, and the Low Countries, so that it is thought that heretofore about half Christendom were of the Protestant religion; though since, the Papists" (He might have added rather—the Infidels) "have gained ground, so that the Protestants now have not so great a proportion." This good work was not slow or protracted in its movement,—it was swift as well as general. I have given some attention to the history of the Protestant church of France, and few things have surprised me more in the course of my investigations than the rapidity with which the gospel advanced. This was strikingly true of the provinces of Navarre and Bearn; and taking the church generally, we have the testimony of Theodore Beza, that he could count above two thousand churches—many of them large, with collegiate ministers—in the course of a few years, from twelve to twenty years, after the Reformation. Similar was the history of our beloved Scotland, so distinguished above many lands for the number and power of its religious revivals. By a comparison of Antiquarian documents, inaccessible to the general reader, I have recently ascertained that in seven short years, from the calling of the first General Assembly in 1560 to 1567, and these years of remarkable civil dissension and war, not less than eight hundred and seventy-four moral and religious agents were raised up for the spiritual instruction of her parishes—Ministers, Exhorters, and Scripture

¹ The History of Redemption, p. 281.

Readers. Not a few of them may have been very humble; but here we have a labourer for almost every parish in Scotland in seven years: and what is remarkable, they penetrated to the inhospitable shores of Argyll, of Orkney, and Shetland. What can explain this marvellous fact but an unusual outpouring of the Holy Spirit?—and what but the same cause can explain the striking testimony, “that within ten years after Popery was discharged in Scotland, there was not in all the country ten persons of quality to be found who did not profess the true reformed religion: and so it was among the commons in proportion?”¹

How rapid was the change in several of our Scottish parishes in the religious revivals of the middle of the 17th and 18th centuries, at Shotts and Kilsyth and Cambuslang, in other days. Nor has the Spirit ceased to be given, in fulfilment of the promise, in the age in which we live. Not to speak of recent doings in our own vicinity, every one who has read Williams’s most interesting narrative of the progress of Christian missions in the South Seas must have been struck with the rapidity with which great religious changes were effected—on hundreds and thousands of individuals—sometimes over whole islands—in the course of a few weeks or months, by very humble agents. In some cases, the people seemed to be waiting for Christian teachers, and had thrown away their idols before they appeared. In one case, the chapel was actually built before any missionary planted his foot on the shore. Tidings of change, like a fiery cross, spread from island to island, and wherever a few of the leading chiefs abandoned their superstition, the body of the people followed their example. In very many instances of course this was no more than the renunciation of open idolatry,—it did not imply a genuine reception of Christianity: still the change even in these cases was very remarkable—reminding us of the prophecy that nations shall be born in a day, and intimating a large effusion of the Holy Spirit of God. And if the Spirit has thus been imparted in former and in present times, what reason have we to doubt whether the prophecy shall continue

¹ Livingstone.

to be fulfilled in the future? So far from doubting, we have every reason to believe that the word of God regarding religious revivals shall be more and more fully accomplished till the whole world participates in the blessing,—and every enemy removed, the millennium shall begin its protracted reign. Viewing the Scriptures aright—recollecting their unchanging faithfulness, the wonder is not that there are revivals of religion, the fruits of the Spirit's power; the wonder would have been had there been no revivals—no progress except what is slow—the result of a painful and progressive labour.

IV. And now, let us ask what is the PRACTICAL INFERENCE to be derived from all this? Is it not that the church should be encouraged to look for revivals? Much does she need encouragement. Many, insidious, and powerful are her enemies; very various too are the untoward and adverse influences with which she has to contend. The truly good are comparatively few; and, with honourable exceptions, they are timid and divided—the worldly, the erroneous; the wicked are bold and well-combined. It is to be feared that Popery and Infidelity and general Ungodliness are on the encrease. It is certain that most pernicious principles, seriously affecting practice in different ranks of society, are spreading. All this is discouraging. It is fitted to damp the spirits, to hinder prayer, to relax exertion. No doubt there are bright spots i* the picture, for which it becomes us to be devoutly thankful. Still there is much to sink and dishearten: Six millions of Jews—600 million of Heathen 1 And what in these circumstances so well fitted to cheer as the hope of a great universal revival? This is just what is needed. It would at once meet and overcome all our difficulties and discouragements, and it would put us in possession of the moral and religious results—the improvement and the excellence and the moral glory for which we so greatly long. Many men—ministers,—yea, the Christian church generally have not been *expecting* religious revivals. They have not been looking for uncommon manifestations of the Spirit's power. They have taken for granted that, some how or other, in some way or other, the gospel

shall one day be universal, This is all that they know and care about. Comparatively speaking, such an idea is cold, distant, discouraging. It wants life and energy. Men must be encouraged to look for revivals near—large—sudden—abiding; and this will cheer and rejoice the heart, and send new life and power through the entire man.

Surely after the promises and prophecies of revivals which have been unfolded, and the partial fulfilment which we have seen them to receive, it is altogether unnecessary for me to urge any reasons why you should be encouraged to expect and pray and labour for a revival. You have the word of God to direct and sustain you, and on what stronger foundation can your faith and hope rest? Men may deceive or be mistaken, but Jehovah is unchangeable. His promises are all yea and amen. His people have in every age experienced of His faithfulness. You believe the word of men, the word of children, and will you not believe the word of God, and upon a subject too where his own glory and the glory of his church are so deeply involved? If you were labouring under personal affliction, would you not search the Scriptures for promises of support under its pressure, and should you not seek as earnestly for consolation and encouragement under the afflictions of the church of Christ in the same quarter? If there were promises of earthly blessings, of peace and prosperity, in which you might share, would you not believe them,—would not your mind be often running forward on the pleasing anticipation, and should you not believe, or should you believe coldly and indistinctly the promises of the unchangeable Jehovah regarding the spiritual health and riches of the church of the redeemed? Should you not rather receive them with the warmest assurance of mind, and realise them with hope and joy? Ah! what a pity that treasures of promise and of prophecy should be lying open in our bibles from year to year—should be vouchsafed for the express purpose of encouraging us, and that through our coldness and half believing, we should derive as little real comfort from them as if they had never been given, or as if they did not apply to us.

Think not only of the promises of God,—so many, so rich, so beautiful,—so finely adapted to the taste and likings of his people,—extending over such vast spaces of time,—repeated by so various prophets,—and yet all harmonious and one. Think of the spirit and example of good men in trying times. How were they supported? It was by believing the promises and predictions of the word of God respecting the church. When the faithful Jews were captives in Babylon how did they feel in reference to the cause of God? Did they surrender themselves to discouragement and despair? No: they remembered the promises of the Lord. They studied the book of prophecy; they hoped for deliverance, and were at length set free even beyond their expectations. How were the Reformers from Popery cheered in their arduous work? Did they trust to their own sagacity, or the native power of truth, or the aid of powerful friends? No! they searched the prophecies;—the book of Revelation was one of their unwearied themes; therein they saw clearly the doom of Antichrist and the blessed revival which follows. They pressed these views upon their hearers.¹ They thought of, and prayed for the Holy Spirit, not as a mere abstraction, but as a divine Person whose power was absolutely indispensable. And thus, believing the promises and the prophecies of God, they were enabled to make a thousand sacrifices, to rise superior to a thousand discouragements, and to carry forward the work of Jehovah. With cheerfulness and joy, they them-

¹ Jurieu, the French Protestant minister at Rotterdam, in his *uijk* on the prophecies, lamenting the decline of the spirit of the Reformation, says, "This controversy about Antichrist hath kinglyed for a hundred years. It hath been unhappily abandoned on a politic account, and in obedience to popish princes. 'Tis a wicked complaisance, for which we are punished, and which hath cost us very dear. For if we had perpetually exposed this great and important truth before the eyes of the Protestants, that the papany is antiehrastianism, they would not have fallen into that degeneracy and apostacy winch we see at present. How could they have resolved within themselves to submit to Antichrist, and return to his party? But it is so long since they heard it so called that they have forgot it. They thought that it was oidy a transport i i zeal in *the first Reformers* from which we were now come off."

selves laboured under the impulse of a revival, and they looked for revivals still larger and more glorious in the future. Thus were they sustained. Thus let us and the Christian church now be sustained. The promises were believed and realised are as efficacious as ever. Why should believers of other days appropriate the entire benefit of them? They are as open to us as to them—as really intended for our consolation as theirs; and the very number of religious revivals which have taken place since their day, interpreted as fulfilments of Scripture prediction, should quicken our confidence in the Divine faithfulness the more, and induce us to pray and to labour for revivals the more. Is it to be credited that Heathenism is stronger now than in primitive times—that Popery is stronger now than in the days of the Reformation—that the Holy Spirit has become weak with the progress of years? And why then do we not plead the promises and predictions of the word of God?

Is it asked, in the way of objection, why revivals are few in number—narrow in range—short-lived in duration, while the promises are so many and exuberant? Is this supposed to shake and invalidate the prophecy? First of all, let us remember that there have been a considerable number of revivals,—perhaps a greater number than those who plead the objection are aware of. Independently of what was vouchsafed to the churches of the Reformation in their early days, and what has been enjoyed by our own country, so eminent for its revivals, not only at that period but in subsequent days, pleasing proofs could be referred to in the history of more modern times, that the Spirit of God has not been altogether wanting to the Protestant churches of Germany and France and Holland, Denmark and Sweden;¹ and above all,—the Christian churches of the United States of America. In all these quarters there have been sound religious revivals more or less extensive. But throwing these out of account,

¹ In the form of a Supplement to this Lecture, I shall throw together some information respecting the Revival of Religion in the churches of the Reformation during the last twenty years. It may be interesting to the reader, and confirm the views given in the text.

we have to remember that the Sovereignty of God is to be taken into consideration in explaining the comparatively small number of religious revivals.—Revivals are intended, as they are fitted in a conspicuous way, to show forth the Divine Sovereignty, in choosing some and passing by others. There may be no revivals in a particular place and at a particular time, because there are no souls to be saved at that time or place, just as the appearance of a work of the Spirit of the Lord may be an intimation that then and there the good Shepherd has sheep to gather into the fold. Apart, however, from this ultimate reason, we may safely say that the grand proximate cause why revivals are brief and few is because there is so little faith and expectation and prayer for them on the part of the people of God. Christians are contented with cold, vague, and general views of the coming of Christ's kingdom. They do not really expect revivals. They are willing to go on, as they have been doing, without any greater progress or more visible success. This is dishonouring to God and injurious to his cause. It is a state of lively and unwearied faith,—it is expecting much and thinking well and generously of God which is pleasing to him, and draws down his blessing.—When is it that revivals appear? Generally after much prayer and earnest expectation. Even in the recent case of Kilsyth, good men prayed and died in the belief that the revival was coming years before it appeared. And what does this show but that living faith—full confidence in the promises of God is the high road to success? Indeed, what is the use of a promise—how can it be of any service, except as it is field and pleaded in prayer? We would not have presumed to ask God for great revivals of religion had he not condescended to promise: but having promised what is our duty but to believe his word, and to live in the lively expectation that the prediction shall be accomplished? it is thus that we honour God and obtain the thing promised. As there is nothing which honours Him more than fully, cheerfully, unreservedly believing his word; so there is nothing in return which He more honours than this believing. He blesses it with success. One reason of the greater number and power of revivals

in Scotland than in many other countries may just be, that one revival leads to more faith and expectation and prayer for other revivals. Thus revivals may be said to perpetuate themselves—they draw forth the disposition of soul which God has promised to acknowledge and regard. Since the religious movement in this vicinity, there have been far more faith and expectation of a revival—much more belief of the promises and prophecies; consequently much more prayer for the blessing. In all probability this shall be ere long rewarded, if it be not already in the course of reward, by a larger number of revivals: and these still more conspicuous in their character. O how delightful will be the day when revivals, by exciting faith and expectation and prayer, in connection with the promises and prophecies of God's word, shall awaken other revivals, and these shall move on like enlarging circles on the waters, giving birth to other and more comprehensive movements, till the sacred influence shall reach the very circumference of the Jake and cover the whole surface with the indications of the presence of the Spirit who stirreth the waters. How- delightful when not a part, a single parish or congregation of the church, here and there, shall receive a few drops of the shower; but when the whole church shall obtain the plenteous rain, and when the more that she receives she shall be stirred up but to expect and believe and pray for the morp, till the whole world shall share in the blessings of the church, and the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the vvaters cover the channel of the deep.

Since then it is want of faith on the part of believers which is one of the grand obstacles to the general revival of religion;—since it is the Church herself who makes revivals few and partial and short-lived, let us all be awoke to faith; and not to any sort of faith, but to strong and lively and persevering faith in the promises of God regarding the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Let us study the promises and the predictions of the word of Jehovah; let us be familiar with them; let us be fully persuaded of their infallible truth; let us be ever confidently looking for their fulfilment; where there is delay, let us be w'earying for its end, and enquiring into

the causes of postponement; and the fewer and more abridged revivals have been in the past, let that just be an additional reason why we should be all the more earnest in our hopes and expectations of the future. Let us beware of unbelief, or of a cold, indolent, unexpected faith. This is but to invite delay; it is to court failure. What was the reason that so many of the Israelites who stood victorious and rejoicing on the shores of the Red sea did not enter the promised land, and did not take possession of Canaan in the name of the Lord? It was their want of faith. They went on a similar errand to that on which we and the Christian church are called upon to go. Commanded by divine authority—cheered by divine promise—they were required to go forth,—to overthrow the kingdom of idolatry, superstition, and crime,—to plant throughout the length and breadth of Canaan the knowledge of the one living and true God: But their faith was weak; they were terrified by difficulties; they refused to apply all their energies in the service of Jehovah. The result was, what might have been expected—the idolatry of the Canaanites continued. The vast body of the Israelites perished in the wilderness; only two of them were privileged to enter the promised land. If, with our higher advantages, going forth to take possession of countries—not for ourselves, but for our Master—using not the temporal sword against the lives of the heathen, but the sword of the Spirit, even the word of the Lord, for the salvation of their souls, and animated by the promises and prophecies of Jehovah, we yet fail through unbelief or weakness of faith, will it be wonderful that the result in our case should be equally fruitless and disgraceful? While unbelief is so disastrous, how noble, how successful is strong faith. What was it which subdued kingdoms, and wrought righteousness, and obtained promises, and stopped the mouths of lions, and quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness was made strong, waxed valiant in light, put to flight the armies of the aliens, and sustained the martyrs in their unparalleled struggles, even unto death? It was strong faith—full confidence in the promises of God, and in the pros-

pects which He held forth of the future success and triumph of his cause.

Let us then be strong in faith, and so give glory to God. Conscious of our own weakness, let our prayer be, "Lord, increase our faith." This was a prayer which was preferred by the disciples when they were called to the discharge of a difficult duty, the continued forgiveness of provoking injury. Let us present the same petition when called, as we now are, to carry forward the kingdom of Christ amid almost insurmountable obstacles and obstructions; when called to believe God's word in circumstances highly unpropitious to faith. Let us be expecting revivals, and large ones; let us be looking out for the streaks of dawn upon the horizon, and anticipating the coining day. How happy for the wearied traveller, after toiling through a long and arid waste, on reaching the top of a mountain ridge, suddenly to behold a vast expanse of nature's richest scenery spread out before him; the green fields and the waving forests, and the village or the city glistening in the sunshine! Would not his heart beat with joy on reaching such an oasis as this? Should the Christian's joy be less when, after the long weary wilderness condition of the church, advancing where there is progress but by slow degrees—scanty tufts of verdure here and there—his eye unexpectedly falls upon successive and ever enlarging fields of living verdure—'Water springing up to everlasting life—trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah—all giving indication of an immortal youth—of an eternal summer?

In conclusion, let me exhort Christians to be comforted and animated. None can enjoy greater sources of satisfaction and hope; other causes may fail—theirs is sure of ultimate triumph; come what will of present difficulty or trial, they are on the winning side: let them be persuaded of this, and exercise lively faith in the promises of God. Such faith will impart cheerfulness and joy to all their prayers and labours. Instead of being cold and contracted and discouraged in their obedience, like the self-righteous sinner, they shall, like the reconciled and confiding believer, live in perpetual sunshine. They will be ever expecting good, and good

will ever be flowing in upon them. Not that they are to reason with themselves in this manner: 'Revivals, and ultimate and universal success are promised; they shall come of themselves; let us resign ourselves to the ease of a dreaming expectation.' No: this would be a gross perversion of the Scripture doctrine of promises and predictions—of the same character with a prostitution of the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. Promises are not intended to supersede prayer or labour, but to give cheerfulness and support under the discharge of their duties. Such perversions would unfit for present obedience, and would even prevent Christians availing themselves of the advantages of revivals when they came.

Let me exhort formalists to arise to serious self-consideration and to diligence. They have been taught how glorious are the days of revival which await the church—what care and zeal will be one day entertained and cherished regarding the one thing needful by multitudes now thoughtless and unconvinced. Can they be then any longer careless? When they see what earnest promises and predictions regard the conversion of others, can they be cold and indifferent about their own, or can they account the dry formalities of a mere external service a good enough religion—all that is required? Will they not rather feel themselves rebuked by the manifest warmth and zeal of the promised revivals, and stimulated to seek, and possess a religion in better accordance with that which the Spirit of the Lord proclaims to be genuine and divine? Can they object to revivals now, and look upon them with suspicion and disdain, when they are found to occupy so large a part of the prophetic Scriptures, and when under God they supply the readiest means of overcoming all the present evils of society and of the world, and of rendering Christianity, with all its blessings, universal and all-pervading?

Lastly, let me exhort the open enemy of the gospel, whether a professed infidel or an abandoned, ungodly sinner, to draw a lesson of solemn warning from the subject which we have been considering. If the promises and prophecies of the universal triumphs of the truth through the medium of successive revivals be so

many and strong and sure, how vain is all his opposition to them. He may hurt himself; he cannot prevent or even arrest the cause of the Redeemer. It shall advance and prevail in spite of him. It has already overcome far more formidable hostility than any which he can hope to muster; the Devil has nothing new to offer; and the promise of Jehovah standeth sure for ever. He is pledged to see to the triumph of his truth and people. Instead of indulging in fruitless opposition, let the sinner now be wise and instructed; let him serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling; let him kiss the Son ere he be angry, and he perish from the way. Let him remember that when the wrath of the Lamb is kindled but a little, blessed—happy indeed are all they who have put their trust in him.

SUPPLEMENTARY SKETCH OF THE RECENT RELIGIOUS REVIVALS IN THE CHURCHES OF THE REFORMATION, REFERRED TO IN THE FOREGOING LECTURE.

It may not be inappropriate to the argument of the text, if I subjoin a few notices of revivals in recent times, some of them little known. Though they leave a vast deal still to be prayed and laboured for, yet it would be ungrateful to God, and moreover fitted to prevent future success, not devoutly to acknowledge the Spirit of Jehovah in the following favourable symptoms. I have collected my information from various quarters, and I believe it is as correct as the circumstances of the respective cases admit of, at the present stage of progress.

To begin with our own beloved *Scotland*—There can be no question, amid all the unfavourable signs of various kinds which appear, that a decided revival of religion has taken place in our land w'ithin the last twenty years, and is vigorously moving forward. All acquainted with the large towns, such as Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, &c., must be aware of this change. Though the Church of Scotland was not permitted to sink so low as the other churches of the Reformation, yet there was deep decline. The rejection by the

General Assembly in 1796, though only by a majority of 14, in a small house of 102, of the proposal then made by several synods and presbyteries, to send the gospel to the heathen, and the grounds on which this rejection was supported by more than one speaker, is an impressive indication of the low state of Christianity then prevalent in the Church. The revived missionary spirit of the present day, both at home and abroad, towards Jews and Gentiles,—the great encrease of devoted ministers—the improvement of ministers of the former age—the raising up of a large additional number of schools and churches—and the very warfare in which the Church has been and is at present engaged, all bear witness to her decided growth as a spiritual church of Christ, the effect of the outpouring of the Spirit of God.

In *England* similar blessed symptoms have appeared in much the same period. It is well known that during a great part of last century vital religion was at a very low ebb in the sister country. Both in the Establishment and among the Protestant Dissenters there was much coldness where there was not serious heresy. Bishop Lavington, addressing his clergy, says, "My brethren, I beg you will rise up with me against moral preaching. We have long been attempting the reformation of the nation by discourses of this kind—with what success? None at all: On the contrary, we have dexterously preached the people into downright infidelity. We must change our voice and preach Christ and him crucified." Again, "Whatever may have been the cause of not preaching the doctrines of the gospel, the effect has been lamentable. Our people have grown less and less mindful, first of the distinguishing articles of their creed—then, as will always be the case, of that one which they hold in common with the Heathen—have forgot in effect their Creator as well as their Redeemer and Sanctifier—seldom or never seriously worshipping him, or thinking of the state of their souls in relation to Him; but flattering themselves that what they are pleased to call a moral and harmless life, though far from being either, is the one thing needful."—First Charge. Such was the carelessness that Hannah

More, in 1789, found in Somersetshire thirteen adjoining parishes in which there was not so much as one curate resident; and such was the ignorance that out of 108 children in one of these parishes drawn to her school not one could tell who made them. The prominently religious ministers were so inconsiderable in number that they could be counted. Of course, there were many faithful pastors unknown to the religious world. But what a happy change has now taken place. The ministers of the cross are reckoned by thousands; and large sums of money are subscribed for carrying the knowledge of the gospel, through schools and churches and foreign missions, to the guilty and the perishing both at home and abroad. Throughout the kingdom not less than £500,000 are thus annually raised. Making an abatement for a recent most affecting revival of the spirit and principles of Popery in the Established church, and the spirit of political partisanship among some classes of Dissenters, there has been a happy change in the tone of the religious press in England—a growing thirst for the theological writings of the best period of the church. The Scriptures too have been circulated to the extent of millions. In 1792, the whole stock of the university printer was only 4500 copies, and there was no Bible Society.

With regard to *Ireland*, again, the revival has if possible been more rapid than in either of the other parts of the kingdom. The Established church, which used to be employed as a mere reward for political services—to the nearly utter neglect of the religious interests alike of Protestants and Roman Catholics—is now rendered subservient to its great end as a Christian institute. Her faithful ministers are increasing every day; and one of the best proofs of their zeal and success is to be found in the bitter and merciless persecution which they are experiencing at the hands of the Romish priesthood in cases where it is plain that it is the pure gospel of Christ which is the only exciting cause of the persecution. We have heard of various parishes where the fruit of the Evangelical labours of the Protestant ministers is already visible in the improved moral aspects of society. In one case a decided simultaneous

revival was lately reported by the Rev. Mr. Burns of Kilsyth, which embraced 150 souls, under the labours of the Rev. Mr. Trench. The reader does not need to be reminded that a great improvement has taken place in the Presbyterian church of Ireland since she excluded the Arians from her communion,—that she has made a considerable accession to her places of worship, and is pursuing the cause of scriptural education and bible circulation with great zeal and encouraging success, while she lifts up a solemn protest against Popery. One Educational Society alone receives the patronage and aid of between six and seven hundred Protestant ministers. The whole religious societies labouring for the moral regeneration of Ireland classed together could the other year point to an annual income of above £20,000—a mighty contrast to the cold day, not very distant, (1828,) when the Irish bible, complete, in the native character, *first* issued from the press.

Turning to the Continent, it is cheering to think of the decided revival of religion which within these few years has appeared in several churches of the Reformation. To begin with *France*, as nearest to our own shores—Every friend of true religion must rejoice to learn, that the Protestant church of a country which was well-nigh crushed between Popery and Infidelity—a country where the truth as it is in Christ was persecuted almost to extinction, with a longer and more bloody warfare than perhaps any church in Christendom ever experienced—it is matter of devout gratitude to learn that this church has caught the spirit of her best days, and is rapidly reviving. The whole number of faithful pastors in 1818 could not be estimated by those who had the best means of knowing at more than 6 or 12; now they are rated at 120, equal to a third of the whole. In Paris, there are now, of all denominations, 12 or 13 ministers who preach the gospel faithfully among a professedly Protestant population of 35,000. This may seem a small force; but it is a vast change for the better upon a state of things where, not a great many years ago, there was only one herald of the cross, and he a foreigner. In the north of France, in the

neighbourhood of Lille, several churches have been formed within these few years, composed almost entirely of converted Romanists—from seven to eight hundred have thus been brought, it is believed, to the knowledge of the truth within the last eight or nine years. Twenty-one pastors, of different denominations, now faithfully preach the gospel where, but a few years ago, there were only two. Does this not indicate a revival of religion, and lay the foundation for a still more general awakening? In another district of France, again, there are sixteen new Evangelical churches, most of them, it may be, very small, but some having an attendance of from three to four hundred hearers and daily encreasing in number—all the fruit of a few years' prayer and labour accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the city of Strasburg, again—a very stronghold of false doctrine—w'here there are twenty-two theological pastors and eight professors in the Protestant university of Neological sentiments, an evangelical church has lately been established under the ministry of Mr. Major, and is attended by 500 to 600 persons. Some time ago, eleven pious young men were preparing for the ministry under his eye. Various similar delightful facts might be referred to, such as the defection of three fourths of a large parish with the Mayor at their head, near Cherbourg, in 1827, from the church of Rome; but let these suffice for France. Simply let me add, that there has been since 1818 a circulation of 150,000 copies of the Scriptures among the Protestant population of the country—that there are various Christian periodicals regularly published, and that there is both a home and a foreign mission for the propagation of the gospel: the latter maintaining a few missionaries on the East coast of Africa. No one who is acquainted with the mingled Popery and Infidelity and Irreligion and Vice of France generally can doubt that such results as these, comparatively recent as they are in their origin, could have been brought about only by the power of the Spirit of Jehovah.

Leaving France and directing our eyes to *Holland*, we are gladdened with the indications of revival. In common with all the churches of the Reformation, that

of Holland, once so famous for its learning and its Calvinism, and so kind to the persecuted refugees from other lands, underwent a serious decline much about the same period as its sister churches. First it was weakened and perverted by Arminianism, and then, in the progress of error and of the French Revolution, corrupted by semi-Socinianism and Infidelity.—But out of the 1238 ministers of that church a large number seem always to have been faithful, and the wide-spread suffering under the French infidel rule appears to have been blessed of God to the awakening of many, both among ministers and laymen, who had departed from the faith. So far as I could learn, on a recent brief visit to that country, there seems every reason to believe, that a decided improvement has set in of late years; though even where there is orthodoxy, it is to be feared much of it is cold and lifeless. The secession of seven pastors with their flocks, a few years ago, from the national church, on the score of its low Christianity, and the severity with which some of them have been treated since, may be interpreted as an evidence of religious revival, and ultimately may be useful to the greater awakening of the church as a whole; but among intelligent Christian men, with whom I came into contact, the separation is not viewed at present in this light. The adherents of the Secession, amounting only to a few thousands, and chiefly young men, hold that the assurance of one's personal safety is essential to saving faith, and a participation in ordinances. They are not much known or heard of. The originating cause, I was given to understand, of the harsh treatment, to which some of them were subjected, was their seizing and maintaining that the property of the churches rightfully belonged to them, as they were the only *true, church* of Holland. So long as they held by this doctrine the State would not recognise them as such, and treated them with a severity which every Christian and friend of freedom must condemn; but as soon as they could show that they differed from the national church, which they speedily did on a few points, chiefly of form, they were, in common with other bodies, not of the Establishment, recognised; and they are now equally pro-

tected as others. If my information be correct, it is to be regretted that from the outset they put themselves in a false position as regards the State, and gave too much ground to awaken the just suspicions of the government. I trust, however, that as their sincerity and zeal are undoubted, they will drop any unsound doctrinal peculiarity into which their very circumstances may have driven them, and that they will be eminently blessed of God for the revival of the true and ancient doctrine of the church of Holland, as set forth in the Heidelberg Standards.

Passing to *Denmark*, we meet with the following facts, resting chiefly on the authority of the Archives du Christianisme. An important religious movement appeared in 1825, which led to a warm controversy upon the capital doctrine of justification by free grace through faith. Though in common with other Continental reformed churches, there was much Neology in the 1500 pulpits of Denmark; yet many of the pastors, and still more of the people, were not prepared for the daring extent to which some leading Neologists went in altering, at their own will, the ancient liturgy and baptismal service, which were sound; this created salutary enquiry and called forth resistance. The Archives say, during the last ten years there have been serious manifestations, especially in Frønia and Jutland. In the first a craving has been awakened—a hungering after that which constitutes the marrow of the gospel—the gratuitous and merciful favour of God in Christ Jesus. A great number of souls have asked with the Philippian jailor, “What shall we do to be saved; and finding no answer in the Rationalist discourses of their Doctors, they have sought the answer beyond the church, in the old Christian writings, especially in the admirable treatises of Luther, and in the ancient Psalms of Broissou and Kuigo. To secure the reading of these, and in order to encourage each other to seek the grace of God and to grow in it, these Christians met at particular houses. Such is the origin of the religious meetings which are now held in many places, and which contribute, wherever they keep faithfully to the word of God, to nourish and to spread the spirit of Christianity.

At first the awakened were sharply persecuted by the world,—not, it is true, in so terrible a manner as the Christians in the Canton de Yaud, but still with much bitterness: they now leave them tolerably quiet. In Jutland, the awakened, as they are called, are for the most part among the Haugeans, that is to say, followers of John Ncilson Hauge, a Norwegian peasant, who, toward the end of last century, aroused by the word of God a great number of souls from the sleep of death. Interesting as these notices may be, a vast deal remains to be accomplished. The population of Denmark amounts' to two millions; and according to the Rev. Mr. Baird, who lately visited the country, there are only two evangelical professors in its universities. In the principal one at Copenhagen, with a thousand students, four hundred of whom are theological students, there is not so much as one evangelical professor. It is cheering, however, to be assured, that many of the young men meet to read and pray together even in discouraging circumstances.

With regard, again, to *Norways* with its five hundred ministers among a population of a million, the Rev. Mr. Baird, who as agent for several American religious societies, lately visited it, states, that a good work has been going on gradually for a number of years—commencing with the peasant already alluded to. His followers now ramify through a large portion of Norway. They do not separate from the Established Church which they hope to benefit by abiding in its communion, but hold social meetings for prayer, reading the Scriptures, and exhortation. "Although, says Mr. Baird, there may occasionally be some excesses, and perhaps some erroneous doctrines, among the people who are to a great degree without the guidance of an evangelical ministry, yet there is every reason for believing that there is among them a genuine and glorious work of the Spirit. Such at any rate is the testimony of the enlightened and excellent Bishop Windigarde of Gottenberg, whose diocese borders on a portion of Norway, and from whom I received the above information."

Few countries are more interesting to a decided Protestant than *Sweden*. So thorough was the work of

Reformation here, that to this day there is scarcely a Roman Catholic family among three millions of people; nor has the church suffered much from the influence of German Neology. The 8500 pastors are almost all orthodox,—well educated,—much respected. There are five hundred students of divinity; and the people are almost universally able to read, and possess many virtues. But all this will not confer vital religion, nor perpetuate it where it exists. It is a melancholy truth, that to a vast extent the power of godliness has disappeared from the church of Sweden, particularly during the last fifty or sixty years; but it is matter of joy and gratitude, that within the last ten or twelve there have been revivals in various parts of the country, and in some cases to a considerable extent. The labours of the late Rev. Mr. Shaerton of Lund were much blessed in the southern part of the kingdom; and since his death his writings, which are eminently practical and spiritual, have been widely circulated, and have proved highly useful. The circulation too of nearly half a million' copies of the word of God in a few years among a people who can all read could scarcely fail to operate most favourably. So conspicuous, however, are the awakened for their study of the Scriptures and good books, that they are generally known among their neighbours by the name of "The Readers." Mr. Baird, on the testimony of a faithful Swedish minister, gives an interesting account of the parish of Norrala, two hundred miles to the north of Stockholm, where, under the ministry of a succession of faithful pastors, there has been a succession of revivals,—first in 1765, then in 1780, and next in 1817—when, to use the narrator's language, "A mighty wind of divine grace blew upon the valley, and caused an unexpected shaking"—and lastly, in 1834. Both the young and the aged were brought to the knowledge of the truth on these occasions; and a beautiful manifestation was made of the power of the gospel in the hands of the Holy Spirit. The practical result is given in the character of "The Readers," not only of this but of other parishes, in the following sentences:—

"The Readers' possess the testimony of impartial

judges to the fact, that they are the most sober, moral, peaceful, industrious, and honourable men—the most diligent attendants at church, and the most attentive hearers.” Again, “they give honour where honour is due, and that not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward—they give custom where custom is due—they labour with diligence each in the calling where-with he was called, that they may not, by their own improvidence, become burdens to others, but on the contrary may have to give to him that needeth. An actual transgression of the law of the land cannot be charged upon any one who has contributed and is a member of their society, (for conference and prayer,) and good morals, cleanliness, civility, and decorum, in words and deeds, are considered by ‘The Readers’ as belonging to the character of Christians.”

Passing from Sweden to *Germany*, one naturally enquires whether there is any revival in that land, which was the nursery of the Reformation. In many districts the gospel ministers are thinly sown; but they are increasing. Such is the state of things in Saxony, which was trodden by the footsteps of Luther, and which still boasts of a large Protestant population—three fourths indeed of the whole. In other quarters the progress is till more marked. Dr. Tholuck, of Halle, stated in London, in 1835, that vast changes had taken place in the religious feeling and aspect of various parts of Germany during the last twenty or even ten years; and all on the side of the gospel. In the Lower Rhine, near Dusseldorp, I have learned from private information, as well as from public documents, that a marked revival is going forward under Mr. Fleidner, at Kaiserworth, who visited Scotland a few years ago, and also at Eiberfeldt and the neighbourhood. In a valley in that quarter of the country there are not less than twelve faithful preachers of the cross. Dr. Tholuck, speaking of them, says, they have spread in such a manner as to fill the whole of the surrounding towns and villages, so that it may be justly said there can scarcely be found any considerable place in the district which does not possess at least one proclaimed of the truth. One of the ministers in this valley is Krummacher, whose work

on the character and history of "Elijah the Tishbite " has had an immense and we trust useful sale in this and other Christian countries.

Higher up the Rhine, in the vicinity of Frankfort-on-the-Maine, a Roman Catholic priest, a few years ago, abandoned the church of Rome with fifty of his flock simultaneously; and that not to adopt a cold-hearted, erroneous Protestantism, which is little if any better than Popery, but to adopt the pure and primitive gospel of Christ. The new converts, after suitable and satisfactory examination, were received, in the presence of four thousand persons in the open air, to the communion of the Reformed Church. After one of the ministers had preached from the words, "I am the light of the world," the converts of Holzhausen were invited to make a public profession of their faith. Helferick, who had been their Popish curate, but who even then preached the gospel, spoke in the name of all. His testimony was confirmed by their assent given with a loud voice! It is related that they fell on their knees and received the blessing. Then they partook of the communion in both kinds; the singing of a Psalm closed this sacred festival, which will be long and delightfully remembered by all the attendants. Who can doubt that this was a revival, and that the Spirit of God was poured out as its Author?

But I must not detain the reader with single cases. Let us for a moment contemplate *Prussia*—an immense country, with fifteen millions of inhabitants. It is here that the spirit of revival in Germany has appeared in the most decided form. The tribulations produced by the wars of Napoleon have, with the blessing of God, wrought lessons of abiding, of heavenly wisdom. The king is understood to be a decided Christian himself, and uses all his influence to promote true Christianity among his subjects. He is careful in the appointment of faithful men to churches and colleges. All correspondence on missionary and kindred subjects he has provided shall pass through the Post-office free,—100,000 copies of the Scriptures have through his care been circulated in the army, and by the labours of Bible societies, which are numerous, not less than a

million of copies have been spread abroad in the course of a few years over the country at large. The Rev. Dr. Paterson, one of the agents of the British and Foreign Bible Society, recently stated, that on visiting Prussia after an interval of twenty years, he was much struck with the favourable change. It is estimated that an eighth part of the clergy are decidedly evangelical,—certainly a small proportion compared with the whole, but a large number when it is remembered that not many years ago evangelical religion was almost extinct in the ministry. The Rev. Mr. Baird supposes that there may be six hundred heralds of the cross of Christ in Prussia. This surely indicates a most blessed revival. At Berlin, the capital which was once the very seat of infidelity in Europe, under a monarch who is said to have made “Voltaire his gospel and Rousseau his catechism,” the progress of the gospel has been, as if in derision of enemies, most conspicuous. Dr. Tholuck tells us that it prospers as a vineyard of the Lord. More than *a third* of the ministers proclaim the pure gospel of Christ; and not one of the professors of the university belong to the Rationalist or Soeinian school. There are four hundred students under their care,—a hundred of the students under Dr. Tholuck, at Halle, being a third of the entire number, are considered young men of promising piety; and what is remarkable, and betokens well for the church—here as elsewhere, the grace of God seems to have made choice of the men of most encouraging talent and influence.

Among the good signs to be met with in Prussia—the signs of revived religion—it would be improper to omit to notice the kind protection and retreat afforded by the king to the poor persecuted Tyrolese in Silesia. It is well known that a few years ago there was a remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of God upon a district of the Tyrol which is under the sway of Popish Austria. The effect of this was that between four and five hundred persons abandoned Popery, and, in spite of persecution, embraced the evangelical faith. Their Romish priests and neighbours were exceedingly provoked by the change, and continued to make their lives so bitter that they determined, if possible, to leave their

native land, though, as mountaineers, that land was peculiarly endeared to them. Seeing it vain to hope for protection from Austria, they had recourse to the Protestant king of Prussia, and presented their request through John Fleidl, one of their brethren, in the following interesting terms, which I am not aware have been published in this country:—"Our faith," says he, "rests wholly on the Holy Scriptures and the doctrine of the Augsburg Confession of Faith. We have read them attentively,—we discover the differences there are between the word of God and human tradition. We neither wish to nor can we ever renounce our own faith to preserve it. We are ready to quit our houses, our fields, our country. May it please your majesty to grant us a place where we can form a distinct community. It will refresh and console us. Deign to place us in a country which in some respects resembles the home of our fathers. Agriculture and the care of flocks are our occupation. Give us a faithful preacher and a good schoolmaster. At first we shall hardly be in a situation to maintain them by our own means; the journey will cost us much; we know not what else we may bring to our new dwellings, but we and our children cannot dispense with the consolations of religion and with school instruction. If the poor among us should suffer, after the rich among us have done what they could to aid them, we reckon upon your majesty as upon a father. May God, in his great goodness, repay to you for all which you may do for us. We will conduct ourselves faithfully, honourably", and gratefully ifi Prussia, and we will not lose our good Tyrolese habits; we will only encrease the number of your good subjects, and we will remain a living monument to attest to posterity this truth, that misfortune when placed by the side of piety ceases to be misfortune, and that the gospel forced to fly before Popery always finds protection with the magnanimous king of Prussia." The request was granted; a district of county amid the mountains of Silesia was assigned them; in a few weeks they, to the number of 440, parted with all their little property, which, under God's good providence, realized 100,000 florins, after which they left their native valleys,

never to return. It is stated that, "The converted Tyrolese, like Abraham, left their country, their parents, their father's house, and every where met with the most cordial reception from the Reformed Christians of Germany. They never thought before that the communion of saints was so strong and so sweet. Many parishes made collections for them, and the poor added their small offerings to the subscriptions of the rich to supply the wants of the exiled Tyrolese. When they entered a Protestant village, they were generally lodged in private houses, and if it were Sabbath, they had the pleasure of attending public worship. How were their souls comforted and their hearts strengthened by receiving these precious testimonies of Christian charity. The Lord had given them brethren to replace the old friends they had left." It is cheering to learn, though it is no more than what might have been expected, that the Tyrolese already exert a happy religious influence on all the country around that in which they are settled. The old Protestant churches of Silesia, which had become cold and lukewarm from the prevalence of Socinian opinions, feel revived and strengthened on beholding the new Protestants moving forward with so much ardour and courage in the way of the Lord. Thus what men meant for evil has been overruled by God for good. The Tyrolese, driven from their country by the persecution of priests, have become the instruments of revival and blessing.

I do not defend the conduct of the king of Prussia in all his religious proceedings. I believe that in some he has acted an intolerant part—a part which is inconsistent with the rights of conscience; but no one doubts the sincerity of his Christianity, and I must confess that I am disposed to make every allowance for the emperor of an almost despotic sovereignty, and especially for one who has acted so noble a part in resisting the usurpations of Popery in the case of the archbishop of Cologne, and in supplying a hospitable refuge to the exiled Tyrolese among the mountains of Silesia.

We may notice among the symptoms indicative of a revival of evangelical feeling in Germany as a whole, the interest which has been excited, and the

resolution which has been formed to erect a great public monument to the honour of Gustavus Adolphus, the illustrious king of Sweden—the Protestant hero of the thirty years' war—the noble defender of the rights and privileges of the members of the Protestant church. The monument is to be raised on the plains of Lutzen, where he fell. All the divisions of Protestant Germany cordially concur in the object: and already the poor, as well as kings and princes and nobles, are pouring in their offerings with humble and generous joy. Such an event could scarcely have been looked for a few years ago under the cold and dark reign of Socinianism which has no sympathy with true Protestantism,—ii: other words, with Christian heroism.

Another sign which points to the same favourable conclusion is the revived taste which has appeared for the works of the Reformers, such as Luther and Calvin. These had passed into great desuetude; in many quarters they were almost forgotten; and, indeed, what interest could Socinians feel in the writings of either? Their wish must have been to obliterate and to bury them. So completely were the Swiss Reformers, Calvin and Zuingli, forgotten, that I understand many of their own countrymen on the spot cannot tell where the one was buried and where the other lived. Now there is a great demand for the works of the Reformers: large editions are published and widely circulated. This surely indicates a warm and growing interest in their spirit and sentiments. Nor is this all: within the last ten or twelve years there has been a great progress in the periodical religious literature of Germany and of the Protestant parts of the Continent generally. The Rationalists, who make such a boast of reason and of learning, either do not publish much in this way, or they have lost ground; while Journals chiefly literary in their character have of late years devoted much more of their attention than formerly to theology—a proof of what they believe to be the public interest on the subject. Above all, periodicals of sound Christianity and missionary zeal have been largely and rapidly multiplied. The Archives du Christianisme speak of thirty periodicals sowing the word of life, besides eight being con-

secrated to the cause of Missions; one of them at so low a price as fourpence a-year, the better to reach the humblest class of society.

Were I not afraid of unduly enlarging this supplementary paper, I would refer to the recent persecution of Christians in Bohemia as a proof that the cause of the gospel is reviving in the country of John Huss and Jerome of Prague, two of the harbingers of the Reformation. It is not worth Satan's while to persecute any thing else; and he will scarcely tind the adherents of any other system who deem their theological sentiments of such importance as to warrant the endurance of persecution in their behalf; but I shall not enlarge. Before concluding with abrief noticeof the revived religious tone of Protestant Switzerland, let me simply allude to an interesting revival which is said to have appeared in a small poor village of Bavaria, on the Danube; the Archives du Christianisme are my authority. In 1826, Lutz, a Popish priest, was appointed to this charge. He knew the truth, and preached it faithfully according to his light. For two years little fruit appeared; but as he advanced in the ministry the effects became more powerful and visible, till in 1832, he felt himself constrained to abandon the church of Rome. Not less than five hundred and fifty persons followed his example. Of course, he and his flock were not a little persecuted: he was obliged ultimately to withdraw; but happily his place was supplied by a pastor not less faithful and enlightened. By means which were never explained—doubtless by fraud and flattery—Lutz was himself reconverted to Popery and sent back to reconvert the people whom he was supposed to have perverted. Some of them yielded to the temptation; but the great body remained firm under the better pastor, and we believe continue so to this day, in the face of unspeakable discouragements.

And now we turn to *Switzerland*. Strong as are the grounds of thankfulness for the revival vouchsafed in the quarters of which I have already spoken, the blessed change has been much more marked and extensive among the Swiss than in any of the continental nations. Much error and evil indeed still remain; one

half of the cantons are Popish, and in one of them, Friburg, the Jesuits have a college attended by from seven hundred to eight hundred pupils, drawn together from all countries, foreign as well as Continental. It seems to be one of the last refuges of that pestilent order. Among the pupils I understand there are not less than six of the sons of Popish princes; but even in the leading Roman Catholic cantons there is a considerable stir after freedom—a growing distaste for the Papal authority and human tradition in matters of religion. A well informed Christian minister, so lately as in November, 1838, says: “Enlightened Roman Catholics are found all over Switzerland who disavow the pretensions of their clergy, and demand a reformation in the bosom of their own church.” He adds, that a Society has recently been formed of *Liberal Catholics* at Shauffhausen to oppose the ultra-montane, or extreme Popish opinions, and that the Pope is very jealous of them. A few years ago, his nuncio in Switzerland published two vehement protests against the reforms introduced into the Popish churches of St. Gall and Lucerne, (which was wont to be a very stronghold of Popery,) but all in vain, or rather to the greater injury of the Papal authority.

With regard to several of the Protestant cantons, the revival of genuine Christianity has been most delightful. No one needs to be informed how fearfully the Swiss Reformed church had abandoned the doctrines for which Calvin and Beza and Farel and Zuinglius so nobly contended—that her ministers had sunk either into Socinianism and infidelity, or into a cold and useless orthodoxy. So completely had the Reformed church been destroyed, that she has lost her lay eldership and every thing like discipline, those essential features for which she was once conspicuous. The change, too, in the moral character of very many of the people has been corresponding. So little was Calvin prized by his modern successors, that I have been informed by an intelligent minister from Geneva that twenty years ago the Soeinian pastors sent fifteen manuscript volumes of his writings to be sold as waste paper; of these only a single volume was accidentally saved. The same gen-

tleman informed me that a minister is still alive who, instead of preaching the everlasting gospel, he remembers to have heard preach upon such a topic as the usefulness and pleasantness of dancing! Such was the food with which immortal souls were fed where they were not poisoned with heresy. But now, blessed be God, there is a great change. The Socinians, both pastors and people, are still strong in Geneva; but there are faithful men on the other side. Not only are there several evangelical churches, but there is an evangelical college, which is presided over by Mr. D'Aubigny, the accomplished biographer of Luther—a work recently translated and published in this country. The college has already sent forth a number of devoted ministers to France as well as Switzerland, and is at present educating nearly thirty individuals. Of Geneva, as a whole, an intelligent Christian writes in 1837: "Error is met at all points by truth; and it is gratifying to be able to add that the number of the friends of orthodoxy increases every year, while that of Socinians sensibly diminishes. It is remarkable that the same persons who once boastingly avowed the lax doctrines of the age are now afraid openly to profess all their opinions, but adopt to some extent the language of evangelical piety; to such a degree has Christianity regained her influence in Geneva."

Passing to *Neufchatel*, another of the four cantons where the French language is spoken, it is stated that German Neology never prevailed in this district, as in many others. The pastors were generally orthodox but lifeless. The French correspondent of the *New York Observer*, who is himself a native of Switzerland, and now a minister of the Protestant church of France, informs us that a decided revival of religion, followed by a change in the moral aspect of society, has taken place in a district of Neufchatel. He attributes it, under God, to the disinterested labours of a lady, M. Calame, who for twenty years conducted an establishment for the Christian and industrious education of children—an establishment which seems to have been almost maintained from day to day by prayer. Shortly before her death, in 1834, the school numbered 300 pupils. Many of

these have now grown up, and have gone forth as domestic servants, labourers, apprentices, shopkeepers, &c. A number of them, having settled in the small town of Locle, have, through their religion, created such a marked contrast, in point of moral character, between that town and a neighbouring town in external circumstances precisely similar, as to be at once visible to the intelligent eye. Thus humble and unlikely are the instruments which God often employs for the furtherance of his cause.

Advancing northward to *Basle*, we meet with a Swiss town whose missionary spirit immediately proclaims its revived piety. In 1830, this town and its country districts caught the revolutionary spirit of the times. A bloody struggle for political power took place between the inhabitants of the city and country—in which the latter were successful; but the change was not favourable to the cause of evangelical religion. The immediate effect was to drive nearly thirty faithful ministers from the country into the town, and to supply their places with uneducated preachers, not of the gospel but of political liberty. Under such preaching the ministers were not respected and their congregations soon declined. On the other hand, in the town, the accession of so many ministers, and sanctified adversity, gave an impulse to the interests of evangelical religion. The missionary institution originated in small beginnings, but now it has sent forth a hundred missionaries, who are labouring in various quarters at home and abroad,—some supported by the institution, others by foreign missionary societies. The annual receipts are not less than £6000. Two missionary magazines and three religious periodicals are published in the town of *Basle*, with a population of 16,000—no small indication surely of its missionary spirit and zeal.

If from *Basle* we now turn to *Berne*, the prospect which meets the Christian eye is not less pleasing. As in the former case so here the political struggles of the last few years between the aristocratic and democratic parties have been sanctified to the spiritual good of many. Not a few have been led to look for happiness to better things than party power and triumph, and under

difficulty and disappointment have found consolation in the gospel of Christ. The reign of Socinianism is at an end, and an extensive religious revival pervades the canton; wherever the gospel is preached the people flock in crowds to hear it: almost all the ministers are orthodox, and a great number are truly evangelical preachers. A new university has lately been established, which will render it unnecessary for young men to repair to Germany for the completion of their studies. This will protect them against various hazards. The professors of the new university are all said to be men not only of talent, but of strictly evangelical views. Dr. Paterson states that the Sabbath is better observed in Herne than in any town of the Continent which he had visited. This is not saying little for the religion of men in a quarter where the Sabbath is generally so much desecrated. It is only true Christianity which can ever lead men suitably to value it. On the same authority, we are informed that there is a Missionary Society in Berne, which numbers seven thousand members, and that throughout the canton there are a hundred and twenty stations for prayer. Another testifies that a great many bibles and tracts have been distributed throughout the towns and villages of the canton, and have lent an important influence in hastening on and extending the revival. The whole population is estimated at 330,000—of whom 40,000 professedly belong to the church of Rome.

The next Protestant canton which briefly solicits our attention is that of *Zurich*, the canton of Zuingle the celebrated Swiss Reformer. Sad to tell, no part of Switzerland has been more poisoned with German Neology, but here also there is a return towards the truth. A weekly journal is published at the capital, entitled the *Evangelical Church Gazette of Switzerland*, which advocates the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, and has a wide circulation. Not long ago, a handsome monument was erected by the pastors and people of Zurich to the honour of Zuingle. It consists of a block of rough granite; on two sides there are inscriptions on iron plates—one of them consists of the memorable words used by the Reformer at the moment he fell da-

fending the cause of Christ and the liberty of his country—“*They can kill the body but not the soul.*” Thousands attended from a distance to witness the solemn dedication of so interesting a memorial of events which passed three hundred years ago, and all discovered deep sympathy with the Scriptural principles and exalted sentiments to which the speakers testified.— But perhaps the most satisfactory proof of the revived religious feeling of Zurich, and a very recent one, is to be found in the noble constitutional resistance which has been offered by the whole body of the people to the appointment of Dr. Strauss, as a professor of theology in their university.. This gentleman, if I am not mistaken, was expelled from Tubigen for his infidelity. He is the author of a work, entitled “the Life of Christ,” which has not the credit of originality, but consists of a compilation of all the infidel notions which have been started regarding our blessed Lord. His object is to show that Jesus Christ is an ideal representation, and never had any personal existence. This he attempts to make out by a course of criticism which, as has been well shown by one of his many successful antagonists, would on the same principles entitle us to call in question the existence of such persons as Luther and Napoleon Bonaparte. In the face of this the newly created democratic magistrates of Zurich, who had no religion themselves, and who thought Strauss’s speculations were in accordance with the spirit of the age, appointed him to the vacant chair. The people were indignant at such an insult to their own piety and the recognised evangelical faith of the country, and assembled in meetings—regularly organized all over the province, and ere long sent in remonstrances and petitions signed by the whole adult male population of the canton—by 40,000 persons out of a population of 200,000. The spirit of calmness, harmony, zeal, and courage, with which this was accomplished was of the noblest kind. The magistrates, after betaking themselves to a thousand shifts utterly unworthy of men who professed to be the friends of liberty and after being defeated in them all, were constrained to abandon the appointment on condition that Strauss should

receive from the state an annual pension of a thousand francs. Thus has the cause of Evangelical religion triumphed in the canton of Zurich, over popular but infidel magistrates. Of course it is not supposed that all who bore a part in the successful remonstrance I have described were true Christians; but, from the evangelical strain which pervades the public papers and addresses on the subject, it is plain that love to the gospel was a ruling motive, and that this was so generally felt by the people as to draw *all* for the time at least under its influence. Hence the petition was at once unanimous and national. No one will imagine that the same spirit could have been excited and the same result realised twenty years ago. Matters may have subsequently proceeded to violence, but that does not affect the merits of the case, and on this point I am not possessed of sufficient information to form any judgment. The revived evangelic feeling of the canton is plain, and that is the point which is before us.

The last illustration of the revival of true Christianity among the churches of the Reformation to which I shall refer is what has appeared within the last twenty years in the canton of *Vaud*. Here the outpouring of the Spirit of God has been most abundant and conspicuous. Keen was the persecution which at an early stage was awakened and for many years maintained. The cruelty was worthy of the inquisitors of the Church of Rome. Not only Socinian pastors and magistrates, but the body of the people, the mob, who are supposed to be always the friends of the suffering and the enemies of persecution, gladly bore a part in the infliction. The sufferings of the faithful men of the Pays de Vaud clearly show, that though Socinians boast of the rule of reason and the love of freedom, they can be the greatest oppressors, and the same sufferings prove, that other parties besides Established churches can persecute—that a Swiss Socinian mob, though without any civil power, is not more kind than an Irish Popish mob in the same circumstances. In short, that persecution is not an accidental peculiarity, but a principle of man's fallen nature to be met with in all till they are renewed by the Spirit of God, and in

some even after that renewal. Blessed be God, persecution did not extinguish the truth in the canton of Vaud. The more that good men were maltreated, the more did their evangelical principles spread. It is estimated, that out of one hundred and fifty-nine pastors, nearly one hundred and twenty are pious men, while all are orthodox; and that in fifty parishes a decided religious awakening has appeared. The entire population is reckoned at 173,000, so that there is a pretty full provision of religious instruction for the people; especially as there are twenty Dissenting evangelical churches besides. There are not less than ten religious societies for the distribution of Bibles and Tracts, and promoting the cause of missions. With regard to Lusaune, which is the capital of the canton—the town in other days of Rousseau and Gibbon, the leading infidels of their time, it is cheering to learn that all the pastors are evangelical men, and that the professors of the university, fourteen in number, participate in the same spirit and sentiments. This holds out delightful hopes for the future. Not a few of the ministers are men of high talent—many are learned in the Scriptures—all are well educated. Lusaune, with a population not much exceeding 10,000, has not less than three Missionary Societies, and besides a Bible, a Tract, and a Sabbath Observance Society. And yet the whole change in the canton, so happy and hopeful, originated with a very humble instrument—a pious female, who distributed tracts, and who was ridiculed and persecuted for doing so. Thus is it oftentimes with God. His ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts. In several of the blessed revivals which we have been contemplating He first employed, not pastors of high talent and acknowledged reputation, but laymen, peasants, females! What can better proclaim that the work is His own? It may be added, as an indication of the revival which has taken place so decidedly in the canton of Vaud, that the pastors are endeavouring to restore the ancient order and discipline of the Reformed church; to associate laymen with ministers in the government, and to draw those fences around ordinances which the Head of the church himself appointed.

Though the churches of the United States of America are, strictly speaking, not churches of the Reformatio, i, but of a late date, yet I should have rejoiced to have borne testimony to the revival which has taken place in not a few of them within the last twenty years. But the subject is far too extensive to be overtaken in these hasty remarks. Suffice it to say, that though there is much and serious religious error in many of the American churches—although not a few of their revivals are more than suspicious; yet there can be no question that a decided and most important work of God has been and continues to be carried forward through their instrumentality. Were there no other proofs, the zeal in the circulation of the Scriptures and of religious tracts, and in the maintenance of home and foreign missions, would clearly show, that a large body of our American brethren have received of the Spirit of God. This is not invalidated by the immense religious destitution of their own land, which they so feelingly deplore, and which they labour so zealously to supply. Any one who has had occasion to examine into the state of the American churches thirty years ago, must feel, on comparing them with the same churches at the present day, that there is a loud call for gratitude to God for the distinguished improvement which has taken place,—in other words, for the blessed revival which has been vouchsafed.

In concluding this long addition to my lecture, I feel that I must caution the reader against imagining, that the revival in the churches of the Reformation, of which I have been writing, is greater than it really is. When one view of a subject, one class of facts, is chiefly dwelt on, there is always a danger of men gathering a stronger impression from it than is proper or is intended. Let no one then abridge his sympathy, or prayers, or labours, for the spiritual renovation of the churches of the Reformation, as if the work were already accomplished. Even in the most favourable cases which have been described, very much remains to be done; while in many of them the change has not advanced beyond the mere dawn of morning. Let men be thankful for what God has wrought, and be encouraged to

hope and pray for much more; in no case let them be relaxed and at ease. This were to pervert and prevent God's goodness in the work of Revivals. At the same time, it must be borne in mind, that I have only given the leading features of favourable change which have come to my knowledge. I trust and believe that there is a vast amount of hidden good with which God is blessing his church, unknown to me or to "the religious world" of either this country or the Continent.

I have only to add, that my chief authorities for the statements which I have made, and which I have not thought it necessary minutely to specify, are the Archives du Christianisme, the Rev. Mr. Baird's Tour, the Letters of the French correspondent of the New York Observer, an important religious paper, and my own communications and correspondence with friends either on the Continent or well acquainted with its religious character and condition

LECTURE IX.

Encouragements from the History of the Church under the Old and under the New Testament Dispensations, to expect, pray, and labour for the Revival of Religion.

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MANY of you I presume are aware, that the eminent and excellent servant of Christ,¹ to whom this lecture was originally assigned, has been prevented by indisposition from fulfilling his task, and I must be permitted to say, I am painfully sensible of the great loss which not this assemblage alone, but the Christian public at large, has thereby sustained. The subject upon which, in his unavoidable absence, I have been somewhat suddenly and most unexpectedly called to address you, is "The Encouragements deducible from the history of the Church under the Old and under the New Testament Dispensations to expect, pray, and labour for the Revival of Religion." This specification evidently assumes, first, that such events as we denominate revivals—remarkable visitations of the Holy Spirit, rapidly increasing the power, and enlarging the sphere of vital godliness, have actually occurred at different periods of the church's history; and secondly, that in the production of such events it has commonly pleased the Father of mercies to employ, as a principal mean, the prayers and exertions of his people. The special business then we take it, which we have at present on hand, is to endeavour by an appeal to Scripture, and other authentic records of the ministration of the Spirit, to show that both these assumptions are well founded, and thus to make way for the inference, that on condition of our duly praying and labouring

¹ The Rev. Robert Buchanan, Tron church, Glasgow.

for it, we have, in our own time and circumstances, ample and conclusive warrant to expect a revival of the Lord's work. Now, as we do not intend to exhibit a mere table of reference, we will not, of course, attempt an accumulation of all the examples, fitted to advance our object, which might be gathered from so vast a field, but restrict ourselves to a cursory notice of a few of the more obvious and striking; and *these*, for reasons which will readily occur to those who are conversant with the various objections to revivals, we shall take chiefly from the Sacred Volume.

Were one to undertake a complete history of this most interesting class of events, he might not improperly, we conceive, commence by adverting to that notable statement:¹ "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord," or, as the margin reads, to call themselves by the name of the Lord. In that pregnant remark, whichever interpretation be followed, we have no difficulty in recognising an epoch in the early progress of the Redeemer's kingdom,—an earnest of the outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh,—some visible and conspicuous movement on the part of the church, indicative of a marked increase of internal union; and of zeal and decision in departing from, and testifying against, the ways of accursed Cain and his followers;—in a word, unequivocal symptoms of what we should in these days term a revival. For another instance—one as to whose origin and progress we have little definite information, but the happy fruits of which are fully and distinctly recorded—we might refer you to the period of Israel's wanderings in the wilderness. On the deep ungodliness of the vast majority indeed of those who had attained to twenty years and upwards at the Exodus, no effectual impression appears to have been made, either by the astonishing miracles of kindness and compassion wrought on their behalf, or the terrible "vengeance taken of their inventions;" and the desert accordingly, which witnessed their incorrigible impenitence, became with two solitary exceptions their grave. But upon the children of that froward and faithless race, with such also of the congregation as were under the age of twenty at

¹ Genesis, iv, 26.

the deliverance from Egypt, Jehovah was pleased, in sovereign mercy, to bestow another heart. So abundantly did he vouchsafe to bless to them the dreadful judgments inflicted on their stiff-necked and stout-hearted fathers—their own miraculous preservation amid the unnumbered perils of forty years' sojourning in the waste howling wilderness,—together with the prayers, the instructions, and the example, of his faithful and devoted servants, Moses and Joshua, that their love and loyalty to him shone forth with a splendour hardly equalled, and never surpassed by any succeeding generation of Israel. Witness, in proof of this assertion, the ardour and unanimity they displayed on occasion of Achan's sin, in searching out the presumptuous offender, and executing upon him and his house the awful sentence of the Divine law;—their cheerful submission, on the borders of the promised land, to the painful and long suspended rite of circumcision,—a transaction concerning which the Lord said unto Joshua, "This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you;"—the upright though doubtless precipitate eagerness with which, to vindicate the honour of Jehovah, the other tribes flew to arms when informed that Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, had set up an altar, on the east of Jordan—a proceeding which savoured it was conceived of sedition and schism,—the admirable expostulation of the majority, reluctant after all, to shed kindred blood, and the equally admirable reply of the suspected tribes—in consequence of which, this seemingly formidable breach was immediately healed. Attend likewise to the less direct, but not less decisive evidence, that the saving grace, as well as the special providence of their heavenly King had done for this generation great things,—afforded by their sudden and supernatural uprooting of the devoted nations, which were "greater and mightier than they;" and finally, hearken to the explicit testimony of inspiration to their worth: "I remember thee," saith the Searcher of hearts,¹ speaking of this generation, "the kindness of thy-youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not

¹ Jeremiah, ii, 2.

sown. Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and the first fruits of his increase." "Cleave unto the Lord," is the language of Joshua, in one of his latest addresses, "as ye have done unto this day:" and among the closing sentences of the book that bears his name it is written, "Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the elders that overlived Joshua."—My friends, have none of you that are parents cause to fear that *your* children are improving the matchless privileges which you may be despising—that, under one and the same dispensation of means and of mercy, they are pursuing the path that leads to the heavenly Canaan, and *you* as swiftly that which conducts to the saddest portion of the reprobate?

The elders that overlived Joshua, and the generation over whom it was their happiness to preside, having at length gone the way of all the earth,¹ "There arose another generation, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works that he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim." Nor do we find that any very memorable reformation took place, until we arrive at the far distant days of Samuel the seer.—But a set time to favour Zion was come, and consequently the fervent prayers, of this eminently godly man were heard, his manifold and unwearied labours to reclaim an apostate and degenerate nation crowned with an abundant blessing. This statement is amply verified, by the contents of chapter seventh of the first of the two books called by his name. There we are told, that while the Ark abode at Kirjath-jearim, all the house of "Israel lamented after the Lord." Urgent reasons had long existed for such lamentation, but it is manifest, that these had now been set home by power from on high. At this solemn and important juncture, Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel,—through the medium it would appear of the heads of the nation—saying, "If ye do return unto the Lord with *all your hearts*, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve *him only*, and he will deliver you out of the hands of the Philis-

¹ Judges, ii, 10–12.

tines." Let the following verse declare how cordially the counsel of the holy sage was approved: then the children of Israel *did put away* Baalim, and Ashtarotli, and served the Lord only. Delighted above measure, we may be sure, by a change so evident and salutary, and earnestly desirous of deepening the impressions in which it originated, Samuel gave orders to gather all Israel to Mizpeh, that he might *pray* for them unto the Lord. At his command "they gathered together, and drew water, and poured it out before the Lord,"—as an emblem perhaps of the fulness of their penitent sorrow, or their joy in the returning smile of him whose favour is life,—and "fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the Lord." "Few words," observes a very competent judge, in commenting on this passage, "are here used, but they are so expressive, that we cannot hesitate to pronounce this, one of the most general and effectual revivals of religion which ever took place in the Church of Israel." As it is a circumstance from which, whether simply or mystically viewed, the rulers and the people of every Christian land have much to learn, we must not omit to remind you, that on this, as on many similar occasions,—some of which will straightway fall under our notice,—the God of truth and mercy was pleased to signify and seal his gracious acceptance of his repentant heritage, by a signal interposition of Providence, at once bringing deliverance to them, and destruction on their foes: for the Philistines having at this very time gone up against Israel,—as they drew neap to battle, "the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them, and they were smitten before Israel."

The *Monarchs* of Israel were repeatedly made the instruments of arresting the progress of national corruption and decay, and restoring to the paths of righteousness, the feet of an erring and unstable people. Neither the church, nor the nation, had cause to rejoice in the *first* of this new order of rulers; but the reign of his renowned successor was fruitful of blessings to both.

In the son of Jesse, flagrant as were some of his personal delinquencies, religion found, throughout the long

lapse of his chequered sway, a powerful friend, a strenuous promoter, and in the main a bright example of its practical ascendancy. And no one can fail to remark, on the slightest survey of his history, that the combined influence of David's ardent piety and active zeal, his transcendent gifts of devotional and prophetic song, so nobly exercised,—his exalted rank and splendid success in fighting the battles of the Lord, was productive of incalculable spiritual benefit to his kingdom. But the point perhaps where his reign presents the strongest contrast, in respect of the prevalence and the power of godliness, to that of his hapless predecessor—the time at which the heart of the nation appears to have flowed most freely and joyously forth, in confidence and love to the Rock of Israel, was that of the removal of the ark from its long imprisonment at Kirjath-jearim, to the abode prepared for it on Mount Zion.—Of the special presence, the covenant favour of Jehovah, the ark was one of the most sacred symbols; and when we remember that, for seventy years and upwards, it had been permitted to remain in obscurity and neglect: and see it at length, amid the rapturous alleluias of Judah's assembled thousands, conducted to its appointed sanctuary; is it possible to avoid the conclusion, that God hath been visiting and reviving his alienated inheritance, and causing many of them to drink deeply of the spirit of the man after his own heart?—And say, brethren, are not these the scenes that confer true dignity on states and kingdoms, and immortal value on their history the prince, in his *princely capacity*, taking the lead in doing homage to the name, and forwarding the cause of the Most High; and the people cordially and unanimously following his steps?

The building of the temple, the most superb and costly structure perhaps ever reared on earth, goes far to prove, that the peaceful reign of Solomon was adorned in its earlier days by no small portion of that warm and wide-spread piety which his father David had laboured so devoutly and successfully to diffuse. A work of such magnitude could not rationally have been undertaken in the circumstances of Solomon, save with the hearty co-operation of his people; and this, a

strong and lively desire for the promotion of the Divine glory alone could have secured. But it is evident—in accordance with the infallible promise—“Them that honour me, I will honour”—that Jehovah lifted the light of his countenance with especial brightness on his chosen—vouchsafed unto them a season of peculiarly intimate and animating communion, at the *consecration* of this glorious monument of national veneration and affiance. Rarely has this fallen world exhibited a spectacle of more interesting and impressive solemnity than that which the sacred historian sets before us in concluding the description of that magnificent ceremony. The beautiful dedicatory prayer had now been offered, the fire had “come down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the house, and the priests could not enter, because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord’s house;”—at this unspeakably solemn moment it was,¹ that all the children of Israel, having seen “how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.” With this sublime and affecting picture of a whole nation prostrate as one man before his footstool, who ever, while he casteth down the proud, exalts the humble;—we are nothing surprised that the sacred festivities brought at length to a close, “the king sent the people away into their tents, glad and merry in heart for the goodness that the Lord had showed unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel his people.”

The heart of Solomon was turned away for a time in his old age, from the service of the Lord to the love of idols—a fearful warning to all to take heed and beware of the leaven of superstition and irreligion. This grievous defection his people were not slow to imitate, and with slight and transient interruptions the tide of apostacy prevailed and grew until the accession of his great grandson Asa. But Asa “did that which was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God: For² he took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high

¹ 2 Chronicles, vii, 3. ² 2 Chronicles, xiv, 3.

places, and brake down the images, and cut down the groves, and commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment. Also he took away out of *all the cities of Judah* the high places and the images." The extent of this reformation gives an awful conception of the extent of the previous corruption. How deep, how lamentable the contrast implied in the words just quoted, to the time at which David brought up the Ark to Zion—to the day on which Solomon dedicated the temple. But it is not more painful and humiliating to contemplate the dreadful amount of the previous degeneracy, than instructive and exhilarating to mark the happy consequences of the noble reformation thus far so speedily effected by the vigorous zeal of Asa, and the rapid diffusion of his principles throughout the body of his people. To illustrate these observations let us refer again to the inspired narrative. "He took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places, and brake down the images, and cut down the groves; and commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment. Also he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the images: and *the kingdom was quiet before him.*" And he built fenced cities in Judah, for the *land had rest*, and he had no war in those years, because the *Lord had given him rest*. Therefore he said unto Judah, "Let us build these cities, and make about them walls and towers, while the land is yet before us, because *we have sought* the Lord our God, *we have sought him*, and he hath given us rest on every side; so they built and prospered." The remainder of this chapter, containing as it does a striking example of the blessed effects of faith united with prudence in the hour of danger, is hardly less applicable to our subject—but we must pass on, without further comment, to the still more apposite matter of the chapter following. There we learn, that after all which had been done, the reformation of the land from idolatry was yet far from being complete; and by what means the Spirit of God prepared the hearts of Asa and his people to resume and carry forward the good work. And Asa, we are told,¹

¹ 2 Chronicles, xv, 8.

“took courage, and put away the abominable idols *out* of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from mount Ephraim, and renewed the altar of the Lord that was before the porch of the Lord. And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them, out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and rut of Simeon; (for they fell to him out of *Israel* in *abundance*, when they saw that the *Lord his God was with him*,) “so they gathered themselves together at Jerusalem”—(this, it has been remarked, seems to have been a voluntary assembly by common agreement, rather than by the king’s command or invitation, unless we suppose it to have been at one of the great festivals) —“in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa. And they offered unto the Lord, seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep. And they entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with *all their heart and with all their soul*: that whosoever would not seek the Lord God of *Israel* should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman. And they swore unto the Lord with a loud voice, and with shouting, and with trumpets, and with cornets. And *all Judah* rejoiced at the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart, and *sought* him with their *whole desire*, and he was found of them, and the Lord *gave them rest* round about.” It is impossible, we think, for any one attentively to compare the religious estate of Judah when Asa ascended the throne, with its condition as portrayed in this passage, without being constrained to acknowledge, that step by step a mighty improvement hath taken place—a wonderful resuscitation of genuine piety. Asa planted, the son of Oded watered,¹ and the Lord hath given in his own time a rich and rapid increase. May he, of his great mercy, incline and enable *us*, our families and friends, our church and country, to seek him with our *whole desire*; then assuredly, of *us* also he will be found, and give us rest round about.

As a promoter of the kingdom of God, Jehoshaphat was more than worthy of his father Asa. The Lord² was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first

¹ 2 Chronicles, xv, 1–8. ² 2 Chronicles, xvii, 3.

frays of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim; but sought unto the Lord God of his fathers, and walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of *Israel*. Having learned by experience the happiness of such a course, he applied himself with equal wisdom and diligence to commend it to his people. In proof of this, it is sufficient to refer to the deep concern he showed for their instruction in the divine law. "In the third year of his reign¹ he sent to his princes, even to Ben-hail, &c., to *teach* in the cities of Judah. And with them he sent Levites, even Shemaiah, &c., and with them Elishama and Jehoram, priests. And they *taught* in Judah, and had the book of the law of the Lord with them, and went about throughout *all* the cities of Judah and taught the people." From such endeavours to advance his glory and the reconciliation of his revolted offspring—if prosecuted in a humble and dependent spirit, the blessing of Jehovah will never be withheld. That it was vouchsafed in the present instance is significantly intimated by the declaration immediately following the passage just quoted: 'And the fear of the Lord fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah, so that they made no war against Jehoshaphat.' For a fuller view of the character of this excellent king, his activity in promoting piety and justice, the success which crowned his labours, and the goodness of the Lord in delivering him from the hand of his enemies, we must refer to chapters xix and xx of this book. From the former we learn, that on his return to Jerusalem from the battle of Ramoth-gilead, in which he fought as the ally of the impious Ahab, he was met by the prophet Jehu and thus saluted, "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord." This reproof appears to have left a strong and abiding impression—for directly we read, "Jehoshaphat went out again through the people, from Beersheba to mount Ephraim, and *brought them back* unto the Lord God of their fathers. And he set judges in the land, throughout all the fenced cities of Judah, city by city, and said to the judges, Take heed what ye do, for ye

¹ 2 Chronicles, xvii, 7-9.

judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment: wherefore now, let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take heed and do it, for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts." "After this it came to pass¹ that the children of Moab and the children of Ammon, and with them others besides the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle." Affliction is one of the most powerful means of proving men's hearts, as it is of their amelioration, when accompanied by the sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost. Let us see how it wrought at this time on Jehoshaphat and his people. No sooner was he apprised of the formidable danger impending over his kingdom, than he set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed, on the simple authority of his kingly office, a fast throughout all Judah. To keep this solemnity, to confess and bewail their own sins and the sins of their fathers, "all Judah, with their little ones, their wives and their children," hastened to Jerusalem. There, in the precincts of the temple, surrounded by the trembling and disconsolate multitude, the godly monarch preferred a short but emphatic and appropriate prayer: "To him that ruleth overall the kingdoms of the heathen"—imploring direction and deliverance in this dread emergency. "Then² upon Jahaziel, the son of Zechariah, a Levite, came the Spirit of the Lord, in the midst of the congregation. And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's. To-morrow go ye down against them: ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye *still*, and see the salvation of the Lord." Upon hearing this gracious answer to his importunate petitions, "Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground; and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the Lord, worshipping the Lord. And the Levites stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a loud voice on high." Early on the following morning, the army of Jehoshaphat went forth

¹ 2 Chronicles, xx, 1. ² 2 Chronicles, xx, 14—19.

to meet the foe—the king exhorting his warriors to believe in the Lord, and so be established. And when Judah came toward the watch-tower in the wilderness, behold the accomplishment of the promise: “Ye shall not need to fight:” “they looked unto the multitude, and they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped.” “Three days were they occupied in gathering of the spoil, it was so much. And on the fourth day they assembled themselves in the valley of Bera-chah; for there they blessed the Lord: therefore the name of the same place was called the valley of Bera-chah (that is blessing) unto this day. Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, to go again to Jerusalem with joy; for the Lord had made them to rejoice over their enemies. And they came to Jerusalem with psalteries, and harps, and trumpets, unto the *house of the Lord*. And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries, when they had heard that the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel. So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest round about.” These things, brethren, were written for our learning: yet how few among us are adequately acquainted with them—how much smaller still, the number duly cognisant of the momentous lessons which they so simply and affectingly inculcate. Pray, that they may this night sink deep into your hearts, and bring forth each its corresponding fruit an hundred-fold.

Among the princes of Judah who did that which is right and good in the sight of the Lord a conspicuous place must be assigned to Hezekiah. On his ascending the throne, he found the nation reduced to the brink of destruction by the monstrous and incorrigible impieties of his father, Ahaz. The Lord brought Judah low, because of Ahaz;¹ for he (Ahaz) made Judah *naked* and transgressed sore against the Lord. To such enormity did his wickedness ultimately proceed, that he gathered together the vessels of the house of God and cut them in pieces, and *shut up the doors of the house of the Lord*. And he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem, and in every several city of Judah

1 2 Chron. xxviii, 19.

he made high places to burn incense unto other gods, and provoked to anger the Lord God of his fathers. In the *first year* of his reign, in the *first month*, Hezekiah *opened the doors of the Lord's house* and repaired them. His next step was to assemble the Levites, who appear to have been peculiarly infected by the corruption of the times, and enjoin them to *sanctify*¹ themselves and *sanctify* the house of the Lord God, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place, and give attention to their various important duties: at the same time intimating his resolution to make a covenant with the Lord God of Israel, that his fierce wrath might be turned away—in which he had delivered Judah and Jerusalem to *trouble*, to *astonishment*, and to *hissing*. With all despatch these injunctions were obeyed. An atonement was then made for all Israel—the Levites placed in the temple, with cymbals, &c., according to the commandment of David—the whole service of the Lord's house, in a word, was again “set in order” with such eelerity “that Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that God *had prepared* the people, for the thing was done *suddenly*.”² Having been hitherto so evidently helped and prospered in his labours of love, Hezekiah, with the concurrence of his princes, and all the congregation in Jerusalem, established a decree to make proclamation³ throughout *all Israel*, from Beersheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the passover unto the Lord God of Israel at Jerusalem; for they had not done it of a long time in such sort, as it was written, “So the posts went with the letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah, saying, Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and he will return to the remnant of you that are escaped out of the hands of the kings of Assyria. The posts passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh even unto Zebulun; but they laughed them to scorn; nevertheless divers of Ashur and Manasseh and of Zebulun *humbled* themselves, and came to Jerusalem. Also in *Judah* the

¹ See Exodus, xix, 10; and Scott's Notes on the passage.

² 2 Chron. xxix, 36. ³ 2 Chron. xxx, 5.

hand of God was to give them *one heart* to do the commandment of the king by the word of the Lord. Then there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the feast—a very great congregation. And they arose, and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem, and all the altars for incense, and cast them into the brook Kidron. Then they killed the Passover, and the Priests and the Levites were *ashamed*—Is not the hand of God visible in this?—and sanctified themselves, and brought in the burnt offerings into the house of the Lord.” No circumstance noted in the history of this memorable festival is more entitled to our attention at present than the following: “A multitude of the people, even many of Ephraim and Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun, had not *cleansed themselves*, yet did they eat the passover.” But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying: “The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleanses according to the purification of the sanctuary.¹ And the Lord hearkened unto Hezekiah, and *healed* the people.” The more important particulars of this celebrated passover, yet unnoticed, and its immediate practical results, are these: “The children of Israel kept the feast seven days with great gladness. And Hezekiah spake comfortably unto all the Levites that *laugh*. the *good knowledge* of the Lord. And the whole assembly took counsel to keep the feast other seven days, and they kept other seven days with gladness: for Hezekiah did *give* to the congregation a thousand bullocks and seven thousand sheep, and the princes gave to the congregation a thousand bullocks and ten thousand sheep, and a great number of the priests *sanctified themselves*. And all the congregation of Judah and of Israel, and the strangers that came out of the land of Israel, and that dwelt in Judah, rejoiced. So there was great joy in Jerusalem—since the time of Solomon there was not the like.² Then the priests arose, and blessed

¹ Compare 1 Corinthians, xi, 29, 30.

² As illustrative still further of the holy issues of the manifest work of grace developed and matured by means of this great solemnity, we would recommend to you the careful perusal of the entire chapter, from the commencement of which we have just been quoting. What follows is so strikingly to our purpose

the people, and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to his holy dwelling-place, even unto heaven. When all this was finished, all Israel that were present went out to the cities of Judah, and brake the images in pieces, and cut down the groves, and threw down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin; in Ephraim also, and Manasseh, until they had utterly destroyed them all. Then, not sooner, every man returned to his possession.”

Feeling that there is refreshment, *revival* in the very air and aspect of such scenes, which of you, believing brethren, is not ready in the fulness of his heart to exclaim, Is this the Judah which Ahaz made naked—this the Jerusalem which not many months ago was polluted in every corner by detestable vanities? Blessed be the Spirit by whose almighty energy they were wrought—for the record of these marvels; and blessed be his name who hath promised to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.

Notwithstanding the measure of reformation brought about by Manasseh after “he was humbled,” the

that we must be excused for extracting it: “Hezekiah, more[^] over, commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the Priests and the Levites, that they might be encouraged in the law of the Lord. And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance the first fruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the “field. The children of Israel and Judah, that dwelt in the cities of Judah, they also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep which were consecrated unto the Lord, and laid them by *heaps*. And when Hezekiah and the princes saw the heaps they blessed the Lord and his people Israel. Then Hezekiah questioned with the priests concerning the heaps—from their magnitude, supposing, it would seem, that those priests who had charge of the oblations, instead of distributing a due proportion to their brethren, intended to reserve the whole for themselves. Azariah, the chief priest of the house of Zadok, answered him and said, since the people began to bring the offerings we have had enough to eat, and have left plenty: for the Lord hath blessed his people, and that which is left is this great store. It has here been pertinently observed, “Tire disinterestedness of the priests \was highly commendable; for they might have easily enriched themselves without being suspected; and the whole transaction enlarges our idea of the blessing which had attended the preceding solemnity; for before this the priests seem to have been generally very careless and ungodly.”

worship of Jehovah, in less than sixty years from the death of Hezekiah, had again become well nigh extinct in apostate Judah. With the accession of Josiah, however, a day of parting glory arose on the wastes of Zion. He was yet a child when the sceptre of a backslidden nation passed into his hands. Many, therefore, and peculiar must his temptations have been to follow other gods, and choose his portion in this life; nevertheless, the grace to which no obstacles are invincible, effectually inclined him in the eighth year of his reign, the sixteenth of his age, to seek after the God of David, his father. Four years later,¹ he began to *purge* Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images. And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence, and the images, and made dust of them, and strewed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them; and when he had broken down the altars, and cut down all the idols throughout all the *land of Israel*, he returned to Jerusalem. These sweeping and determined exertions for the abolition of idolatry were followed up (in spirit) by the appointment of a commission to repair the temple—a business in course of which an incident occurred that gave a powerful impulse to the zeal of the youthful reformer, and the cause of truth among his partly awakened subjects. This was the discovery of a book of the law, (probably the original writing deposited in the ark by Moses,) in some obscure by-place of the temple. For the sake of magnifying the importance of this discovery, we need not suppose that besides this no other roll of the “*Scripture*” then existed in the land. One thing seems obvious, that neither the king nor the principal officers of religion possessed a copy, or knew at least they did; and that both were but imperfectly acquainted with its contents; so that in effect the book of the covenant had in a great measure ceased out of the land;² and its appear-

¹ 2 Chronicles, xxxiv, 3.

² Who does not recollect that to this dismal picture the whole extent of Papal Christendom presented for ages a dreadful parallel? Who knows not that if Popery had its will, the sight of a Bible, ay even in Scotland, emphatically the land of Bibles, would soon again become a wonder—“a new thing under the

anee on this much to be remembered occasion was as if one had risen from the dead." The book having been brought to the king, it came to pass that when he heard the words of the law, he rent his clothes, and in the utmost consternation, sent to enquire of the divine oracle by the prophetess Huldah, whether the awful curses denounced against apostasy would indeed be executed. The answer returned to him was—Mark it, ye careless sinners, ponder it, ye that mourn in Zion; thus saith the Lord God of Israel,¹ Behold I will bring evil upon this place, even all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king; and as for the king, say unto him, because thine heart was *tender*, and thou didst *humble thyself*, and rend thy clothes and wjeep before me, behold I will gather thee to thy fathers in *peace*. A message from God at once so consoling and so terrible could not fail still more profoundly to humble the soul of the contrite king, and engage him with the deepest simplicity and earnestness to say, "Lord, what wouldest thou have me to do?" How well this remark harmonizes with the brief outline of his future proceedings none of you will be at a loss to perceive. Here we can further trace them only to the extent of the following extract, omitting all notice of the great passover, respecting which it is said: "There was no passover like to that from the days of Samuel." And the king² went up into the house of the Lord, and all the men of Judah, great and small, and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant; and he caused all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to *stand to it*; and the inhabitants of Jerusalem *did* according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. And Josiah took atvay *all* the abominations out of *all* the countries that pertained to the children of Israel, and made all that were present in Israel to serve the Lord their God; and all his days they *departed not* from following the Lord, the God of their fathers." We are awrare that the impression naturally produced by these striking statements at

sun"? At the bare idea of such a consummation what heart does not shudder? The mighty God of Jacob defend us and our posterity from it!

¹ 2 Chron. xxxiv, 23. ² 2 Chron. xxxiv, 29.

first sight requires greatly to be modified, since we find Jehovah complaining, apparently of this very generation:¹ "Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but, feignedly, saith the Lord." Still it would be contrary to all analogy to suppose, that amidst such a multitude of dissemblers, there were not a goodly number of genuine converts.

These are some of the more prominent revivals by which the era of the first Jewish monarchy is distinguished. Let us next shortly advert to certain events relating to the return of the captives from Babylon, fully entitled, it would seem, to be called by that name. The premature and sorely lamented death of Josiah was the sunset of Judah's glory. Her descent to destruction was from that hour as the stone that is hurled from the mountain's brow. The madness of idolatry, arrested for a season, again rolled an impetuous and resistless flood over the length and breadth of the land, and fierce and furious on its track came the torrent of Jehovah's wrath. Within a few years, Jehoiakim and certain of the choice of his people, had been bound and carried away captive to Babylon; and in twenty years from that "beginning of sorrows," Jerusalem and the temple were a heap of ruins; and thousands more of the flower of the nation had hanged their harps on the willows "by Babel's streams." But grievously as they had rebelled, and justly as they merited to be given over to destruction, Jehovah had not cast off his chosen for ever. Jeremiah, who with others of the prophets, had foretold, in the most awful terms, the coming desolation, had further been commissioned to declare that at the end of seventy years, God would revisit his people in peace, and restore them to their own land; and, moreover, that their restoration would be preceded by a signal revival of his fear in their hearts. Thus saith the Lord,² after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word, in causing you to return to this place; then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you; ye shall seek me and find me when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And now that the empire

¹ Jeremiah, iii, 10. ² Jeremiah, xxix, 10.

of Chaldea hastened to its fall, and the day of Israel's release drew nigh, we find Ezekiel himself among the captives, by his example, his prayers, and his preaching, an efficient instrument of fanning the feeble embers of faith and piety which still survived in a small remnant of his brethren in bondage, declaring, in language still more distinctly descriptive of spiritual renovation, that their return to the land would be accompanied by a great turning of their hearts to the God of their fathers: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you; a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you."¹ In accordance with these predictions is the account given of the first return of the captive Jews under the conduct of Zerubbabel. "Then, upon the proclamation of Cyrus," which was evidently the result of supernatural influence, "rose up the chief of the fathers² of Judah and Benjamin, and the Priests and the Levites, with all whose spirit *God had raised*, to go up to build the house of the Lord." The number who experienced this divine quickening was upwards of forty-two thousand, and the reality and force of it are satisfactorily evinced in the vigour with which they began, and the steadfastness with which they continued to prosecute the grand object of their return.

After an interval of between seventy and eighty years, Ezra the scribe, one of the most distinguished names in the Jewish annals, came from Babylon to Jerusalem, with as many of those still in captivity as were minded to accompany him—bearing a commission from Artaxerxes, to enquire how far the law of God was observed in Judah—to rectify whatever disorders he might find, and to complete the decorations of the temple—the building of which, after many vexatious interruptions, had at length been finished. The presence of such a man at Jerusalem was at this time urgently required, and led by the blessing of Heaven to highly important and salutary consequences. He found many of his countrymen—although as a nation they never after their deliverance from Babylon actually

¹ Ezekiel, xxxvi, 25. ² Ezra, i, 5.

addicted themselves to gross idolatry, on the high way thither. For not the people only, but a number also of the Priests and Levites, had taken to them wives from among the daughters of the surrounding heathen—a practice strictly prohibited by the law of Moses and strongly tending, it is obvious, to departure from “the Fountain of living waters.” This intelligence pierced the heart of the holy man with the most poignant sorrow. He rent his garment and his mantle, plucked the hair from his head, and sat down in speechless astonishment:—How beautiful an example of Christian sensibility and compassion. He then prayed in an agony of shame and humiliation, magnifying the tender mercy of Jehovah, and confessing the heinous backslidings of his covenant people. The sight of a man eminent at once for character and station thus humbled, thus afflicted by sins not his own, had a powerful effect both in awakening penitent feelings in the hearts of others, and in deepening and drawing them forth where they already existed. Around him gathered every one that “trembled at the words of God”—and forthwith crowds of men, women, and children, bathed in tears. The issue corresponded to this promising omen—the offenders saw and confessed their guilt, and to prove the sincerity of their repentance, agreed to put away their idolatrous wives, and the children they had by them. We are not prepared to maintain that none of those who consented to a measure so singular and so trying were actuated mainly by the wisdom of this world; but neither can we hesitate to affirm, that the obvious impression of the sacred narrative is, that the majority went into it from deep and pungent convictions of sin, and a sincere desire of reconciliation with their offended Father in heaven.

From the period to which we have just referred, twelve or fourteen years had again elapsed, when it pleased God to raise up in the person of Nehemiah, cup-bearer to Artaxerxes, another zealous and effective agent both of temporal and spiritual good to the remnant of the captivity now established in Judah. Hearing of the affliction and reproach which lay upon his brethren, by reason of the wralls of Jerusalem being still

unbuilt, he determined to ask permission of his royal master to go thither and build—as he pathetically describes the object of his journey—the “city of my fathers’ sepulchres.” His request, in answer to special and importunate prayer for its success, was readily granted, and he quickly set forth on his pious embassy, provided with an armed escort, and a letter to the keeper of the king’s forest to furnish him with the requisite supply of timber for the work. In a marvelously short space of time, despite of the bitter and furious opposition of the Samaritans, he was enabled by the good hand of his God upon him to complete the primary object of his mission—the restoration of the walls and the gates of Jerusalem. This it is evident was a work eminently calculated to subserve the interests of pure religion—and who can refuse to acknowledge, in the enthusiastic ardour, energy, and resolution of the builders,¹ the fruit of a sudden spring shower of gracious influence on their hearts? After this, it was represented to Nehemiah, that many of the wealthier and more influential of his countrymen had been guilty of sorely oppressing their poor brethren by the exaction of exorbitant interest on money lent them to pay the king’s tribute, and purchase corn in a time of dearth. He instantly espoused the cause of the oppressed with all the warmth of a generous and compassionate heart, and remonstrated with the evil-doers in terms so forcible and appropriate, that they immediately agreed to restore their ill-gotten gains, declaring, “As thou savest we will *do*.” It is not every day, nor among every description of men, that a simple appeal to conscience is followed by such results. On this affair Scott’s remark is excellent—“Thus,” says he, “was this matter in one assembly amicably settled by motives and arguments taken from true religion, and the law of God: yet one of a similar kind disturbed the Roman state for ages, and the oppression was never effectually prevented!—But the most important and interesting passage by far of Nehemiah’s history, especially in relation to our present occupation, is that in which he is represented as zealously labouring along

¹ Nehemiah, iv, 13, &c.

with Ezra to instruct the people in the Divine law, and excite in them the sorrow that worketh repentance. Being assembled in great numbers at Jerusalem to keep the feast of trumpets, the people¹ gathered themselves together as one man into the street, and required Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law which the Lord had commanded to Israel. And Ezra brought the law before the congregation, both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding—and he read therein from the morning until mid-day, before the men and the women, and those that could understand, and the ears of all the people were attentive: And deeply did the ears of many affect their hearts. The voice of contrite weeping and holy joy alternately prevailed, as Ezra from a pulpit of wood made for the purpose, and the Priests and Levites—having probably separate audiences, since one man's voice could not possibly extend over such a concourse—"read in the law distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused the people to understand the reading." On the second day, the chief of the fathers, the *Priests* and the *Levites*, being gathered together unto Ezra, even to understand the words of the law, that is, that Ezra might explain to them such portions of it as they less fully comprehended,—it was resolved to keep the feast of Tabernacles, as the law enjoined. The people accordingly made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God: since the days of Joshua had not the children of Israel *done so*: and there was very great gladness:—Also day by day he read in the book of the law. Every thing is beautiful in his season:—Nehemiah and Ezra had exhorted the people on the first day of the month not to weep, but to rejoice in the Lord, agreeably to the spirit of the festival they were met to solemnize. On the 24th day, however, and doubtless by the authority of Nehemiah, the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, and with sack-clothes and earth upon them: And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers.

¹ Nehemiah, viii, 1, &c.

The long-suffering mercy, the distinguishing favour of Jehovah towards his chosen nation, and the heinous ingratitude which they had shown in return, were then largely discoursed of by the Levites, — probably at different stations, as when previously they expounded the law. The sequel proves that these penitential exercises were greatly blessed: For they are no sooner brought to a close than we read that the people, old and young, men and women, as many as had understanding, entered into a solemn covenant drawn up in writing, to which Nehemiah and the other principal persons affixed their names and seals, to walk in God's law and observe and do all his commandments: In particular they engaged to renounce their besetting sins, the great decisive proof of sincere repentance, namely to abstain from all marriage alliances with the surrounding heathen—to buy from them no ware or victuals on the Sabbath, and to contribute regularly to the due support of the Temple services.

With these brief and very imperfect remarks on the times of special refreshment and reviving vouchsafed unto the church of Israel previous to the winding up of her history, in so far as it is recorded in Scripture, we must hasten—passing entirely by the long interval, not even excepting the noble contendings of the Maccabees for the faith of their fathers—to the opening of the New Testament dispensation. Now to all who have bestowed any measure of attention on the subject, it is well known the Jews had at this ever-memorable epoch sunk unto the lowest depth of degeneracy and corruption. A small remnant indeed with aged Simeon waited in patience and hope for the true consolation of Israel, but the body of the nation, priests and people —(notwithstanding that by many the form of the Mosaic worship was still zealously regarded)—were to the last degree in their principles perverse, in their habits depraved. The fearful picture which Isaiah has left of the profligacy of his countrymen in the days which he illumined and adorned is yet more applicable in its darkest features to the contemporaries of the Saviour: “Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters!

They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the holy one of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint,—from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it.” I cannot forbear, says Josephus, declaring my opinion, though the declaration fills me with great emotion and regret, that if the Romans had delayed to come against *these wretches*, the city would either have been engulfed by an earthquake, overwhelmed by a deluge, or destroyed by fire from heaven as Sodom was, for that generation was far more enormously wicked than those who suffered these calamities: And thou, Capernaum, said Jesus, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom it would have remained until this day. Such were the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, in those days when John the Baptist began in the wilderness of Judea to preach “Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” To move the hearts of such men, no ordinary style of address was required. That of the Baptist was in the highest degree searching, arousing, pungent. The spirit of Elias burned in his breast—the power thundered in his voice. And who can doubt that his ministry was extensively blessed as he reads, “Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan confessing their sins”—that all the people who heard him and the publicans justified God? who can doubt that, while the great majority heard him only as Herod heard, and were willing but for a very little while to walk in his light, nevertheless the prediction of Gabriel was not suffered to fall to the ground—“Many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God”?

Unto the people whom the Baptist had been labouring to make ready “the Lord their God” at length appeared, in fashion “as a man,” preaching the gospel of the kingdom. Here then it were most natural to anticipate, if unacquainted with the fact, the dawn of a revival day totally eclipsing all that had gone before

But, turning from conjecture to history, we find that the immediate spiritual fruits of the Saviour's personal ministry were comparatively small and inconsiderable. Not many hundreds at most were effectually persuaded, it would seem, to repent and believe the gospel by the instructions and appeals of God manifest in flesh. A more solemn truth than this can hardly be conceived. —It supplies, however, no argument against the use or the importance of *means* of grace: it only shows that the most excellent, the most perfect means are in and by themselves powerless—utterly unequal to the quickening of souls dead in trespasses and in sins. The *natural man* receiveth not the things of the Spirit—not if declared by the lips of inspiration—not even at the mouth of Emmanuel himself. Brethren, this is a doctrine which in proportion to its infinite importance we are slow to learn and prone to forget. To bring it home to our minds with a power, a pressure which no direct statements could equal, may not this have been one reason why so few real converts were made by Him who “spake as never man spake”?—But it is necessary to remark that, to however limited an extent the personal ministry of the Saviour issued in the actual salvation of sinners, the whole period of his public life was marked by unwonted religious excitement and agitation. On the soul of the nation no longer lay unbroken, undisturbed the torpor of spiritual death;—The legions of darkness gave violent signs of their consciousness that some strange jeopardy had encompassed their dominion on earth;—The enmity of the carnal mind was roused to the highest pitch of exasperation. —Meanwhile a great preparatory work was proceeding in the hearts of many elect unto eternal life. The profound awakening—the manifest revival—begun by the Baptist was sustained and advanced. Hypocrisy was fearlessly unmasked, and unsparingly scourged, in the high places of her strength—sophistries were refuted, prejudices undermined,—in a word, multitudes were unquestionably led to solemn enquiry and reflexion—trembling seized the heart of many a secure and slumbering sinner, and seed was sown which afterwards sprang up in a sudden and glorious harvest.

To the contemplation of that bright and blessed era your thoughts are next for a moment to be directed. From his tears and travail on earth let us now then follow our adorable Emmanuel to his exaltation on the right hand of the Father: with his enthronement there the proper age of the Holy Spirit began—the fulness of the times arrived for the dispensation of his saving influences unto all flesh. From the foundation of the church the Spirit's power had been felt, the fruits of his love made manifest; but henceforth, his precious gifts were to be communicated with a plenitude, a liberality before unknown. The star-light which he had shed upon a solitary people was now to become the splendour of the all-warming, all-vivifying sun;—the narrow stream, in which his benign influences had heretofore been pent up, a majestic river rolling health and gladness through every land. Now it was meet that the connection between the ascension of Messiah and the pouring out of the Spirit should be distinctly seen,—eternally signalised. It was fitting too, that some illustrious display of Messiah's power and love should be made on earth, in close conjunction with the extatic acclamations of the blessed, as they beheld him enter the celestial gates in human form—the triumphant spoiler of hell and the grave,—fitting that on the very spot where lately he had been crowned with thorns, and nailed to an accursed tree, it should be confessed by thousands of his bitterest enemies, and thence proclaimed to all countries and ages, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the King of Israel, the Saviour of the world. Accordingly he had been seated but a few days on the Mediatorial throne—and these only to afford scope to the faith and the prayers of the feeble company of his disciples associated at Jerusalem—when he shed down in unexampled profusion the miraculous gifts, the converting and sanctifying grace of his promised Spirit. The effects of this stupendous manifestation of Messiah's kingly power and munificence were beyond comparison or conception glorious. With tongues and hearts of heavenly fire, his chosen heralds forthwith began to preach glad tidings, to publish peace, to make offer in the name of their crucified Lord, of

pardon and life eternal to the chief of sinners. The fondly cherished dream of the restoration at that time of the kingdom to Israel hath vanished at last, and with it all unseemly contention who "should be the greatest."—The glory of their risen and exalted Master, and the salvation of perishing sinners through faith in his atoning blood—these are the objects which now engross their thoughts and absorb the noblest energies of their souls,—the objects for whose sake they are willing to renounce all that is dear on earth, to endure all that is painful in persecution unto death. Need you be told the success of their devoted labours: thousands on that very day of wonders were pierced to the heart with a sense of their guilt and misery, and enabled to lay hold of the hope set before them.—How refreshing, how animating to read immediately after, "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved; and again, the number of the *men* was about five thousand; and again, multitudes of believers, both men and women, were added to the Lord; the number of the disciples was multiplied at Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the Priests were obedient to the faith." .All this took place within two years of the descent of the Spirit: eight years more had not elapsed before the gospel was preached with saving power to the Gentiles at Caesarea, and at Antioch much people added to the Lord. With what rapidity its triumphs were multiplied, both among them and the Jews scattered abroad, the following testimonies relating to the next eight years of the New Dispensation are witness. At Iconium, a great multitude both of Jews and also of the Greeks believed: the converts of Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, were confirmed in the faith, and increased in number daily. In Thessalonica some of the Jews believed, and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few. At Berea, many of the Jews believed, also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men not a few. Many at Corinth believed and were baptized. The word of God grew mightily at Ephesus and prevailed. At Athens, certain men clave unto Paul, and Demetrius complained that, throughout *all Asia*, Paul had preached and turned away much people.—

Would ye know how much in those days was implied in such expressions as believing, being *obedient* to the faith, being *added to the Lord*;—how they felt, how they acted who were then called Christians? As to the *apostles*, agreeably to what we have already declared of their zeal and devotedness after the Pentecost, we find them declaring to the multitude of the disciples—“we will give ourselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the word: and the inspired historian of their deeds affirms of them—that daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. When renouncing the charge of the “daily ministration” they recommend, as fit persons to become their substitutes in that business, men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom. Again, respecting the general body of the faithful, we read, that for a time, “all that believed were together, and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people.” Again, we have the infallible witness testifying “the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul, and great grace was upon them all. On this point let us further hear the testimony of Paul,—writing to the Thessalonians, he tells them, “We give thanks to God always for you—remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ; for our gospel came not to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost: and ye became followers of us, and of the Lord.” With these scriptural intimations of what Christians were in the primitive age, let us compare one or two passages relating to the same subject from uninspired writings. “They bind themselves,” says Pliny, a hostile heathen, speaking of the Asiatic Christians, “not to the commission of any wickedness, but not to be guilty of theft, or robbery, or adultery,—never to falsify their word, nor to deny a pledge committed to them when called upon to return it.” Describing the early condi-

tion of the Corinthian church, St. Clement writes, "You were all humble in spirit—nothing boasting, subject rather than subjecting, giving rather than receiving: contented with the food of God, and carefully embracing his words, your feelings were expanded, and his sufferings were before your eyes—so profound and beautiful the peace that was given you, and so insatiable the desire of beneficence. Every division, every schism, was detestable to you; you wept over the failings of your neighbours; you thought their defects your own, and were impatient after every good work." The following testimony embraces almost the whole extent of the then Christian world. It is from the pen of Bardesenes, a learned Christian of Mesopotamia, contemporary with Marcus Antoninus. "Neither do Christians in Parthia indulge in polygamy, though they be Parthians; nor do they marry their own daughters in Persia, though they be Persians. Among the Bactrians and the Gauls, they do not commit adultery, but where-soever they are, they rise above the *evil* laws and customs of the country." My friends, has the gospel come with such power—such effects to us?—has it raised us above the evil laws and customs of an ungodly world,—led us to abound in works of faith and labours of love,—made us followers of holy Paul and of the Lord; then are we, seeking earnestly to strengthen our brethren—praying without intermission that the word may every where have free course and be glorified; that the whole church may again become radiant with the light of departed days—the whole earth glad in the smile of Jesus? Many ages ago would such prayers have been realised had the gospel continued to spread and prevail as in the times of the apostles: but soon was the fair morning we have been viewing destined to be overcast, and by degrees almost swallowed up in gloom. The epistles to the seven churches of Asia¹ bear emphatic

¹ From these remarkable communications, let us extract a single sentence in order to show in what circumstances a church in the Saviour's account requires to be revived. "Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus, write—I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear with them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne,

witness to the fact, that even before the end of the first century, palpable symptoms of declension had manifested themselves in some of the earliest and most favoured seats of the faith. Unhappily there is abundant evidence that neither was the declension thus early reformed, of limited extent, or of brief continuance.

Long after this, indeed, the gospel continued to diffuse its heavenly light among the benighted heathen. But the power which accompanied its first promulgation sensibly decreased, and in fully an equal proportion the value of its fruits. From age to age, the vineyard of the Lord assumed a colder, bleaker, and drearier aspect; instead of the fir tree, came up the thorn; and instead of the myrtle, the brier. Gradually the progressive decay of spiritual strength and vigour prepared the way for the revelation of the Man of Sin, the Antichrist of Rome, who for ages held in worse than Egyptian bondage almost the entire extent of western Christendom, and binds, alas! to this hour, in darkness and iron, millions of deluded souls. Beneath his fostering auspices, ignorance, superstition, and profligacy, every where prevailed and increased to a degree of which, in our prodigiously altered circumstances, it is quite impossible to form any adequate conception. With the contents of the word of God, the great majority of the (so called,) priests themselves speedily became as little acquainted as were the children unborn; and no vanity of fable, where any knowledge of it was possessed, could have been more absolutely disregarded as the rule of life. To such an enormous height did the corruptions of the Papacy, both in doctrine and morals, rise at last, that the question could hardly have been pronounced extravagant, whether the religion of Jesus, so prostituted, so profaned, was not rather a curse than a blessing to men. Still it is important and interesting to bear in mind, that throughout the long and horrible night in which Popery was extending and securing her baleful empire, there arose, at intervals, within her pale,

and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured and hast not fainted. Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember from whence thou wert fallen and repent," &c.

individuals endued with light from on high to discern and courage to protest against her monstrous abominations. Many also are of opinion that beyond her pale there existed an unbroken succession of faithful and incorruptible witnesses for the truth: insomuch that when scornfully asked where was the religion of Protestants before Luther, they are prepared, should it not be held sufficient to answer, "in the Bible," to add, and "in the valleys of Piedmont." But cheering and delightful though it be to trace in the darkest times of papal corruption the perpetuity of the promise "The gates of hell shall not prevail against the church," it must still be acknowledged that the depth and the dreariness of the all but universal gloom which for a thousand years had been thickening over the nations of Europe, render the Reformation of the sixteenth century one of the most blessed and momentous epochs in the history of mankind. Then burst, in full-orbed majesty, from beneath the veil of that long and dismal eclipse, the Sun of truth; and obedient to his call, nation after nation suddenly arose from the slumber and the stupor of ages, and asserted their unalienable right to search the Scriptures and worship the God of their fathers in spirit and in truth. But the mighty revolution stopped not here: thousands and tens of thousands, in throwing off the fetters of Rome, were made spiritually free. The great leaders of the Reformation were men not more eminent for the excellence of their gifts than for the abundance of grace by which they were engaged to consecrate them all to the Redeemer's glory, and the regeneration and enlargement of his church. Their labours in the gospel, accordingly, were mighty to the pulling down of strongholds, the translation of sinners out of darkness into marvellous light. And well, my friends, doth it become us, with gratitude and humility, to remember that as in no country was the Reformation itself, strictly so called, effected so rapidly as in our own, in none was it accompanied with spiritual reviving so extensive and manifest.

In Scotland, says Kirkton, "The whole nation was converted by lump. Lo! here a nation born in one day; yea, moulded into one congregation, and sealed

as a fountain with a solemn oath and covenant." To the same purpose are the following reflections of Fleming, in his *Fulfilling of Scripture*: "It is astonishing, and should be matter of wonder and praise for after ages, to consider that solemn time of the Reformation (in Scotland,) when the Lord began to visit his church. What a swift course the spreading of the kingdom of Christ had; and how professors of the truth thronged in amidst the greatest threatenings of those on whose side authority and power then was. O! how astonishing and extraordinary was this appearance of the Lord there on all ranks, so that they offered themselves willingly for the truth; and upon such of his servants as were sent forth on the work of the ministry, with such zeal and oneness of spirit as, on the furthest hazard of their lives and estates, they did enter into covenant for mutual defence, for the truth of Christ, and a free profession thereof." The testimony of Knox¹ is not less decisive: "Our very enemies can witness in how great purity did God establish his true religion among us; and this we confess to be a strength given us from God, because we esteem not ourselves wise in our own eyes: but knowing our wisdom to be foolishness, we, before God, laid it aside, and followed that which was only approved of him. In this point could never our enemies cause us faint, whilst for this we wrestled, that the reverend face of the first primitive and apostolic church should be reduced to the eyes and knowledge of men; and in that point hath our God strengthened us, till the work was finished, as the world may see."

But we cannot better serve the cause we *are* endeavouring to plead, than by subjoining to these general testimonies respecting the revival of genuine piety in our native land at the time of the Reformation from Popery, a few of the more remarkable visitations of the Spirit upon particular places. The first we shall mention occurred under the ministry of the "Scottish John Baptist, Mr. George Wishart." On a certain occasion, being excluded from the pulpit at Ayr, by Dunbar, Bishop of Glasgow, he allayed the vehemence of his

¹ History, p. 203.

friends, who would have forced an entrance, by remarking, "Jesus Christ is as mighty in the field as in the church, and himself oft preached in the desert, at the seaside, and other places, it is the word of peace God sends by me; the blood of none shall be shed this day for the preaching of it." So saying, "he mounted an earthen fence, and continued preaching to the people above three hours, and God wrought so wonderfully by that sermon, that one of the wickedest men in the country, the laird of Sheld, was converted by it, and his eyes ran down with such abundance of tears, that all men wondered at him."¹ Hearing at this time that the plague had broken out in Dundee, VVishart, forcing his way through all the expostulations of his friends, hastened to the scene of infection, observing, "They are now in trouble, and need comfort; perhaps the hand of God will make them now to magnify and reverence the word which before they lightly esteemed." He stationed himself at the east gate, having the whole within, and the sick without: and chose for his text, "he sent his word and healed them."² "By which sermon he so raised up the hearts of those w'ho heard him, that they regarded not death, but judged them more happy who should then depart, than such as should remain behind."³ The next name notably associated with the work of the Spirit is that of William Cooper. Towards the close of this (sixteenth) century, he was for a time minister of Bathkenner. On his first arrival there, "he found for a church four ruined walls, without roof, door, or window;"⁴ but such was the acceptance of his faithful labours for the eternal interests of his people, that within a few months they cheerfully of their own motion repaired and embellished the church. "During seven or eight years of a very successful ministry in that place, it pleased God to begin to acquaint him with his terrors, and with inward temptations, so that his life was almost wasted by heaviness; yet thereby he learned to know more and more of Christ Jesus. He was afterwards removed to the north, where for nineteen years he was a comfort to the best, and a wound

1 Fleming, ii, p. 297 2 Ps. cvii, 20. 3 Fleming, ii, p. 297.
4 History of Revivals of Religion in the British Isles, p. 174.

to the worst sort." He had evening meetings three nights in the week; of which he says, "It would have dene a Christian's heart good to see those joyful assemblies,—to have heard the zealous cryings to God among that people, with sighings, and tears, and melting hearts, and mourning eyes." "Mr. Cooper had never a controversy with any man but for his sins, and the Lord assisting him, the power of the word did so hammer down their pride, that they were all of them brought to acknowledge their evil ways."

Contemporary with Cooper was John Welsh, "in respect of his spiritual life, and familiarity with his Maker, a man unparalleled." His first sphere of labour was Selkirk, and though his stay there was short, he left behind him some seals of his fidelity in making known Christ crucified. In 1590 he was translated from Kirkcudbright to Ayr. Such was the condition of his new charge, that at first no one would let him a house, and he was often obliged to rush in between bloody combatants on the public streets, his head protected by a helmet, his weapon the message of peace. Having put a stop to an affray, he would cause a table to be spread on the street, and offering a prayer, persuade the angry parties to eat and drink together, and conclude the business by singing a psalm. He was most assiduous in his holy duties, never preaching less than once a day. "But if his diligence was great, so it is doubted whether his sowing in painfulness, or his harvest in success was greatest; for if either his spiritual experience in seeking the Lord, or his painfulness in converting souls be considered, they will be found unparalleled in Scotland." Mr. David Dickson of Irvine, a much honoured servant of God, was used to say, long after Welsh was in glory, when any one mentioned the success of his ministry—"The gleaning grapes in Ayr in Mr. Welsh's time, were far above the vintage of Irvine in his own." How important for all who have any love for Christ and the souls of their fellow-sinners to know, that this is the man who, from the beginning of his ministry till his death, reckoned the day ill spent if he staid not seven or eight hours in prayer,—who, on going to rest, was accustomed to lay a plaid above his

bed clothes, so that when he arose to his *night* prayers, he could cover himself with it,—who would retire to the church of Ayr, which was at some distance from the town, and not find it “an irksome solitude to pass the whole night there in prayer.” “On a certain night, being under an extraordinary pressure of spirit to pour forth his heart to God, he left his bed and spent most of the night in that exercise: his wife, becoming at last uneasy, went to seek for him, but missing him in his ordinary place, entered other gardens by such passages as she knew: at last she heard a voice, and drawing near to it, could hear him speak a few words with great force and fervency, accompanied with audible expressions of inward anguish, which were these:” “O God, wilt thou not give me Scotland! O God, wilt thou not give me Scotland!”

Mr. Bruce, about the time of Welsh’s removal to Ayr, commenced his ministry in Edinburgh. Kirkton describes the power of his preaching in the following words: “He made always an earthquake upon his hearers, and rarely preached but to a weeping auditory.

I have heard an eminent minister say, he believed never man in the latter ages spoke with Mr. Bruce his authority.” At Edinburgh his labours were singularly blessed, and when a prisoner at Inverness, “he marvellously enlightened that poor dark country,” and turned many souls into the way of peace. “A poor Highlander once came to him after sermon, and offered him his whole substance, (which was only two cows,) upon condition Mr. Bruce would make God his friend;—an evidence of the power of his ministry as evident as it was simple: and many such he had.” The little incident we are about to state, lets us at once into the secret of Bruce’s power and pathos in the pulpit. At Larbot, where he frequently preached, “he used after the first service to retire to a chamber near the church. Some noblemen having once come far to hear him, and having the same distance to return to their homes, became impatient from his delay in returning to church, and sent the bell-man to hearken at his door if there were any appearance of his coming. The bell-man returned and said, ‘I think he will not come out this day at all, foi

I hear him always saying to another that he cannot go except the other go with him, and I do not hear the other answer him a word at all.”

A little before his death, in 1632, he was made the means of a wonderful illustration of the blessed promise, the prayer of a righteous man availeth much. He was at Edinburgh, and through weakness kept his chamber, when divers godly ministers then assembled there came together, and gave him an account of the actings of these times, the prelates then being resolved to introduce the Service-book. “Bruce prayed, and did therein tell over again to the Lord the very substance of their discourse, which was a sad representation of the case of the church;—at which time there was such an extraordinary motion on all present, so sensible a down-pouring of the Spirit, that they could hardly contain themselves. But what was most strange, there was even some unusual motion on those who were in other parts of the house, not knowing the cause at the very instant. One present on the occasion said, ‘O how strange a man is this, for he knocketh down the Spirit of God on us all.’ This he said because Mr. Bruce did divers times knock with his fingers on the table.”¹

The General Assembly was, in 1596, the scene of another remarkable quickening of souls, already most of them it may be presumed in Christ. The ministers and other commissioners to the number of between four and five hundred being convened, to humble themselves and wrestle with God—“to pursue a *national* as well as a personal reconciliation,” Mr. John Davidson, “the salt of the church of Scotland, both in the pulpit and judicatories, both for zeal and constancy,”² was called to preside. He showed—having caused to be read the 3rd and 34th chapters of Ezekiel—“that the end of their meeting was the confession of sins, and entering into a new covenant and league with the Lord, that thus by repentance they might be the meeter to provoke others to the same; and he was followed with that power for moving of their spirits in application, that within an hour after they were entered into the church, they looked with another countenance than that wherewith

¹ Fleming on Fulfilling of the Scriptures, i, 37. ² Kirkton.

they entered. He exhorted them to retired meditation, and acknowledgment of their sins, even whilst they were together. For the space of a quarter of an hour they were thus humbling themselves—the preacher pausing it would seem during that time—yea, with such a joint concurrence with those sighs and groans, and with shedding of tears amongst the most, every one provoking another by their example, and the teacher himself by his, so as the very church resounded, and that place might worthily be called a Bochim, for the like of that day had not been seen in Scotland since the Reformation. After prayer and public confession, Mr. Davidson discoursed from Lukp, xii, 22; and was wonderfully assisted by God's Spirit to cast down and raise up again the brethren. When they were to dissolve, they were stayed by the Moderator, and desired to hold up their hands to testify their entering into a new league and covenant with God. They held up their hands presently and readily, which was a moving spectacle to all who were present.¹

Passing on to the Reformation of the church from Prelacy in 1638, we find that this also was a time of extensive and extraordinary revival. The Lord, says Fleming, did let forth much of his Spirit, when this nation did (again) "solemnly enter into covenant, which many yet alive do know, how the spirits of men were raised and wrought upon by the word and ordinances lively and longed after. Then did thie nation own the Lord, and was visibly owned by him. Much zeal and an enlarged heart did appear for the public cause—personal reformation was seriously set about—and then also was there a remarkable gale of providence that did attend the actings of his people, w'hich did atonish their adversaries." These striking declarations are confirmed by the testimony of Livingston. "I wras present at Lanark, and several other parishes, when, on Sabbath after the forenoon service, the Covenant was read and sworn: and I may truly say that in all my life time, excepting at the kirk of Shotts, I never saw such motions from the Spirit of God. All the people generally and most willingly concurred. I have seen more than

¹ Fleming on Fulfilling of the Scriptures, vol. ii, 316.

a thousand persons all at once lifting up their hands, and the tears falling down their eyes.

The signing of the Covenant at Edinburgh is thus interestingly and beautifully described by Mr. Aiton in his life of Henderson. "The Presbyterians had crowded to Edinburgh to the number of sixty thousand, and on the 28th of February a fast had been appointed in the Grey Friars' church. Long before the appointed hour, the venerable church and the large open space around it were filled with Presbyterians from every quarter of Scotland. At two o'clock Rothes, Loudon, Henderson, Dickson, and Johnston arrived with a copy of the Covenant ready for signature. Henderson constituted the meeting by prayer "verrie powerfullie and pertinentlie" to the purpose on hand. The Covenant was read by Johnston, "out of a fair parchment about an cine squair." When the reading was finished, there was a pause, and silence still as death. Rothes broke it by requesting that if any of them had objections to offer he would now be heard "Few conies, and these few proposed but few doubts, which were soon resolved." The venerable Earl of Sutherland stepped forward, and put the first name to the memorable document. After it had gone the round or the whole church, it was taken out to be signed by the crowd in the churchyard. Here it was spread before them like another roll of the prophets, upon a flat gravestone, to be read and subscribed by as many as could get near it. Many in addition to their name wrote, "*till death,*" and some even opened a vein and subscribed with their blood. The immense sheet in a short time became so much crowded with names on both sides, and throughout its whole space, that there was not room left for a single additional signature. Zeal in the cause of Christ, and courage for the liberties of Scotland, warmed every breast. Joy was mingled with the expressions of some, and the voice of shouting arose from a few. But by far the greater number were deeply impressed with very different feelings. Most of them of all sorts wept bitterly for their defection from the Lord. And in testimony of his sincerity, every one confirmed his subscription by a

solemn oath. With groans and tears streaming down their faces, they all lifted up their right hands at once. When this awful appeal was made to the Searcher of hearts at the day of judgment, so great was the fear of again breaking the covenant, that thousands of arms which had never trembled even when drawing the sword on the eve of battle were now loosened at every mint. After the oath had been administered, the people were powerfully enjoined to begin their personal reformation. At the conclusion, every body seemed to feel that a great measure of the Divine presence had accompanied the solemnities of the day, and w'ith their hearts much comforted and strengthened for every duty, the enormous crowd retired about nine at night. Well might Henderson boast in his reply to the Aberdeen doctors, that "this was the day of the Lord's power, wherein we saw his people, most willingly offer themselves, in multitudes, like the dew-drops of the morning—this was indeed the great day of Israel, wherein the arm of the Lord was revealed—the day of the Redeemer's strength, on which the princes of the people assembled to swear their s'd'egiance to the King of kings." Earlier by thirteen years than the period of which we have last been speaking was the well known outpouring of the Spirit at Stewarton and its vicinity. Here the principal human agent was Mr. Dickson of Irvine, at one time professor of Moral Philosophy in the university of Glasgow.

Mr. Dickson's ministry, says Wodrow, was singularly countenanced of God.—multitudes were convinced and converted, and few that lived in his day were honoured to be instruments of conversion more than he. Not a few came from distant places, and settled in Irvine, that they might be under his ministry. Upon the Sabbath evenings, many persons under soul distress used to resort to his house after sermon, when usually he spent an hour or two in answering their cases, and directing and comforting those who were cast down, in all which he had an extraordinary talent. For a considerable time few Sabbaths passed without evident tokens of the peculiar presence of the Spirit, with the soul of this meek and holy man, and the souls of his audi-

tory. And being induced thereby to begin a weekly lecture on the market-day, he found an opportunity of commending the truth to the people of Stewarton and other adjoining parishes; thus, like a spreading moorburn, to use the words of Fleming, the power of godliness did advance from one place to another, which put a marvellous lustre on these parts of the country, the savour whereof brought many from other parts of the land to see the truth. It is interesting to know, that the latter end of this eminent saint, and “winner of souls,” realised the promise, “Mark thou the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace.”¹ Livingston, coming to visit him on his death-bed, and enquiring how he found himself, he said, I have taken all my good deeds, and all my bad deeds, and cast them together in a heap before the Lord, and have betaken me to Jesus Christ, and in him have full and sweet peace. Within a few days after, he died.

Most of you have heard of the glorious revelation of the Lord’s arm in the parish of Shotts. It occurred at the dispensation of the Supper in June, 1630. The circumstance that several of the then persecuted ministers would take part in the solemn services having become generally known, a vast concourse of godly persons assembled on this occasion from all quarters of the country. To many of them the Sabbath was a blessed day—their communion was indeed with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ: nor do we marvel, when we remember that among those who dispensed the bread of life was venerable Bruce—and that several days had been spent in social prayer, preparatory to the service. In the evening, instead of retiring to rest, the joyful multitude divided themselves into little bands, and spent the whole night in supplication and praise. The Monday was consecrated to thanksgiving, a practice not then common, and proved the great day of the feast. After much entreaty, John Livingston, chaplain to the Countess of Wigtown, a young man, and not ordained, agreed to preach. He had spent the night in prayer and conference—but as the hour of assembling approached, his heart quailed at the

¹ Psalm xxxvii, 37.

thought of addressing so many aged and experienced saints, and he actually fled from the duty he had undertaken. But just as the kirk of Shotts was vanishing from his view these words, "Was I ever, a barren wilderness or a land of darkness?" were borne in upon his mind with such force as compelled him to return to the work. He took for his text Ezekiel, xxxvi, 25, 26—and discoursed with power for an hour and half. "As he was about to conclude, a heavy shower made the people hastily take to their cloaks and mantles. They kept their places, however, and the preacher continued. If a few drops of rain from the clouds so discompose you, how discomposed will you be, how full of horror and despair if God should deal with you as you deserve! and thus he will deal with all the finally impenitent. God might justly rain fire and brimstone upon us, as upon the cities of the plain. The Son of God, by tabernacling in our nature, and obeying and suffering in it, is the only refuge, and covert from the storm, and none but penitent believers shall have the benefit of that shelter. In a similar strain he exhorted and warned for about an hour after his premeditated thoughts were exhausted—with great enlargement and melting of heart, and with such visible effect upon his audience as made it manifest, God was in the midst of them of a truth.' I can speak on sure ground, says Fleming, that near five hundred had at that time a most discernible change wrought on them, of whom most proved lively Christians afterwards. It was the sowing of a seed through Clydesdale, so that many of the most eminent Christians of that country could date, either their conversion, or some remarkable confirmation of their case, from that day.

At the distance of some twenty years from the immortal "Shott's Monday," we see another remarkable exemplification of the promise, "the wilderness shall rejoice and blossom as the rose," attendant on the labours of William Guthrie, minister of Fenwick. His character and success as a pastor are thus described by his biographer. "The heavenly zeal for the glory of his great Master which animated the labours of this excellent minister, his fervent love to the souls of men

dying in their sins, and his holy wisdom and diligence in reclaiming and instructing them, were so honoured by God and accompanied with the powerful influences of his Holy Spirit, that in a little time a noble change was wrought upon a barbarous multitude: they were almost *all* persuaded to attend the public ordinances, to set up and maintain the worship of God in their families; and scarce was there a house in the *whole* parish that did not bring forth some fruit of his ministry, and afford some real converts to a religious life." "The fulness and freeness of his exhibition of Christ, together with the excellency of his preaching gift, did so recommend him to the affections of people, says Livingston, that they turned the corn field of his glebe to a little town, every one building a house for his family upon it, that they might live under the drop of his ministry." His large church was often crowded by great multitudes—it is further stated in his life—from Glasgow, Paisley, Lanark, Hamilton, and other distant places, deprived by persecution of the bread of life at home; and his strong clear voice enabled him to extend the profit of his discourse to the many hundreds who were obliged to stay without doors. "An extraordinary zeal then enlivened the souls of sincere Christians; they were animated by a warm affection to the truth, and an uncommon delight in hearing the joyful sound: and this made them despise the difficulties that lay in the way, so that it was their usual practice to come to Fenwick on Saturday, spend the greatest part of that night in prayer and conversation about the great concerns of their souls, attend on public worship on the Sabbath, dedicate the remainder of that holy day to religious exercises, and then on the Monday go home ten or twenty miles without grudging the fatigue of so long a way, the want of sleep and other refreshments, or finding themselves less prepared for any business through the week. A remarkable blessing accompanied ordinances dispensed to people who came with such a disposition of soul; *great numbers* were *converted* to the truth and many were built up in their most holy faith. A divine power animated the gospel that was preached, and exerted itself in a holy warmth and sanctified affections,

—a ravishing pleasure in divine fellowship,—and a noble joy and triumph in their King and Saviour, which were to *be visibly* discerned in the hearers: many went confirmed in the good ways of the Lord, strengthened and comforted against temporal fears and discouragements; and the fruits of righteousness discovered in the excellency of a holy conversation were a glorious proof of the sincerity of their profession and the wonderful success of Mr. Guthrie's ministry."

The Church of Ireland was privileged to share in those showers of blessing which at and near the time of the second Reformation—as in part we have seen—fell out so copiously on different portions of the vineyard in our native land. "I must instance (writes Mr. Fleming,¹) that solemn and great work which was in the Church of Ireland about the year 1628, and some years thereafter, which as many grave and solid Christians yet alive can witness, who were there present, was a bright and hot sun-blink of the gospel; yea, may-with sobriety be said to have been one of the largest manifestations of the Spirit and of the most solemn times of the down-pouring thereof that almost since the days of the apostles hath been seen, where the power of God did sensibly accompany the word with an unusual motion upon the hearers and a very great *tack* as to the conversion of souls to Christ; the goings of the Lord then full of majesty, and the shout of a king was heard in the solemn meetings of his people, that, as a judicious old Christian who was there did express it, he thought it was like a dazzling beam of God with such an unusual brightness as even forced bystanders to an astonishment; a very effectual door opened to the ministers of Christ in preaching the word, while the people might be seen hearing the same in a melting frame, with much tenderness of spirit; surely this was the very power of God, a convincing seal to the truth and ministry of his servants. I remember, among other passages, what a worthy Christian told me, how sometimes in hearing the word such a power and evidence of the Lord's presence was with it, that he hath been forced to rise and look through the church what the people

¹ Fulfilling of the Scriptures, v I. i, p. 356.

were doing, thinking from what he felt in his own spirit, it was a wonder that any could go away without some (hange upon them.—Then it was sweet to come thirty or forty miles to the solemn communions, and there continue from the time they came until they returned, without wearying or making use of sleep; jea, but little either meat or drink; and as some of them professed, did not feel the need thereof, but went away most fresh and vigorous; their souls so *filled* with the sense of God's presence." There are those among you, we doubt not, to whose minds this passage vividly recalls some of the deeply solemn scenes and circumstances which it was your privilege to witness last autumn at Kilsyth. As to those of you, if decided Christians, who have been conversant with revivals only through the medium of testimony, such representations will be exceedingly apt to present a certain cast of exaggeration; and hence arises, we apprehend, a strong obligation to embrace the opportunity of *seeing* a revival wherever in the course of Providence it is afforded.

The records of the Saviour's kingdom, in the 18th century, exhibit many of the brightest triumphs of Sovereign grace, in connection with the unwearied labours and unceasing prayers of such men as Whitefield, Wesley, and President Edwards, Walker of Truro, Venn of Huddersfield, Berridge of Everton, Charles of Bala, and Robe, M'Culloch, and Stewart in Scotland. But as the progress of the evening forbids the wish to follow the movements of any of these devoted soldiers of the cross in detail, let it suffice to mention a few particulars illustrative of the grand results of their glorious warfare. Mr. Walker, not the least distinguished of these worthies, speaking of the growth of a right spirit in his own heart, tells us, "As this work was going forward in myself, the people were made partakers of it; —by and by I began to deal with them as lost sinners, to beat down formality and self-righteousness, and to *preach Christ*The fruit of this, by the mighty working of the Spirit, quickly appeared. It was a new way to them; they were surprised and *grew angry*, not without an evident fear resting upon them, and an interesting curiosity to hear me again of this matter. I have

reason to judge that, almost *all* of them have been one time or other awakened more or less.....In the meantime, some more sensibly pricked in their hearts, came tome enquiring *what they must do?* The number of these continually encreasing, I thought my utmost diligence was needful towards them; they were universally ignorant in the grossest degree; I was glad to give them as many evenings in the week as I could spare, appointing them to attend me aftertheirwork was over..... I had from the first engaged them frequently to converse together, and pray with one another.....By the grace of God, the number whose *conduct* seemed to express a *lively* faith began now to be something considerable, for which reason it was thought advisable to form them into a religious society.....The number of members is now upwards of seventy; it was afterwards considerably encreased.” Of Berridge, Vicar of Everton, his biographer declares, “We learn from more sources than one, that he was in the first year (after beginning to preach the true gospel) visited by a thousand persons under serious impressions; and it has been computed, that under his own and the joint ministry of Mr. Hicks, about four thousand were awakened to a concern for their souls in twelve months.”

There is hardly upon record, a more evident and astonishing work of the Holy Spirit than that which accompanied the proclamation of the gospel by Whitefield and Wesley, to the colliers of Kingswood, near Bristol. “In the year 1739, when Whitefield intimated his intention of going to America to convert the savages, his friends at Bristol replied—what need is there of going abroad for this? Have we not Indians enough at home? if you have a mind to convert savages, go to the colliers of Kingswood.” The suggestion was not made in vain. “On Saturday, February 17th, 1739, Whitefield stood upon a mount in a place called Rose Green, his *first field pulpit*, and preached to about two hundred of these barbarous men, who being quite unprepared for his exhortations, were more astonished than impressed.” “His second audience at Kingswood consisted of two thousand individuals; his third, from four to five, and they went on encreasing to ten, fourteen, and twenty

thousand.....The first evidence he observed, of having made any impression on his rude auditors, was their deep silence; the next, and still more convincing, was his observation of the *white gutters* made by the tears which fell plentifully down their cheeks black and unwashed from the coal-pits” Wesley, by whom, on his removal to America, Whitefield was succeeded in this most interesting field of labour, speaking of the harvest which it yielded in return to their conjoint prayers and labours, says, “Few persons have lived long in the West of England, who have not heard of the colliers of Kingswood, a people famous from the beginning hitherto for neither fearing God nor regarding man; so ignorant of the things of God that they seemed but one remove from the beasts that perish. Many *last winter* used tauntingly to say of Mr. Whitefield, if he will convert heathens, why does he not go to the colliers of Kingswood? In spring he did so; when he was called away, others followed to compel them to come in; and by the grace of God their labour was not in vain. The scene is already changed: Kingswood does not now, as a year ago, resound with cursing and blasphemy; it is no more filled with drunkenness and uncleanness, and the idle diversions which naturally lead thereto. It is no longer full of wars and fightings, of clamours and bitterness, of wrath and envyings; peace and love are there; great numbers of people are mild, gentle, and easy to be entreated; they do not cry, neither strive, and hardly is their voice heard in the street, or indeed in their own wood, unless when they are at their usual evening devotion singing praise unto God their Saviour. That their children too might know the things which make for their peace, it was sometime since proposed to build a school house, and the foundation was laid in June last.....Thus we see, that in the middle of *February*, Kingswood was a wilderness, and that when the month of *June* arrived, it was already blossoming like the rose.” The following brief extracts from the letters of Charles of Bala, “the apostle of North Wales,” will enable you to form some idea of the great revival which took place under his ministry in North Wales; beginning in the year 1791. Let it be premised, that previ-

ous to this, Charles had made extraordinary and most successful exertions to instruct the young by means of *circulating*, and latterly of fixed week-night and Sabbath schools, which he frequently visited, and publicly catechised.....The Sunday schools, he observes, "and the public examination of them have undoubtedly done wonders in Wales, and have succeeded in moralizing the people, when all other means failed." In September, 1791, he writes in reply to some enquiries on the subject: "About the state of the churches in Wales I have *nothing* but what is favourable to communicate. At Bala, we have had a very great, powerful, and glorious outpouring of the Spirit on the people in general, especially on the children and young people. Some of the wildest and most inconsiderate young people of both sexes have been awakened. If the Lord should be pleased to continue the work as it has prevailed some weeks past, the devil's kingdom will be in ruins in this neighbourhood.—Ride on, ride on, thou King of glory! is the present cry of my soul day and night.....It is an easy work to preach the gospel here at this time; divine truths have their own infinite weight and importance on the minds of the people; beams of divine light, together with divine irresistible energy, accompany *every* truth delivered. It is glorious to see how the stoutest hearts are bowed down and the hardest melted: I would not be without seeing what I have lately seen, no, not for the world.....These are the blessed things I have to relate to you respecting poor Wales;—the Charity schools here are wonderfully blessed; children, that were before like jewels buried in rubbish, now appear with divine lustre and transcendent beauty; little children from six to twelve years old are affected, astonished, and overpowered; their young minds day and night are filled with nothing but soul.concerns. *All* I say is matter of fact; I have not exaggerated in the *least* degree, nor related more than a small part of the whole. The Lord hath done great things for us, and to him be all the praise." In a letter written to an eminent minister in Edinburgh the year following, he says, "that it was the work of God, I am not left to doubt in the least degree; it carries along with it every scrip-

tural satisfactory evidence that we can possibly desire,—such as deep conviction of sin, of righteousness, of judgment,—great reformation of manners, great love for and delight in the word of God, in prayer, in spiritual conversation, and divine ordinances. These, even in young persons, occupy the place and employ the time that was spent in vain diversions and amusements..... I am far from expecting that all who have experienced these impressions are savingly wrought upon and really converted: if that were the case, all the country must have been converted; for, at one time, there were but few who had not felt awful impressions on their minds, producing foreboding fears respecting their future existence in another world.”

A single remark of the celebrated Edwards, we have not time for more, will assist you in forming some general notion of the extent and character of the revival by which different parts of New England in America were visited early in this century. It is by the mixture of counterfeit religion with true—he observes in the treatise on ‘religious affections’—“that the devil hath hitherto had his greatest advantage against the cause of Christ. By this principally has he prevailed against revivals of religion that have been in our nation since the Reformation. By this he prevailed against New England, to quench the love and spoil the joy of her espousals about a hundred years ago. So the same cunning serpent hath suddenly prevailed to deprive *us* of that fair prospect we had a little while ago of a kind of *paradisaic* state of the church in New England.”

The permanent results of the great work of the Lord at Cambuslang in this neighbourhood in 1742 are thus stated by Mr. M’Culloch, the minister of the parish at the time. “Setting aside all those who appeared under awakenings here in 1742, who have since remarkably declined, there is a considerable number of the then awakened that appear to bring forth good fruits. I do not talk of them at random, nor speak of their number in a loose general way, but have now before me, at the writing of this, April 27, 1751, a list of about four hundred persons awakened here in 1742, who, from that time to the time of their death, or to this, that is,

for these nine years past, have been all enabled to behave in a good measure as becometh the gospel, by any thing I could ever see, and by the best information I could get concerning them." From a letter dated May 8, 1742, evidently written by a highly competent witness—we extract the following summary of the means, and preparations by which this wonderful work was preceded. "The sum of the facts I have represented is, that this work has been begun and carried on under the influence of the great and substantial doctrines of Christianity, pressing jointly the necessity of repentance towards God, of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and holiness in all manner of conversation; that it came after such preparations as an extensive concern about religion gradually increasing—together with extraordinary fervent prayer, (in large meetings) particularly relating to the success of the gospel."

"When Cambuslang¹ and other parishes were sharing so copiously of the Divine influence, it was matter of grief and discouragement to Mr. Robe, then minister of Kilsyth, that not one of his people seemed as yet at all to be awakened. He continued to wrestle much in prayer, and still with affectionate earnestness to exhibit to his people a full and a free salvation. The Lord did in due time send a plenteous rain. The first symptoms were the reviving of many of the meetings for prayer, the institution of some new associations, and particularly of one composed exclusively of females from ten to sixteen years of age. These movements were hailed as the harbingers of brighter days." In his narrative of the blessed effects of the mighty change then approaching, Mr. Robe states, "On May 16, I preached as I have done for some time, on Gal. iv, 19: My little children, of whom I travail in birth until Christ be formed in you. While pressing all the unregenerate to seek to have Christ formed in them, an extraordinary power of the Divine Spirit accompanied the word preached. There was a great mourning in the congregation as for an only son. Many cried out, and these not only women, but some strong and stout-hearted young men." The number of individuals awrakened in

¹ History of Revivals, &c., p. 267.

the course of the revival now decidedly begun, and who afterwards made a public profession of faith in Christ, was about three hundred, and "by various authentic documents recorded in Mr. Robe's narrative, it is ascertained, that the conversation of *all* of these was such as became the gospel. The moral influence on the parish generally was remarkable." Among the instances, he writes, "of the good fruits of this work may be mentioned visible reformation from many open sins, particularly cursing, swearing, and drinking. In social meetings edifying conversation has taken the place of what was frothy, foolish, or censorious. Instead of worldly and common discourse on the Lord's day there is that which is spiritual and good to the use of edifying.

There is a general desire after public ordinances. The generality of the people attend the preaching of the word during the week as regularly as upon the Lord's day. The worship of God is set up and maintained in many families who formerly neglected it. There are many new societies for prayer, composed by individuals of all ages. Former feuds and animosities are in a great measure laid aside and forgot, and this hath been the most peaceable summer among neighbours that was ever known in this parish. I have heard little or nothing of that pilfering and stealing that was so frequent before this work began. Yea, there have been several instances of restitution, and some of these showing consciences of no ordinary tenderness."

The "grace that bringeth salvation," so abundantly shed down at this remarkable time on Cambuslang and Kilsyth, was extended in various lesser degrees to several other parishes in the same district, and to some also at a greater distance. In the parish of Campsie about a hundred souls were awakened, and nearly the same number in Calder in the immediate neighbourhood. The revival at Calder began under singular circumstances. The Minister, Mr. Warden, was in the practice of delivering a week-day lecture in a small village at some distance from the church. This lecture he intimated from the pulpit on the Sabbath. Discouraged by the small attendance for a while past, he said sorrowfully one day in jiving the intimation, "But

why should I tell you, for you will not come." On the usual day he proceeded to the village resolved to announce that the service would be given up. Touched with pity for the grief of their faithful pastor, the people said one to another, "Poor body, let us go this time." Not aware of this resolution, he came unprovided with a discourse, and was not a little disconcerted when he found the room crowded. "Oh, cried he with characteristic simplicity, I have often been here with a sermon when there were no folks, and now, when there are plenty of folks, I have no sermon." "He retired into a wood at a little distance, earnestly to implore Divine direction and blessing. Immediately he returned and preached from these words, which had been suggested to his mind while in the wood: "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of men."¹ From this text he opened up the fulness—the freeness of the gospel proclamation. The Holy Spirit accompanied the word. Many were effectually humbled and ultimately made to bow to the sceptre of Jesus."² Compassion for their disappointed minister was the ostensible cause of the people of Calder assembling in such numbers on this important day; but when we think of the great things which God had been doing all around, and of the many prayers which along with those of its affectionate pastor, doubtless arose from the awakened parishes on behalf of this heretofore desert locality, we may well suppose that, however unconscious of it, there was a higher and holier force concerned in bringing them together.—We ought narrowly and often to examine our motives for frequenting public ordinances, and earnestly to pray they may be such as God approves: at the same time it is very comfortable to reflect that many who enter the sanctuary in the most

¹ Proverbs, viii, 4.

² Revival Tracts, No. III. It may be proper to state that the Tracts here and in other places of this Lecture referred to under this title are those published under the superintendence of the Glasgow Revival Tract Society: and, also that the work to which reference is repeatedly made, and to which we have been much indebted, under the abridged title of *History of Revivals, &c.*, is that recently published by Mrs. Duncan of Ruthweil, entitled "*History of Revivals of Religion in the British Isles.*"

careless and ungodly frame have cause, to the praise of Sovereign grace, to say It is good for me to be here; "This is none other but the house of God and this is the gate of heaven."

In the parish of Gargunnoch about a hundred souls were at this time brought under saving convictions, the greater number of them while attending the dispensation of the Supper at different places in the neighbourhood.¹ "The case of the parish of Baldernock deserves to be particularly noticed. Few of the people had visited those places in which the revivals took place: and although for some years there had been no regular pastor, yet about ninety individuals were brought under the quickening influence of the Spirit of promise. Mr. Wallace, who had previously laboured amongst them in holy things for about fifty years, had been faithful and zealous, and perhaps the many conversions which now took place might be remotely traced to his ministrations. But in the absence of a regular ministry, God, who can accomplish his purposes of mercy with weak as well as with powerful means, raised up and qualified Mr. James Forsyth, who occupied the humble but honourable station of parochial schoolmaster, as the instrument of carrying forward the good work, which had made such advances in the surrounding country. He was a man long distinguished for godliness. His experience of the preciousness of Christ could not but prompt him to embrace the opportunity which his profession afforded of diffusing the knowledge of that name and of that salvation which he knew to be so essential to the true happiness of the people with whom he was brought in contact. He partook of the joy with which the news of God's dealings with his church was received by such as had themselves tasted that the Lord is gracious; and in the peculiar circumstances of the parish, he endeavoured by every mean in his power to infuse the same spiritual life among the people. He spoke more especially to the young with earnestness and affection about their lost condition by nature and practice;—about the love of God manifested in the gift of his Son for the salvation of sinners ready

¹ Revival Tracts, No. III.

to perish; and the Holy Spirit was pleased to convey these simple but impressive truths to the souls of his interesting charge, who in their turn were enabled to leave a testimony to the truth in the consciences of the adult population. Respecting the people, in general, of this parish, Mr. Forsyth thus writes, "Some were awakened at Cambuslang, &c.; but the greater number at the private meetings for prayer. These meetings were held twice a week, and all were admitted who chose." "These meetings were eminently countenanced. Many who attended were blessed with the communications of Divine grace, and made to experience the image and the earnest of the fellowship that is above." By consulting No. X of the "Revival Tracts," which gives a most interesting account of a revival in Skye in 1812—14, you will find that much humbler instruments still than Mr. Forsyth of Baldernock are sometimes employed by the Spirit of all grace in distributing to perishing souls the bread of life.

The materials for indefinitely prolonging these illustrations of the power and the glory of gospel-grace are so ample, so interesting, that it is with much reluctance we forbear the further application of them. Between the point at which we pause and the present day, there may be traced—in conspicuous and refreshing contrast to the wintry coldness, sterility, and death which have too generally prevailed throughout the church—many a spot of living green, many a gleam of millennial glory. Volumes would not suffice were we fully to declare and speak of all the wonders which during that interval the Lord hath wrought in our own eminently favoured land, in the sister kingdoms on the Continent, in India, Ceylon, the South sea islands, and above all, in the United States of America. But we must no longer trespass on your patience; nor is it necessary,—enough having been already said to establish beyond controversy the fact, that agreeably to his word of promise so largely set before you in the preceding lecture, Jehovah has often in a marked and extraordinary manner come down and comforted "his heritage w'hen U was weary." Again and again have we seen light arise suddenly "on them who sat in the shadow of death,"—"the thirsty land be-

come springs of water,"—the smoking flax blown into a flame,—the dry bones of the valley "stand up an exceeding great army." In a way of all others fitted the best to impress our untoward hearts, we have been taught that there are no depths of declension, of debasement, of apparent hopelessness, from which the faithful and the covenant-keeping God cannot ransom and raise up his people,—no tract in all the wide wilderness of sin so desolate, that his blessing cannot swiftly clothe it in the beauty and the bloom of Eden.—Nor less forcibly have we been taught that the bestowment of that blessing, "e'en life for evermore," is associated *with*, suspended as it were *upon*, the use of certain divinely-appointed means, namely, prayer and the promulgation of the word of truth. These can of themselves do nothing but in the spiritual world neither is any thing done without them. There is no merit in prayer, no inherent efficacy in the soundest and most zealous preaching. Nevertheless, as the ordinances of the King of kings, the prayer of faith and the preaching of the truth, are honoured to do great things—to do all things. As the instrument the one of procuring the Holy Spirit,—as the grand medium the oilier, by which his benign and omnipotent energy is exerted on the souls of men—how often have we this evening been called to mark their power to remove mountains, to waken the dead, to lay the strongholds of Satan in the dust. But is it certain that the use of these means will always be productive of like results, that the prayer of faith will ever avail to bring down the Spirit, and that his blessing will ever avail to render the "joyful sound" effectual to the conversion of sinners and the edifying "of the body of the Lord?"—Ascertain as that God cannot lie, and cannot change; as certain as it is that his kingdom *shall* come, his will be done on all the earth. Then, brethren, do you feel an interest in the coming of that kingdom—in the rapid augmentation of its power in believers; and the extension of its holy and blessed sway over the impenitent? In other words, would you see a great and speedy revival of the Lord's work,—a manifest, an extensive, a universal revival?—ye are not straitened in him, see that ye be not straitened in yourselves. The more in

every *sense* of the word you in this case desire, the more you shall have—the more you ask, the more assuredly you will obtain. Awake therefore, Christian brethren, from the lethargy of unbelief;—arise, animated by the many wonders of mercy ye have this night been called to observe flowing forth upon the church, and the world, through the instrumentality of prayer, and the proclamation of the truth; arise and ply these mighty instruments in earnest—with the energy of full assurance that in proportion as they are strenuously and extensively employed, with continual dependence on the work of Emmanuel, they will prove effectual to advance the Divine glory, to secure the peace, the happiness, and the salvation of men. The working of one of these instruments, the proclamation of the gospel, is no doubt peculiarly the province of a comparatively small class among us; but there is no Christian who may not vitally contribute by his prayers to the greater efficiency of the public preaching of the cross, and who moreover has not numberless opportunities in other circumstances, to teach, to warn, to exhort,—which he is solemnly bound to improve.—And the more to encourage the hearts, to animate the prayers, and inflame the zeal of all godly ministers, elders, and people, in pointing out the way of life, it ought to be known that scarcely a day at present passes which does not bring us tidings from different parts of the country, of another and another repetition of those glorious and not soon to be forgotten scenes which recently in our neighbourhood and latterly at our very doors, have created so profound an interest and communicated so powerful an impulse to the Saviour's cause. And what, my friends, would be the effect upon that cause—which we profess to hold so dear—throughout the earth, were this great Protestant city, on a scale proportioned to its magnitude and influence, to become the scene of a decided revival—were it suddenly from its centre to its farthest suburbs to become instinct with spiritual vitality and heavenly joy; were the great majority of its families, instead of living as now in sin and going down in sorrow and despair to the grave, to become the penitent, the peaceful, and devoted followers of the Lamb;—were the Spirit of the

gospel to become predominant in its busy streets and in the ships that bear its merchandise to the ends of the earth, and were there written upon the great mass of its gold and silver and precious things, "holiness unto the Lord!" O my friends, which of you for the hastening of a day so bright, so blessed, will not emulate the "imperishable testimony" borne to that woman who came aforehand to anoint the Saviour's body to the burying,—"she hath done what she could."

LECTURE X.

Symptoms and Fruits of a Revival of Religion.

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“For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One shall say, I am the Lord’s; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob: and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.”—ISAIAH, xliiv, 3 5

IN order to render the Symptoms and the Fruits of a Revived state of a Church more clear and palpable, it would have been desirable, had the time permitted, to trace first of all the symptoms of an opposite state—of a low and dead condition of a church. I have no doubt, however, that this has been done already in the previous lectures. And I shall simply observe, in the most general manner, that a Dead Church may be known by such marks as these: The general prevalence of obscure and distant and shadowy thoughts of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and more particularly of the Person and Work of the Holy Ghost: the prevalence of slight thoughts and views of the odiousness and danger of sin—general indifference about sin—tampering with sin—slight thoughts of the evil and danger of it: low and unscriptural views of Christian privilege and character—scarce one in fifty communicants feeling, that to be a Christian is to be a citizen of heaven, an heir of glory, a temple of the Holy Ghost, a king and a priest unto God,—the church confounded with the world—nobody able to find out where the people are who are styled in Scripture “the salt of the earth,” the “light of the world,” the “living epistles of Christ, known and read of all men:” a slothful and incredulous use of the means of grace—some

of them wholly neglected, the rest used with little heart and little faith: conformity to the world in its corrupt maxims, amusements, and practices; and in fine, indifference about the conversion of the world,—even of the nearest relatives, acquaintances, and friends. Such being at least among the more leading symptoms of a dead church, the subject of our enquiry to-night is this—when the Spirit of the Lord comes down in infinite mercy to revive a church, what will be the symptoms, and what the fruits of his glorious life-giving presence and operations—what the symptoms and fruits of a revival?¹ “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One shall say, I am the Lord’s; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall Subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.”

I. 1. The first symptom which I mention, is *an unusual thirst for the preaching of the word, and unusual meltings of soul under it*. Observe how it is with the new-born babe. It thirsts, by the power of an irresistible instinct, after its mother’s milk, the destined food and nourishment of its infant life. Just so it is with the heaven-born soul,—with the new-born revived church. It thirsts, by the force of a resistless spiritual instinct, after “the sincere milk of the word,” the food and nourishment of the immortal soul. In dead souls and dead churches, there is nothing even approaching to a *thirst* for the preaching of the word. The people come to the house of God, not to satisfy an appetite, but to discharge a duty. The most solemn and affecting truths fall powerless on their ears. There are no meltings, no subduings of soul under them. They are scarce listened to without impatience, unless there be something remarkable and exciting in the style and manner of address. Very possibly, eloquence may moisten the eyes and touch the feelings of the people; but the most affecting truths of God fail of reaching their hearts. Nothing seems much worth attending to which wants the charm of novelty

¹ Isaiah, xliv, 8-5.

Services at all out of the fixed routine of time and place are viewed with indifference, if not dislike. In short, there is nothing at all resembling an appetite, a thirst for the word; there is no deep, soul-penetrating, soul-subduing interest felt in hearing it. The whole of this is reversed in a revived, a living church. The souls of the people there open at once to the word of God, melt and bend beneath the most simple truths presented in the simplest scripture dress; every opportunity is eagerly embraced; new opportunities are desired and longed for; the word is drunk in with an avidity and delight before unknown. Those words describe the experience of multitudes, "My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times." "I opened my mouth and panted, I longed for thy commandments." In the account of the island of Arran, of date 1812, we read: "For some months after the commencement of the awakening, the subjects of it manifested an uncommon thirst after the means of grace. Both old and young flocked in multitudes to hear the word of God. His house, and the place employed for private meetings, were frequently so crowded that the people, as it were, trod one upon another. To travel ten or fifteen miles to hear sermon was considered as a very small matter." "They longed for the return of the Sabbath: They rejoiced when it was said to them, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord.' They eagerly sought after renewed opportunities of receiving spiritual instruction. Their desire was so great as not to be easily satisfied. In our religious assemblies at this time some might be seen filled with divine love, others with fear; some rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, and others trembling lest they should come short of it." I might give many other examples to the same effect. Let one suffice from the account of Skye. "It was a common thing, as soon as the Bible was opened, after the preliminary services, and just as the reader began" —here, you will observe, it was the simple reading of the word without preaching; yet such was the power upon the minds of the people, that "it was a common thing, as soon as the Bible was opened, after the preliminary services, and just as the reader

began, for great meltings to come upon the hearers. The deepest attention was paid to every word as the sacred verses were slowly and solemnly enunciated. Then the silent tear might be seen stealing down the rugged but expressive countenances turned upon the reader, and so on. "It was often a stirring sight to witness the multitudes assembling during the dark winter evenings—to trace their progress, as they came in all directions across moors and mountains, by the blazing torches which they carried to light their way to the places of meeting. The word of the Lord was precious in those days-, and personal inconvenience was little thought of when the hungering soul sought to be satisfied." Unusual thirst for the preaching of the word, and meltings of soul under it.

2. A second symptom, to which I invite your attention, is *the prevalence of anxious enquiries about salvation*. How is it, in this respect, in a dead state of a church? I fear I can tell you, my friends, from a good deal of painful experience. The minister preaches to his people from Sabbath to Sabbath, that "except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." He addresses them in such solemn words as these—"Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." He preaches the gospel to them, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Well, he finds after every examination he can make, that the mass of his hearers remain very much as they were before: no awakening of souls to any real belief in these things; no general deep concern among the people regarding them. All things, from week to week, and from Sacrament to Sacrament, seem to jog on very much in the same uniform course with scarce any perceptible alteration. I am quite well aware that more good may be accomplished under a man's ministry than he has the means of knowing. But it is just as clear to my mind, that if there were any thing like an extensive awakening of souls from the death of sin, it could not be concealed from one anxiously on the outlook to perceive it. It would appear in many ways not to be misunderstood; it would appear in evident irrepressible concern and anxiety about salvation; it would appear in frequent

applications by people to ministers and others for spiritual advice; feelings of false delicacy and shame would be thrown aside; persons under concern of soul, in place of allowing their feelings to lie pent up within their breasts, there, perhaps, to languish and die, would unfold them to those in whom they had confidence, "asking the way to Zion with their faces thitherward." "The watchmen that go about the city found me, *to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul lovech?*" The awakened hearers of Peter on the day of Pentecost cried out as one man, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They revealed their anxiety to those who had been the means of awakening it. "They said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" By abundant examples we might show that so it has been, and will be, in every instance of a revived church. The time obliges me to pass to a

3. Third, and the only other symptom which I mention, namely, *an earnest general desire to give vent to the feelings in Prayer, secret and social*. If the word, brethren, is the milk, the nourishment of the new-born soul—the revived church, Prayer is the element it breathes in, the very breath itself of the awakened, regenerated soul. "Behold he prayeth," was said of Saul instantly on his conversion. No sooner has a man been quickened to realising vivid perceptions of God and sin and eternity, than he pours his feelings instinctively forth in prayer. All set forms of words are cast away. There is no room for them. The prayers of an awakened soul are cries for deliverance: groanings that cannot be uttered take the place of customary phrases and expressions. The prayers of living souls are these—"I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee as a thirsty land. Hear me speedily, O Lord, my spirit faileth; hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto those that go down unto the pit." The same character of course must belong to the revived church. In dead churches there is little prayer; and what there is, is cold and formal and listless. Talk in such churches of a man, under any circumstances, spending whole hours or nights together in prayer, and you are set down as a madman. No sympathy is felt with any-

thing of this kind. Nights can be spent in revelry and carnal mirth. A night spent in communion with the adorable God,—in seeking the welfare of an imperishable spirit, is the next door to insanity. If there is little secret prayer in dead churches, there is perhaps still less social prayer. It is a melancholy and scarcely credible fact, which I have, however, on authority I can truly say, that after minute and accurate inquiry made but a few months ago in Edinburgh, only *four* meetings for social prayer could be found in the whole of that city in connection with the Established church. It is otherwise now, I am glad to say. But so it was only a few months ago. Oh, how different would be the state of things in a revived, a living church! To give but one instance out of many before me,—Mr. Halley thus writes in the account of Muthill, 1743: “Thirteen societies for prayer have been recently instituted, and a new one is about to be established. I cannot express how much I am charmed with the young people.” “Oh, to hear the young lambs crying after the great Shepherd,—to hear them pouring out their souls with such fervour, with such beautiful expressions, with such copiousness and fulness, did not only strike me with admiration, but melted me into tears. I wished in my heart that all contradictors, gainsayers, and blasphemers of this work of God had been where I was that night.”

II. And now, in passing to what will require a somewhat fuller notice—the *Fruits* of a Revival—it is proper to observe at the outset, that the distinction between symptoms and fruits is simply this—that while symptoms belong rather to the condition of a church in the course of revival, marking the passage of it from the one of the two states to the other, fruits are rather to be understood of those fixed characteristic features of a work of divine grace in the souls of men, which vary but little with mere changing circumstances, and form the grand standing tests and evidences of the reality of religion, alike in individual souls, and in the churches viewed collectively.

1. The first of them which I mention, is *profound sorrow and shame in the view of former estrangement*

from God. The Scriptures are perfectly clear and express on this point." I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication." And what shall be the fruit,—what the result of this outpouring of the Holy Ghost? Is it joy simply? Is it change of conduct and life simply? Nay, joy were but delusion in this case apart from sorrow; change of conduct were but hypocrisy without grief and shame for conduct past. "I will pour upon them the Spirit of grace—and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, *and they shall mourn for him,*"—not believe on him simply, but *mourn* for him,—mourn for *him*, for dishonours done to *him*,—for ignominy cast upon *him*,—for miserable unbelief, impenitence, estrangement from God in time past. So in many other parts of the prophetic books, when God is promising to pour his Spirit upon the house of Israel, we find such words as these—"they shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them." "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus." "Thou shalt remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of shame." "Ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your abominations." Wherever there is a genuine work of the Spirit of God, Christian souls revived, will be disposed to say with Job, "I abhor myself,"—with Asaph, "I was as a beast before thee,"—with Ephraim, "I was ashamed, yea even confounded,"—with the publican, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." Converted souls will look back with loathing on one continued course of dishonours done to the glorious God. They will see an unspeakable depth of meaning in that question of an Apostle—"What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed; for the end of those things is death?" They will enter deeply into the words of another Apostle, "For the time past of our lives may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles:"—as a little boy with whom I conversed lately, —on my saying to him, Well, my boy, it is not too soon to have given yourself to Christ,"—"too long," said he, "too long!" "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy

son." Yes, dear brethren, there are "stony-ground" hearers, that "hear the word, and anon with joy" in a sort "receive it." But their joy is altogether selfish and superficial. It is unmixed with sorrow. They sow not in tears; and therefore they reap not in joy. They "have no root in themselves, and in time of temptation they fall away." How is it in this respect, let me ask, with you? As to our congregations at large, there is no difficulty in seeing what this text says of them. We shall then have revived churches, when we have weeping, mourning churches. "In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem; and the land shall mourn." "They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them." "All those with whom I conversed," says Mr. Halley of Muthill, "appeared to be touched to the quick,—the arrows of the Almighty shot to their very hearts,—trembling like the jailor, and crying out against sin;"—sorrow and shame in the view of former estrangement from God.

2. But a second fruit of Revival, inseparably connected with this, is *hearty renunciation of sin, and dedication to God*. To mourn for sin without forsaking it, is a contradiction, an impossibility. Sin may cleave to a man who mourns over it: but that is a very different thing from his cleaving to the sin. A man may *seem* to mourn over sins he will not forsake. But he does not really mourn for the sins, but only for something that happens to be associated with them. I knew the case of a person who, bathed in tears, cried aloud "is there no mercy for me?" But God was not in the tears; for when the same person w^{as} told, in reference to a particular course of sin, that it must be abandoned,—that Christ would save men from their sins, but not *in* them, the message was despised, and the friend that brought it dismissed with expressions of anger. Another, on the contrary, subdued by the Spirit's grace, while engaged in his ordinary occupations, came instantly and made open confession of a sin which he had long and stoutly denied. Zaccheus, converted, exclaims, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold." Ephraim

shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?" We just now found Ephraim bemoaning himself. He is not content, however, with that. Ashamed of the sin, as well as afraid of the punishment, he exclaims—What have I to do any more with idols? I cast them away—I have done with them for ever. "Depart from me, ye evil-doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God." It is not so much, however, the simple renunciation of sin that marks the work of God's grace in the soul, as the surrender of the soul itself to God, which includes the other, and decisively stamps it with the seal of the Holy Spirit. It is quite possible to turn at least from some sins, without taking God in the place of all! It is not so much the "turning from idols" simply, as turning to God from idols, to serve the living and true God," that decisively marks the work of grace. The text affords the finest of all illustrations here. In the third chapter, we have the promise of the Holy Spirit—"I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground." What shall be the fruit—what the certain immediate result? Look at verse fifth. "One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." "One shall say, I am the Lord's." I belong to him: by creation, redemption, self-consecration, I am his property—I yield myself to his service, "I am the Lord's and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob"—whose God was the Lord; "and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord,"—not content with saying, "I am the Lord's," he shall, by a solemn deed and bond, written and subscribed with his hand, give himself away to the Lord—"and surname himself by the name of Israel." Do you know anything of this fruit, brethren? I am very desirous that we should not speculate this evening, but try ourselves by each several fruit as it comes before us. I have no doubt that many of you, for instance at the Lord's table, have taken up the position of consecrated souls—consecrated and given up to God for all eternity. Were you distinctly aware that that was your position? Are

you prepared still to stand to it? Will you go to your chambers this night, and looking it full in the face, with all its duties, conflicts, privileges, will you solemnly take it up anew, saying, "My beloved is mine, and I am his;" "O Lord, I am thy servant;" "Thou art my portion, O Lord; I have said that I would keep thy word;" "I have sworn and I will perform it, tha* I will keep thy righteous judgments"?"

3. A third fruit of revival is *a high and loving esteem of communion with God, and all divine ordinances and means of grace*. I spoke, under the head of Symptoms, of an unusual thirst for the preaching of the Word,—a thirst betokening the passage of a church out of one condition into another. What I now speak of is something different from this. It is that fixed, habitual delight in the ordinances of God, which continues to characterise converted living souls, when possibly both, the first intensity of the thirst, and many things connected with the manner of satisfying it, have passed away. What I speak of is the state of mind expressed in words like these: "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth." "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life:" "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!" Wherever there is a genuine work of God in the soul, there will infallibly be a high regard for the sanctuary of God, for the Sabbath of God, for the mercy-seat of God, for the word of God, for the holy table of God, for the very instruments employed and blessed of God to the soul's eternal welfare. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that publish the gospel of peace!" But this fruit does not come out in its full shape and character until, along with the ordinances, we have taken into view the fellowship of the God of them. The delight of the living soul is in the God of the ordinances. It esteems them only as means of enjoying Him. It loves the sanctuary, to behold His beauty,—the communion table, as a place of meeting with Him,—the Sabbath, for the Lord of the Sabbath,—the messengers, for their message—their work's sake. "I will go about the city," says the Spouse; "in

the streets and in the broad way I will seek *Him* whom my soul loveth:" "Let *Him* kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: "I sat down under *His* shadow with great delight/' Know you any thing of this fruit* brethren? Do you pant and breathe after a nearer fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ? Know you what this high and loving esteem is, of communion with God, and all divine ordinances and means appointed to maintain and to advance it?

4. But a fourth fruit of revival to which I would ask your attention, is *a spirit of charity and mutual forbearance, of tenderness and brotherly love*. We find the apostle expressly saying that the "fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness." Observe the account given of the Christian church immediately on the outpouring of the Spirit at the day of Pentecost:¹ "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." Especially observe the fourth chapter:² "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness; and the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common: neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold; and laid them down at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. Of course there were several peculiarities here belonging to the early church, which are not designed for our imitation; but the spirit of unity and harmony, "one heart and one soul"—the spirit of generous, enlarged mutual charity, and tenderness and forbearance, is evidently set forth as the proper characteristic fruit of the Holy Ghost. The same effect infallibly will spring from the same cause in every country and every age. Individual souls, brought by the spirit of

1 Acts, ii, 44, 45. 2 Acts, iv, 32-35.

love and peace into the fellowship of "the Prince of peace," will burn with intense desire to see mercy and peace and love reigning among the children of men. Revived churches, in place of biting and devouring one another, will marvel at their former discords, weep over them, and strive *together* only for the faith of the gospel. I believe, brethren, that in one day the out-pouring of the Spirit would extinguish the fire of a hundred controversies. The grand spring of discord is pride. Men once brought to their knees,—like Ephraim, made to "smite upon their thigh,"—like Job, to "abhor themselves,"—might by duty be forced, but assuredly would not by inclination be drawn into the field of contention. What is the source of many of our keenest controversies? It is the low state of vital religion; the Spirit of the Lord is not with us; the soul wants occupation; there is little communion with God, little striving against sin, little pressing after conformity to the Divine image. Disputes and discords rush in to fill up the very vacuum. In such a soil, to change the figure, disputes of their own accord spring up in rank luxuriance. I am quite well aware that, in existing circumstances, many controversies must be continued; but let the church only be revived—let a spirit of faith and holiness be but extensively poured forth—and the circumstances will change; and we shall find far too much to do in setting ourselves against the common enemy, to have either leisure or heart for conflicts and contentions among ourselves. "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul." "From the first," says Mr. Burns, in his account of Kilsyth, "the people of the Dissenting congregation seemed interested in the work equally with our own; and there appears to this day to be much of the spirit of love diffused among us. The state of society is completely changed; politics are quite over with us; they who passed each other before are now seen shaking hands, and conversing about the all-engrossing subject." As to charity, in the more limited sense of the word, I cannot help reading a line or two from the account of Lewis:—"It has long been the custom to make a col'lection at the Thursday lecture for the most necessitous

persons in the district where the lecture is held; and thus, without poor rates, these people support their own poor. For many years they have contributed £13 or upwards to the Gaelic School Society, sometimes £16; and one year, when the Society was in difficulty, the contributions amounted to £20. On transmitting £16, which was the sum collected in Uig in 1830, Mr. M'Leod remarks—1 Considering the circumstances of the people, I bear testimony that their liberality and zeal in this case have cause to provoke very many to similar duties. It was most delightful to see the hoary head and the young scholar of eight or nine years joining in this contribution. The will preponderates over our purse, so that we cannot do exactly what we would.' In 1831, Mr. M'Leod, while he petitions that a teacher may not be removed from his present station for another year, says: 'A poor man in that station declared to me lately, that should the directors demand one of his cows, he would readily give one before he would part with the teacher.'" The greater part of this extract might with equal propriety have come under,

5. The next fruit of revival which I mention—namely, *zeal for the conversion of others, and especially of relatives and domestics*. When the Christians of the infant church of Jerusalem were scattered abroad in the persecution upon the death of Stephen, we are told that "they went every where preaching the word." Most of them, doubtless, were private Christians; yet wherever they went, it seems they carried the news of Christ along with them. "The love of Christ constrained them." "They could not but speak the things which they had seen and heard." They could not but say to men—"Come with us and we will do you good:" "We have found the Messiah:" "Come see a man that told me all that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" Full of the Holy Ghost, in their own simple way they preached the gospel. Ah! in dead churches it is deemed the business of ministers to "pluck men as brands from the burning." Private members will rather leave them there to perish than put their hands to the work. It is not their business, forsooth! Not their business, though they profess to believe that the Son of

God left the bosom of the Father, and died on the tree for their salvation I Was that *His* business? Not their business, while they profess to have given themselves and all that belongs to them to Christ, for his service and glory! Not their business, when the matter concerns their own nearest relatives—their parents, brothers, sisters, children! Is it possible that a man can be going to heaven himself, and be indifferent whether he meet his dearest friends there or no? Every living Christian will, in some sense or other, be a missionary; he will have the spirit of one; in various ways suitable to his station he will act as one. Every revived church will be a missionary church. In living churches, the glory of Christ and the salvation of men will be deemed the business of every man. No doubt, regard will be had to circumstances and stations; but of nothing, my friends, am I more firmly convinced than this, that that silence about God and divine things, which in dead churches is deemed the result of a prudent and sober discretion, is in the vast majority of cases, the result of nothing but an unworthy shame, a mean worldly policy, a base fear of man bringing a snare; and, worst of all, a cold and heartless indifference and apathy and unbelief. “I beheld transgressors and was grieved,” is the language of a living soul. “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done upon the earth, as it is done in heaven,” is the language of the revived church. God bids Ezekiel set his mark on the foreheads of “the men that sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land.” I pray you take this also home to your consciences. How feel you as to the honour of Christ and the salvation of men? Would it make you very joyful to hear of the decided conversion to God of some near relative who had been living without God, and without hope in the world? Is the advancement of Christ’s cause your happiness? Do you pray and long for the outpouring of his Spirit, for the coming of his kingdom? Does that which touches his honour and interest, touch the apple of your eye?

6. *There is only another, a sixth fruit of revival, which I notice: namely, a lender concern to adorn the gospel by an upright and conscientious discharge of ordinary*

duties. It is here, my brethren, that enthusiasts, hypocrites, and fanatics, all, in the end bring out the hollowness and rottenness of their professions. They often display a great deal of fervour and zeal in religious duties. They look uncommonly fair in the church and on their knees. But follow them to their houses, to their places of business, to the ordinary transactions of life; their religion is all on the outside; there is no principle at the bottom of it; they can cheat and lie and oppress the widow and the fatherless without compunction. It turns out a mere caricature, a mere mimic stolen copy of the work of God,—a delusion, a dream. On the other hand, says the apostle; “The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and *righteousness and truth.*” The work of the Holy Ghost is signally tested, evidenced, adorned, by a quiet and steady attention to the things which are “true and honest and just and lovely and of good report.” We are told of the Christians of the day of Pentecost, that they did eat their bread with gladness and *singleness of heart*, praising God, and *having favour with all the people.* The dreadful punishment of Ananias and Sapphira, while it shows, that there were not wanting hypocrites from the first, evinces in the clearest manner the general prevalence of integrity and truth in the early church. The exception powerfully confirms the rule. That the same fruit everywhere attends the outpouring of the Spirit, I shall only further establish, by an extract of the deepest interest, in regard to the Island of Lewis: “On occasion of a year of famine, the natives were put to great straits, and in danger of perishing for want. A vessel laden with meal was driven upon their shores by stress of weather. Did the famine-stricken natives seize on the ship, and lawlessly apply her cargo to the supply of their necessities? If they had, hunger would have formed for them a plausible excuse. Twenty years before they would doubtless have done so, and held themselves guiltless. But now it was not so. Every portion was accurately weighed or divided; and, as their necessities were so great that they had nothing then to pay, their affectionate minister gave a promissory note for it, knowing well that the excellent

lady whose property the lands are, would not suffer him to be impoverished. The people knew this also, but none took advantage of it: all were occupied in economising to the utmost, till one after another they had repaid their debt. Thus they obtained not only the great blessing of necessary food, but preserved the still greater blessing of integrity, and a spirit free from covetousness.

“It is a rule in this and the other isles of the Hebrides, that when a man meets a stray sheep on the moor, he is entitled to carry it home as his own, and obliged to make an equivalent offering in the collection for the poor on the Sabbath day. After the commencement of the revival in the Lewis, many came to confess to their minister the trouble of conscience they experienced by reason of having what they called a black sheep in their flocks—some having had them for several winters. The minister always directed them to make restitution now in the appointed way; and in one season, the sum of £16 was deposited in the plate. The number of sheep annually lost has wonderfully diminished since the commencement of the revival, leading to the conclusion, that the loss imputed to accident arose from dishonesty.”

I have thus mentioned, as the symptoms of a revival, an unusual thirst for the preaching of the word, and unusual meltings of soul under it; the prevalence of anxious enquiries about salvation; an earnest general desire to give vent to the feelings in prayer, secret and social. The fruits I have mentioned are these: profound sorrow and shame in the view of former estrangement from God; hearty renunciation of sin, and dedication to God; a high and loving esteem of communion with God, and all divine ordinances and means of grace; a spirit of charity and mutual forbearance, of tenderness and brotherly love; zeal for the conversion of others, and especially of relations and domestics; a tender concern to adorn the gospel by an upright and conscientious discharge of ordinary duties.

Brethren, how precious, how supremely desirable the revival everywhere of the work of God, since such are the fruits of it! How low also, by the contrast of those

fruits, does the actual state of religion appear, in our parishes and congregations generally! In both views, how loudly are we called to break forth, in earnest united prayer, "Oh that thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence!" "Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south." "O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy." "Come from the four winds, O Breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." Are there those in this house conscious to themselves, from the absence of the various fruits that have been mentioned, that they have never been raised from the death of sin? I would this night proclaim to them, the Lord Jesus, "the Resurrection and the Life." "Ye *will* not come to me," says he, "that ye might have life." Are there those who can but faintly hope that they exhibit them, without being confident that they do? Let them come anew to Christ, as poor ruined sinners; and let them press on towards the different fruits, one by one, crying for the outpouring of that Spirit from whom they flow, at once upon their own souls, and upon the Church and the World around them. "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them: I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water: I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together; that they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it."¹

¹ Isaiah, xli, 17-20.

LECTURE XI.

Mode of Conducting a Revival, so as to improve such a visitation of Divine grace.—Errors and Evils to be avoided

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“Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.”—1 THESSALONIANS, v, 17.

THE branch of the great subject of the revival of religion allotted to me, is “the Mode of Conducting a Revival, so as to improve such a visitation of grace, with the description of the Errors and Evils to be guarded against.” I feel my inadequacy to illustrate such a subject, and have endeavoured to approach to it in the spirit of humility, self-abasement, and prayer. There has, however, a previous question been moved, which may require, first of all, to be disposed of, namely,—“Is it right and lawful even to suggest or hint at such a thing as *conducting* a religious revival? Is it not presumptuous? Is it not incongruous to speak of conducting a work which belongs exclusively to God, and in which the Divine sovereignty is peculiarly prominent? This has been in some degree already set on, its true basis in discourses which have preceded in the course, particularly in that which illustrated the work of the Holy Spirit in the revival of religion, the sovereignty of God as connected with it, with the means of promoting the same glorious work.

I would now proceed more particularly to observe, in reference to the objection, that the figures which are employed by the great Teacher himself on the subject of which we are to treat seem to furnish us with the proper answer to the question and to the objections which have been started: “The wind bloweth where it listeth, thou hearest the sound, but canst not tell whence it

cometh, or whither it goeth: so is every one that is bora of the Spirit." Nevertheless human sagacity, industry, and activity, are much exercised and applied in making use of the winds in various branches of human enterprise, both on the land and on the water. And, although we cannot command the shower or the genial vegetative heat, the husbandman and the gardener know well, how with skill and activity to prepare the soil and to cast in the seed: "This also, saith the prophet,¹ cometh from the Lord of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working." The electrical fluid also has been, by later efforts of skill and ingenuity, directed in its course, so as to be conducted harmlessly along; and certain diseases to which the human frame is liable have been, by a well known process of medical skill and experiment, either greatly modified, or prevented, and all without any presumptuous attempt at interfering with the great-all-wise Disposer—the Lord of nature,—whose will gives law to the universe.

A revival of religion is an unusually successful dispensation of religious ordinances, the effect of a copious effusion of the influences of Divine grace; but in other respects it comes under the same rules with the more ordinary dispensation, where the effects of the word of grace are less obvious and prominent. In both it is obvious that human agency is employed, and wisdom and zeal and activity are not less called for in the one than in the other, or rather a greater degree of prudence, of wise consultation, and of untiring watchfulness and activity, are to be called forth in the period of an awakening than in ordinary times. "In all our ways, we are to acknowledge God, that He may direct our steps." The rules I have selected as the text are certainly peculiarly applicable in an awakened state of the church:—"Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things: hold fast that which is good," &c. Let us proceed therefore, by the Divine help and blessing — humbly and earnestly implored, First, to make some remarks upon the best mode of conducting and continuing a revival.

The first remark, I would venture to make is;—that

¹ Isaiah, xxviii, 29.

“holiness to the Lord ” should be inscribed upon *all* and every one engaged in such a work. The Lord is in his holy temple, *therefore* should we keep silence before Him. All who bear the vessels of the sanctuary should be holy. This no doubt is true at all times; but it holds still more pre-eminently and strikingly where the goings of the King of Zion are seen, with more than usual majesty and power, in his temple. “His arrows fly thick to pierce the hearts of the King’s enemies, and the people fall under him.” His word is “as a fire and a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces.” When all is thus, as it were, solemnising—the *presence of Deity* peculiarly felt—the great work of the ever-blessed Trinity going on with unusual manifestation;— when all heaven and hell, as well as earth, are, so to speak, in active and powerful movement;— when the trumpet of the gospel waxes louder and louder, when even Zion mount seems all on flame; and when an unusual influence attends the dispensation of the word, sealing it upon the souls both of sinners and of saints,—then the presence and the operations of the holders of office in the church, who are characterised by any thing but spirituality of mind, seems peculiarly incongruous.¹

When religion is in a low state, it is seldom that the office of Eldership is at all filled up, even as to numbers, in any kind of proportion to the extent or population of parishes or congregations. There is, for the most part, a melancholy skeleton of what may have been at one time a well-conditioned, and (fully organised, lively body of Minister and of Elders and Deacons, in those parishes where religion has been in a declining state. But even on the supposition, that the framework has continued after the animating spirit of religion has departed, the dead branches must be replaced with those which have life from the true Vine,—the mouldering stones changed into living ones, ere the church as a building—the temple of the Lord, can be restored to order or beauty. But perhaps in most cases where a “revival” takes place, one of the first movements is among *office-bearers*

¹ Deuteronomy, xxiii, 9.

of the church; and an improved state of that important department of Zion precedes any very decided or general improvement; in which case, these are "the Lord's remembrancers," ready to take their places on the watch-towers; and, making their rounds, "serving the Lord *instantly* day and night;" and, having grace and wisdom given to them according to their exigencies, they are in some degree prepared for the pleasant though difficult work to which they have been called. He "with whom is the residue of the Spirit" giveth more grace to the humble; and it shall be given in the hour and season of need how to speak, and to act, in answer to prayer—secret and united.

This leads to another remark, that *prayer, unceasing and earnest*, is *that* wherein the great strength of a revival of religion lieth. This it is which draweth down the pure, life-giving, animating influence which sets all hearts in motion, which kindles every sacrifice, which consecrates every tongue, and makes every house a Bethel, every heart an altar and a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour, and each body and soul a living temple, consecrated to the presence and residence of the ever-blessed Trinity. Then every address to the Lord is the offering of the heart perfumed with the incense of the Redeemer's merits; every act of worship is an immediate, felt, realized entry into the holiest of all—a beholding of the glory of God, and of Jesus Christ at his right hand—a blessed communion "with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ"—"a pouring out of the heart before the Lord." There is a nearness to God felt and enjoyed, and a persuasion that we *have* the petitions that we have desired of Him. I know not any thing by which the services of prayer and of preaching, which have been most evidently blessed for conversion and for edification, have been more peculiarly characterised and pre-eminently distinguished, than by this *prayerful, earnest* pleading with the Lord, that he may not leave to barrenness and coldness in the speaker, or to listlessness and unconcern in the hearers. It is not strength of arguing, or eloquence, in the ordinary sense of these expressions, which the Lord has owned and succeeded, but holy unction on the spirit—humble, fervent, wrest-

ling, that the word may not return void, and that none may go away unimpressed; and this in secret, and *before* and *after* the addresses from the pulpit or prayer meeting. With regard to the social meetings for prayer to which not a few have referred as the scene and the means of their first serious impressions, or where they found peace, the question has been put, How are they conducted, and what is their peculiarity, to which such more than usual success may be, under the blessing of God, attributed? The answer is in sum this; That they have not been so much for *increase* of knowledge and of experience in the Christian life, as for promoting lively personal religion, and to bring those to the *point* who have been, it may be, going *about it and about it*, without ever declaring on the Lord's side. Fellowship meetings, properly so called, of Christian friends, for growth in grace and deeper insight into divine things, useful as they are, yet are *not* those which have among us been referred to; but those into which mere enquirers have been admitted, yea, which they have been solicited to attend. Some we know disapprove of this kind of prayer meetings as of a nature too open, and as wanting in correct views of Christian character, in allowing those to be present among the people of God who have not made any serious profession, and who may go away and bring discredit on the good cause. But perhaps this solution may be allowed, that prayer meetings of the nature now described, and fellowship meetings, are each in their place scriptural and useful: and, perhaps that which might not be expedient in one grade of society, may suit another. We have in our view chiefly those in the humbler walks of life, who are much more in the way of familiar and unceremonious converse with each other, and much less shackled by forms than those in a more elevated station. The meetings referred to are not so much for mutual religious fellowship, and the comparing of passages of Scripture or of experience, as for immediate addresses in prayer and praise, interspersed with a few verses of Scripture, comments and controversy excluded. Certain it is, that among us not a few *young parents* particularly have been thus much benefited; and either at such meetings,

or as an effect of the reading and hearing of the gospel, and reflection and comraunings to which these meetings have given rise, not a few have been brought to the knowledge and experience of the truth.

The weekly public prayer meetings too, which have been conducted for several years, and to which some resorted who were not in the habit of church-going, have been blessed for conversion and for edification: to which we add, the meetings for missionary purposes, which have been found very enlivening; so that while "watering others, we are ourselves watered." No church or parish can be in a sound, wholesome, or flourishing state spiritually, where there is no special attention and prayer called forth in regard to the spiritual condition of the heathen and the Jew. Indeed, the very use of the prayer our Lord hath taught his disciples, condemns those who pay no respect to the spiritual wants and miseries of the Jewish or of the Gentile nations, and renders their use of such a prayer at any time a mere inanimate form. Too many parishes, we fear, are still in this sad and dead condition!

More closely still to the important point on hand, the concert of united and continued and persevering prayer for the abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit requires to be earnestly pressed and embraced. It has been remarked, as an important and encouraging fact in the history of the revivals with which we are best acquainted, that the moving spring of them all has been *prayer—believing, earnest, united*; by a smaller number, it may have been by only a very few at first, but, immediately preceding the remarkable awakenings, by a greater number of Christians brought together, as on sacramental occasions. Witness the wonderful day at the Kirk of Shotts in 1630, preceded by a night and a morning of incessant praying among ministers, and by the people who had been engaged in holy communion at the table of the Lord, and who were unwilling to depart without a blessing. Now, "the Lord's hand is not shortened that he cannot save, neither is his ear heavy that it cannot hear." When we come down to more recent awakenings in our church: to that of Moulin, 1800; Skye, 1814; Arran, 1813; Lewis, 1834;

and in Kilsyth at this present time: it is true in each case that "the Lord hearkened and heard those who feared his name," and who were "speaking often one to another" of the things of salvation, and who were, with united believing supplications, addressing the throne of grace, and were looking up and expecting an answer.

Going to Scripture history and referring as far back as to the days of Enos, when "men began to call upon the name of Jehovah,"¹ and coming down to the day of Pentecost, when the Apostles in an "upper-room continued all with one accord in prayer and supplication, waiting for the promise of the Spirit," we find the same important place given to prayer; and doubtless, the history of the true church of the living God, in every age and in every place of the world, would be found to present a beautiful uniformity and unity in this respect, so that it is verified in the church—the body of Christ collectively viewed, as well as in each individual member, that "whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."²

I conclude this part of the subject, by earnestly pressing upon my fathers and brethren in the ministry, the duty and the privilege of having a weekly prayer meeting, wherever circumstances will allow of it, on some evening of the week, over which the minister should preside. The attendance, as it was formerly with us, for some time may be small and somewhat discouraging; but good is always doing more or less, and there may come a time when such a meeting will form a rallying-point to the enquirers after salvation, and a mean of great comfort and edification to the people of God. Such weekly meeting was commenced in the year of the cholera, 1832, with us, as it had been in many places. It was often thinly attended, but never given up. Not a few have obtained saving impressions when they dropped in to these meetings, where a familiar short exposition of a psalm was given with prayer and praise, and once in four weeks religious intelligence. It has been found by some to be to them the "house of God and the gate of heaven." Besides there were weekly meetings held in two rural districts, one of

¹ Genesis, iv, 26. ² Romans, x, 12.

which has been recently formed into a parish, distinct so far as religious ordinances are concerned, which were found very conducive to spiritual good. In this latter case a *failure* was predicted, and seemed at one time *nearly verified*, but it was never given over to extinction; and now the work of the Lord has revived in that district, where, a few years ago, rudeness, ungodliness, and intemperance prevailed. We have just to reverse this description. Old things are in a great measure done away, and the Banton district of miners flourishes not merely by its minerals, but by prayer and the preaching of the word. A tap-room has been changed into a meeting-place for prayer, in which not a few assemble for holy converse and united prayer and praise, where lately there was only the sound of revelry and of wrangling! If it be asked wherein the great strength lies, the answer is, in *prayer*,—without which the church would be, like Samson without his hair, *weak and like others*.

Again: To carry forward and extend a revival while all the ordinary means of grace must be regularly and zealously maintained, there must be an *instancy also out of season*. Some have unreasonably objected to the using of any means beyond the usual Sabbath-day ministrations and the orderly round of visitation, as endangering due respect to the instituted regularly recurring means of grace: and such persons are so wedded to form, and so punctilious as to hours and seasons of public meetings, that the inroads made upon time and privacy of study by any thing like an awakening of numbers to a sense of their spiritual danger, would be an annoyance to them. Now, my friends, while every studious and prayerful means should be used to conduct the preaching of the word—the devotional exercises in public, and the pastoral visitations, in the most pointed, lively, scriptural, and edifying manner, giving to these the full force of all the preacher's head and heart, and best manner of address—there must be beyond these, *an* in addition to all the ordinary means, a *patient and* **nsti}3tt* waiting upon cases of the convinced and anxious—that they may be instructed and edified; and even although the regular hours of closing should have ar-

rived, the urgency of trembling and awakened enquirers *may*, yea *must* in a season so unusual and an occasion so pressing, overrule all the customary, and at ordinary times, salutary restrictions as to times and seasons. I know this is with some a very difficult point, and, no doubt, it is easy to summon up reasons against all deviations from rule as to time and place for religious exercises. But the answer here is just this;—that the whole work we are now treating of is of an unusual kind, and therefore must not be subjected rigidly to ordinary rules: here wisdom and zeal must be eminently conjoined with much and earnest waiting upon God for direction. The sunshine, while it lasts, should be fervidly improved, as it is by the farmer: the springtide must be waited on, and all hands must be at work—the sails spread, the prosperous gale with the favourable current not neglected, although the sun may have set, and although no moon nor stars should appear. The Philippian jailor was converted at midnight, and St. Paul, once at least, when about to depart on the morrow, continued his speech until the same hour of midnight. So, my friends and brethren, even at *uncanonical hours* we must be willing that men be converted.

So it was with Mr. Robe in 1742, for, “considering in his own mind what had been done at Cambuslang, and hearing the criticisms of the world on the week-day services—the many hours spent in church, &c., Mr. Robe, while he prayed for a time of refreshing from the Lord on his own people at Kilsyth, made various secret resolutions as to how he would arrange matters so as to avoid censure, should his prayers be answered. But when the time came, the exigence of the souls crying out ‘What shall we do?’ upset all his preconceived plans; for when the good man had closed his services, and saw many of his people sit gazing upon him as if they were still hungering for more, he was constrained to begin anew, and then called in elders, and next ministers from the adjacency to assist, and also to mark the doings of the Lord,” &c.¹

Such seasons will *soon*, we fear *too soon* pass by,

¹ History of Revivals, &c., p. 260.

leaving many after all in their dead sleep. The faithful, and rousing, and pointed preaching of the word, with appeals, it may be, *after* the usual addresses have been finished, without any apparent impression, may in some cases be called for, and have been actually attended with marked success, though here it is granted that there is room for the question—"Why resort to such methods, instead of leaving the message, solemnly and affectionately delivered and followed with fervent effectual prayer, to the impression which may be expected to have been made?" In the method followed by our Lord and by the apostles, there seems to be warrant for both of these plans of addressing sinners. We find them in many instances declaring the truth boldly and affectionately, and this done, leaving it to operate by the divine Spirit's influence, just like the husbandman sowing the seed after previous preparation, and after a time looking for the increase. At other times we find them following up the more public and general addresses with special reasonings and conversations, so as "by all means to save some," even "pulling them out of the fire."¹

One mean which seems to have been often blessed to conversion, is that of individual address by one man, or from one friend to another; as Andrew telling Peter, "I have found the Messias:" "Come and see." In the season of a revival this comes to be a very common case: the subject of salvation is so much the matter of interest and reasoning among friends and neighbours, that one member of a family speaks to another, and one workman speaks to his fellow, and one student in a class to another on the same bench, and one occupier of a seat in a church to the individual near him; in reference to the all-important subject. Thus it is, that the reserve which is ordinarily observed on the subject of salvation is broken through, and there results a free and interesting interchange of thought, of mind, and of heart. Hence also arises very naturally, an increasing number of meetings for prayer and Christian fellowship: and these again become so many rallying-points, or places of resort, to those who are asking the great ques-

¹ Acts, xxviii, 23, 30, 31.

tion, "What they shall do to be saved." There is here, however, some evil to be apprehended when the anxious are led to go to the first person they meet with, however imperfectly qualified to give them advice. Surely it is to be regretted that it so frequently happens, that the sermon or the address which has made a serious impression is not immediately followed up by an earnest and humble application for advice to the teacher, whose words have been so far effectual: or, if that cannot be attained from any cause, why not to the godly parent, or elder, or stated pastor, or experienced Christian friend, instead of consulting only, or chiefly with the most forward and self-confident, as is often the case; by which mistake many have been bewildered or led away to some new sect, and been turned aside to vain jangling? And here I would observe, that it should be well known and understood beyond all doubt, that consultation on soul-concerns is expected, and at all times welcomed and courted by the pastor watching for souls. This, alas! it must be acknowledged, has been too seldom the state of things betwixt the minister and his flock; and thus many precious opportunities of doing good have been neglected, and many precious souls, there is reason to fear, have been lost.

Again, while prayer, as we have seen, is the *spirit* of a revival of religion, the substance of a revival,—the pillar and ground of all is the sound, zealous, pointed preaching of Christ—the compliance with the command, "Go, stand, and speak unto the people all the words of this life." Some, it may be, have attempted to obtain or to promote a revival—by speaking much about revivals, by describing them, or by *dejudging* them. All this may be so far well, and the recital at such meetings, of well-authenticated cases of awakening and of conversion, may be very animating; yea, may be a *means* of conversions: but to rest in these, to flatter ourselves that good has been done merely because a few meetings of this kind have been thronged by attentive hearers will not do. The people must be plied from day to day with plain, faithful, scriptural preaching *to* them, and not merely *before* them. The conviction must more and more be wrought on the minds of the

hearers, that the preacher is in earnest, that he means and feels what he says; that, in the words of R. Baxter, he "*never expects to meet any one of them in heaven unless they be truly converted*," I have read of one preacher that, he was successful in two things very difficult to attain,—the one is making the hearers to *feel* that he was in earnest in wishing their conversion; the other, that *God was in earnest* in calling them, and willing to save them.—Of another I have heard, that lately he preached *about revivals*, but now he proclaims the doctrine of salvation more than before in a way calculated by the blessing of God really to *produce* a revival. It is the word of the living God, delivered in a living manner, which proves quickening and powerful! And here I would beg leave, with great humility, just to suggest the inquiry,—whether the preaching of our day, generally speaking, has been altogether of the description for plainness, for godly sincerity, and home-dealing, which comes to men's business and bosoms; and, whether it would not appear, at the close of too many sermons, almost incongruous to expect that there may have been made such an impression as to lead any of the audience to stay behind, waiting and seeking further counsel? And further, may not the question be salutary, Are not some pulpit addresses, though unexceptionable as to doctrine, yet too much of an abstract description, and in the style of what is brought *before* an audience as hearers and judges, instead of being addressed *to them* as matters of personal and most pressing concern; and is not the sound too *general and uncertain* to leave a decided and deep impression? It is amazing, and it is lamentable, how many able and doctrinally sound discourses are delivered from Sabbath to Sabbath in the pulpits of our land, of the practical converting efficiency of which there are so few palpable fruits and evidences. Is there not too often a substitution of the *intellect* for the *heart*?—of human reasoning, for the demonstration of the Spirit? Is there not a defect *of prayer*, and a practical forgetting of the often-repeated text, "*Not by might, nor power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts*"? Do we not *expect too little*, and *that* because we pray *too little*, and *too coldly*?—Certain it is, that

there is a defect,—a great defect somewhere, and we have probably touched upon some of the points in question, which may be useful in suggesting the remedy and the means of promoting a more awakened feeling and frame in speaking and hearing God's word. Of certain preachers who were peculiarly successful, it is said "their sermons are not distinguished by what is called *talent*;—few of them exhibit marks of powerful genius: they are plain, energetic, and manly:—No attempt at oratorical display; no poetical description; no metaphysical dissertation; no learned criticism: but *simple, practical* truth forcibly presented, illustrated, and applied." May the number of such preachers be increased a hundred-fold in all the churches; may the Lord pour out his Spirit more copiously on preachers and hearers;—then there will be a speaking as of dying men to dying men, *feeling themselves so*: and of living men, to living men,—of heart to heart!

Another very valuable means of carrying forward the work of revival is '*pastoral visitation*. Waiving all general remarks on the unquestionable importance of this department of ministerial duty, I would remark, that besides that these visits are from various causes generally few and far between, there is another imperfection too commonly attendant upon the mode in which they are conducted, and that is, too little holy earnestness and *closeness* and *familiarity* of the proper kind, similar to that of the enquiries of a beloved friend or family physician. There is apt to be too much ceremony and too distant and too general and vague application, to be a likely means of leaving a permanent impression. Now, a season of revival affords manifest openings and facilities for closer and more home address. The awakening of so many to concern about salvation, and the beneficial change upon the life and conversation of neighbours and relatives, naturally give rise to a *mors, free*, and at the same time a peculiarly solemn mode of address. Such scenes bring into nearer contact with the condition of souls, and place us together as it were on the borders of eternity and the judgment-seat of Christ. We come at once to deal with our people,—young and old—about matters of near and everlasting

moment. Instead of a few remarks on relative duties, and it may be, hearing a few questions from the youthful members of the family, with a prayer: there will be (not forced in, but) naturally introduced, serious conversation with each member as to how it now fares with them, and how their *souls* are? The idea I wdsh to convey is thus well expressed, in describing family visitation as practised by Presbyterian churches transatlantic: "Visiting a family for the express purpose of religious enquiry, in order to ascertain the religious state of the heads of the family, and of every member;—the amount of their Bible knowledge, and the manner in which they perform their acknowledged duties; and especially to ascertain whether they are really seeking God. The visit is purely pastoral; and as it is by no means considered requisite for the physician to travel all round the circle of general topics before he can venture to allude to the purposes of his visit; so neither is this deemed necessary for the minister: he feels at liberty at once to enter upon enquiries relating to the soul. These enquiries are often put in the plainest and most pointed form to the individual, and no evasion permitted. If the question be put, "Are you living in the habit of prayer," and the answer be evasive, it would be immediately followed by the plain question, "Did you *pray this morning*? had you communion with God?" and followed by perhaps nothing more than an affectionate pressure of the hand, and a fatherly caution to beware of going back. Worldly conversation—perplexing enquiries—doctrinal disputes—find no place: the only subject is the application of the great doctrine of salvation to the consciences of the hearers, according to their capacities and attainments." Now, no doubt wisdom is profitable to direct here, how far such close questioning may *in some cases* be practicable, or for edification; but certainly holy zeal and affection may do very much to make *that* a very interesting work which is either too much neglected, or too formally and coldly performed, and make it a promising means of carrying forward a revival. A season like the present surely would be seized, for getting into more close dealing with the hearts and consciences of our people; and, in

the majority of cases having to deal with the poor and unlearned, access will be found more easily and acceptably and usefully than might at first be apprehended. Connected with this also, the catechetical and conversational manner of visiting families, in order to impart solid views of Divine truth, and to establish the weak and lately awakened, is most requisite and desirable, seeing that it is through the influence of *family* religion that a revival of religion is likely to pervade and to be handed down in its blessed influence to succeeding times.¹ (See the Directory for Visitation of Families, in our Confession of Faith.)

This brings me to speak of *Bible classes* for religious instruction conducted by ministers, and by pious and intelligent Christians under their superintendence. These have been greatly honoured of God as supplemental to the blessed and scripturally-approved example of "commanding children and household to keep the way of the Lord, and to do judgment and justice." There is warrant also for the Sabbath classes, for wTE read of one teaching his brother, saying Know the Lord;

¹ The following remarks appear to me very valuable. "From long observation of facts I have been particularly impressed with the importance of early instruction. I feel more strongly attached to the *good old way*, trodden by the venerable fathers of the Reformation in Scotland, and Holland, and England, and afterwards by our pilgrim fathers, who brought the light of 'immortality and life' to our western wilderness. With them the instruction of youth in the elementary doctrines of religion, by catechising and pastoral visitation, was an important part of ministerial labour. The revered *Flavel*, in 1688, addressing the Puritans, remarks thus: 'Prudence will direct us to lay a good foundation among our people by catechising and instructing them in the principles of Christianity, without which we labour in vain. Unless we have a *knowing* people, we are unlikely to have a *gracious* people. All our excellent sermons shall be dashed upon the rock of their ignorance. What age of the world has produced more lively and steadfast professors than the first ages? and then this duty (of catechising) most eminently flourished in the church. Clemens, Optatus, Austin, Ambrose, Basil, were catechists.' This hath therefore been a constant practice in the church; and in the first ages they had a particular person set apart to this office."—See appendix to Sprague's Lectures, (Collins's Edition,) Letter X, by Dr. Proudfoot,—a most valuable letter where all are excellent.

and Cain's answer is recorded *not* for approval, but as a *beacon*, "Am I my brother's keeper?"—The answer is, "Yes, you *ought to care for a brother*: and especially for such as cannot, or *will not care* for themselves." True, every *family* should be a Sabbath school, and a prayer meeting, yea, a church; but in order to bring about such a glorious result, every Scriptural means must be used, and such schools of the prophets as well-conducted Sabbath classes should be earnestly encouraged. On these the blessing of God has abundantly rested. Frequently has it been observed, that in revivals the Bible classes and Sunday schools have been deeply affected; *they* have felt *the first* influence of God's grace, and the great work has sometimes commenced with them. Before leaving this head, I would just observe, that from the *localplan* of Sabbath schooling, by drawing as it were a circle around a station, and collecting the neglected children enclosed, much good has resulted. Three years ago, by *thus* "assaying to good," a large call for Bibles resulted, and other blessed effects connected with the present revival,—such as increase of prayer meetings; a desire for good reading; attendance on ordinances; *saving* benefit to not a few of youthful age.

Another means of carrying forward revivals is *the appointment of days of Fasting and of Thanksgiving*. I am persuaded that we are guilty of criminal neglect in this respect, in not being more observant of the spiritual and moral signs as well as the occurring events which call for such appointments. The following, referring to the early history of our American Presbyterian brethren, seems to be well worthy of notice. Hutchison, in his history of Massachusetts, says, "The fathers laid aside the fasts and feasts of the Church of England, and appointed, as occasion required, days of fasting and prayer, to implore the Divine blessing upon their affairs. This practice has been continued down to the present time, (1829). If the savages threatened to exterminate their settlement, the fathers appointed a *fast*; if religion languished, they held a *solemn fast*. At different periods, this practice has been observed ever since among the churches; and very frequently have

great blessings been granted, after days of supplication, accompanied by solemn fasts. So of days of thanksgiving." Upon this subject, I would very humbly suggest that congregational or parochial *fasts* and *thanksgivings*, occasioned by some more than usual breaking forth of *evil* on the one hand, or of *good* on the other, seem highly beneficial. The experiment was made in the parish of Kilsyth in the year 1830, on account of appalling moral depravity prevailing. The appointment was much honoured of God, and respected by man, though at first opposed by some. The reasons for it were set forth in a memorial by the session, and read for two Sabbaths previously. It was followed by a blessing. All the Commandments were gone over, in a portion of the sermon as well as in *prayer*, and special—very special notice of the *breaches* that had been most prominent. That day is still remembered by many and referred to with interest: *The first day of this year, 1840, was a thanksgiving day and a prayer day.* A similar appointment was very lately made by one of the brethren in Edinburgh, owing to the inadvertent admission of some unworthy communicants; the observance of which had a very solemnising effect, and I believe has not been without its visible good fruits. This is a course which ought to be more frequently resorted to. Before an ordination, for example, how suitable to have a day, or a part of it, spent in fasting and prayer. In the first platform of Presbytery after the Reformation, as described in the Geneva Confession, this is to be found.¹

But these observations, though referring to points of great importance, under the head of means of carrying forward revivals, may be perhaps judged too general, and more specialty may be demanded. These specialties, however, may more properly be dealt with under the second head.

¹ "The ministers and elders, at such times as there wanteth a minister, assemble the whole congregation," &c. "At the which time, the minister exhorteth them to humble themselves to God by fasting and prayer (Acts, xiii, 14, &c.) that both their election may be agreeable to *his* will, and also profitable to the church."—Geneva Confession, received and approved by the Church of Scotland, 1560, John Knox being minister.

II. *Errors to be guarded against* in the matter of revivals.

Errors and mistakes indeed are incident to every thing to which man puts his hand. In the case of ordinary duties the danger is formality. In services and duties more unusual, as in the case of the work of revival, the errors to which ministers and office-bearers are exposed are of a different character; either, on the one hand, in being too easily satisfied with cases, in healing too slightly, and being too ready to give comfort; or on the other, in putting stumblingblocks in the way, and denying the application of the balm of consolation where it ought to be administered. Certain it is, on the one side, that awakening—conviction—weeping and trembling—are *not conversion*, though often the commencement of a saving change; therefore, there should be a sifting process as a preliminary to comforting. On the other hand, it is the Divine will and command, that each one to whom the gospel offer is made should immediately believe, and so have life, without being kept for weeks or even days in despair; and, therefore, we are sure that there is no Scripture warrant for keeping anxious enquirers a certain length of time in legal bondage and labouring in the fire, ere the free offer of salvation is made to them. Again, there is an error into which those not acquainted with the work are very apt to fall, and that is; when there appears to be any melting and evident commotion among the hearers, straightway to get alarmed and to wish to have all the subject of such distress instantly removed; and again,—to become impatient of detention—to wish, in short, to shut all up decently, it may be with a few words of prayer and advice, and so to conclude. There is a great and manifest danger of thus quashing and deadening convictions both in the distressed and in attendant friends and observers. In relation to the question, *what is duty* when—as is sometimes, though not always the case in such awakenings—there are sobbings, or outcries of the spiritually-wounded, I will here recite some of Mr- Kobe's observations on this subject, with this remark, that when we were tried exactly in a similar way recently, in the churchyard

scene, which I have elsewhere described, we followed the same plan as Mr. Robe had been led to pursue, without any special reference at the time to his mode, and the reasons he assigned. Similarity of cases led to a similar treatment. Mr. Robe had been previously anxious on this subject, and had made resolves that so soon as any fell under remarkable distress they should be carried out of the congregation into a separate place; he also prayed, that if it were the holy will of God, He would bring them to a sight of their sin and danger, without those bodily distresses, which were so unpleasant to behold, so distressing to the people themselves, and offensive to several. "The Lord in a little time discovered to me my error and imprudence in this.....I observed that some were awakened while they had the distressed in their sight, and heard exhortations given in the place where they were convened. From this I was persuaded, that the example of others under spiritual terrors and distress was one of the means the Lord was pleased to bless.....I am now of opinion, after all I have seen and experienced relative to this work, that it is best to leave the distressed to their liberty, and in the congregation if they incline, until it be dismissed. No means that Providence puts into our hands is to be omitted that hath a tendency to awaken secure sinners."

In these sentiments, I entirely accord with my venerated predecessor. In reference to one of the remarkable days of the present revival already noticed, I may just further remark, that I felt a tendency to the error Mr. Robe says he fell into at the first; namely, to take away the distressed by themselves, which would have left many equally anxious unaddressed, and might have arrested the progress of the work and prevented much of the good which we know resulted from continued appeals; for we know that the Lord works by the use of means; and that sympathy with, and reasonings *from the case* of the distressed are among the means which He is pleased to employ. The few sentences following are from the remarkably judicious letter on this subject addressed to Mr. Robe and introduced into his narrative:—"If the King of glory descends in his majesty among you, and strikes secure

sinner with the terrors of his wrath, whereby they are made, from a felt sense of their perishing condition, to cry out, "What must I do to be saved?" why must these trophies of his victory be removed out of the assembly? This cry is what was common in the Apostles' time, and no doubt will be so again, and much more abundant, as the glory of the latter day approaches."And again, "Christ will plead his own cause, and Wisdom is justified of her children." How true also is that which follows, of which I have often thought since the beginning of this work. "There is no end, and there can be no good fruit of seeking to obviate the objections of an ungodly world, and the company of carnal worldly professors. Their cavils will be innumerable," &c. In reality one of the greatest errors to be dreaded, and watched and prayed against, is that of excessive caution, under the guise of prudence, in anxiety to avoid giving offence to worldly people, who never can be reconciled, by all you can do, to any thing in the shape of a revival of religion. We never should attempt to make it palatable to those who cannot suffer any thing like vital religion in any form. No doubt, the good moral effects resulting, the men of the world may be competent in some degree to appreciate; and, it is good to have these to appeal to in answering objections; but in the conducting of the revival itself, there must be no respect to what worldly friends may say, or even to the opinion of cold-hearted professors, who are too easily satisfied to let things go on as they are, rather than take much trouble or run any risk of being excepted at, by the friends of what has been called *rational religion*. Needless offence is not to be given, nor are we to be regardless of the censure of observers further than a sense of duty, and the command, "Be not conformed to the world," demand; but we apprehend, after all, that the error of excessive caution is much more common among us¹ than the

¹ I have said, "*among us*," for it appears from various passages in the valuable appendix to Sprague's Lectures, that in America, there are lamentable excesses and follies connected with the subject of revivals. I quote the following sentences from an able and judicious letter of Dr. Gridin, as a warning

opposite of too much zeal, while, most certainly, all things should be "done decently and in order," This is a general salutary rule; for God is the God of order in all the churches: nevertheless the Lord worketh variously, and sometimes as it were cometh out of his place, making bare his arm, and there is a flying thick of his arrows, piercing many hearts, and breaking of rocks with a kind of loud explosion. Sometimes, again, it may be truly said, that there "cometh the sound of earthquake, and of strong wind;" and yet the Lord is not in these, but in the still small voice, calling to solemn reflection, and deep musing. In all meetings of God's people, let us ever remember, that we stand in awe; "The Lord is in His holy temple, let all keep silence before Him!"

Another evil to be guarded against in a season of revival is, the intrusion of *controversy* and of *novel doctrines*; not new, it may be, in actual existence, but as relates to the place and the people where the awakening may be in progress. "Beware," says the judicious Halyburton, "beware of vain speculations and curiosities in religion." These tend sadly to blight the springing of the ear of grace, if indeed they do not choke it even in the blade. This applies to societies and classes as well as to individuals. In Glenlyon, the introduction of the controversy about infant baptism proved most injurious to the revival which had begun, and which previously to this unhappy controversy was advancing so auspiciously. The enemy got advantage, and instead of the all-important questions, "What shall I do to be saved?" and "How are we to grow in grace?"

against all that would justly prejudice the cause: "Let the attention of the world be aroused by every hallowed means; let the imagination and passions be wrought upon as far as the most sweet and solemn and awful truths of God can move them; let every knee be pressed to the earth in prayer and every authorised tongue be strained with entreaties to dying men; let the whole operation be as impressive—as irresistible as love and truth and eloquence can make it: but, O, for the honour of Christ and his Spirit, and in pity to the cultivated millions of our race, let revival* be conducted with order and taste (and, we add, with scriptural simplicity and unction), and shun every thing by which our brethren may be offended, or made to fall!"

—the torch was thrown in, and the community set in a flame about the mode and the subjects of baptism. The former of these, the question about dipping and immersion, is usually introduced in the first place, (though assuredly of minor importance,) which, when practically illustrated by the actual immersion of a few, gives to the careless, to scoffers, and to formalists, just what they wish, in order to involve the whole matter of religious revival in ridicule, and to turn men's minds away entirely from the real controversy which is carrying on, against the stupidity, worldliness, and irreligion of an untoward generation, and for the destruction of "all the works of the devil." The attempt has been repeatedly made in Kilsyth by certain of the American Baptists, who, by the way, are very unsound in their creed in essential points: while the *particular Baptists* have not been amenable to the censure of bringing forward their peculiar views; but, as far as known to us, have rejoiced in the work of grace, and wished us success. We have much reason to be thankful, that the class I have referred to above have been hitherto defeated entirely, and that their attempts to distract prayer meetings, by introducing their favourite subjects, have been most strenuously and *harmoniously* resisted. The attempts of the Roman Catholics, and of Socinians, and the teachers of universal pardon, have been equally unsuccessful. I am happy to say, that our people cannot endure *unsound* doctrine, and when they hear the word as they have heard it from a great number of ministers from various places of the church, they have shown the opposite of a captious spirit, and have, we know, been much delighted and edified with the uniformity of scriptural doctrine, with which they have been so highly favoured. "The sheep of Christ hear his voice, and a stranger will they not follow." Yet we are justly jealous of such strangers making entry, and of grievous wolves not sparing the flock.

When I speak of the danger of controversy to the on-going of a revival, I wish not to be misunderstood, as if the true faith in its whole extent were not to be uniformly maintained, and as if a genuine revival were

not in fact just a powerful and successful combat with error in doctrine and in practice. Instead of hanging out a flag *of truce* to the Arminians, for example, the great truths which are so fully set forth in the epistle to the Homans have been illustrated and expounded, as an antidote to their errors during two years past. It was not then by avoiding controverted subjects, and simply dwelling on truths common to professing Christians, as some would recommend, but by "not shunning to declare the whole counsel of God;" by dwelling on every doctrine of the Bible, whether controverted or not, or however repulsive to the carnal mind; and by bringing all to the test of Scripture, that the work was promoted. What, in fact, has a Christian to do but to carry on a constant unremitting warfare with error, both doctrinal and practical—a casting out and killing bad seed, and sowing and watering the good?

I cannot refrain here from just hinting, in relation to a very stirring subject at present, that nothing could be conceived more threatening to the on-going of such a blessed work as that we are privileged to witness, than would be the INTRUSION of a *minister* in opposition to the seriously felt and solemnly expressed convictions of the people that they could not be spiritually edified by his ministrations. If the calling for the serious, prayerful consideration of this subject at the present crisis of our church, should be viewed by any one as an infringement of the rule I have been illustrating, namely, the evil influence of controversy, I would only say in addition to what I have just advanced, that in our apprehension we might as well at once abandon the church of our fathers, dear as it is to us, in which, in 1742 and in 1839, such glorious things have been done for us, whereof we are glad, as continue in stupid inactivity, when the enemies of her true interests would deal with her as the Philistines with Samson, when, his strength having departed, they proceeded to put out his eyes, and make him grind in the prison-house, the sport of his enemies. Surely we should be already blind and enchained, did we not arise as one man to use all diligence that our views and wishes on this subject may not be mistaken. Surely our thus praying

unceasingly for the prosperity of our Sion, and our holding fast that which is good, and our not *despising prophesying*, as those do who put nothing to the account of interesting, and unctuous, and sound preaching of the word, (which are very essential elements of acceptable ministrations,) but who think any thing which is not absolutely heathenish and heretical good enough for our people,—our taking a strong view of the present position of our church, as calling for all our earnestness of prayer and exertion, cannot be amenable to the charge of “quenching the Spirit,” whose office it is to *testify* of Jesus Christ, as the church’s Head and great Shepherd. In this great cause it is good to be zealous, and we use weapons, *not carnal.*, “but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong-holds.”

Further: To *promote, consolidate, and perpetuate* a revival, let us be on our guard against superficial and ill-cemented systems of religious doctrine and practice. In a period of awakening, the feelings are excited—the conscience roused; exercises of prayer and praise much engaged in; *psalmody* is unusually lively; the *hymn-book* is by some converts specially exercised; but the *Catechism* and the Confession of Faith, and even the sacred Scriptures themselves, are in danger of being in a measure neglected. In a sound revival, certainly the word of the living God, the grand means of regeneration, and of progressive holiness, must be prized above all other books; and so we are happy to find it generally among us: yet some of the awakened have been, it is frankly acknowledged, but very imperfectly grounded in the principles “of the faith delivered to the saints.” Some of them never had the form of sound words at all; by others all had been forgotten in the days of their ungodliness. If, therefore, pains be not taken to communicate solid, scriptural views, and to indoctrinate both the head and the heart, there may be anticipated a plentiful crop of very green weak stalks, which may never ripen at all, or which will produce at best only a very small quantity of good grain. There is much need therefore to be at all due pains, both in preaching publicly, and in teaching privately from house to house, to explain clearly and fully, and, at the same time, *affec-*

tionately and *attractively*, the doctrines and the duties of Christianity, and the close connection betwixt them; so that the word of Christ may *dwell* in the converts *richly*, and that they may learn to do all, in word and in deed, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; giving thanks through him; and teaching and admonishing themselves and others; "building up in their most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keeping themselves in the love of God, and looking for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." There must be much watchfulness, lest when men sleep the enemy sow tares, which will grow up much more readily and luxuriantly where there is a lack of good seed sown.

Another error I would point at is, the yielding to the opposing influence, and the failing of ardour to push the advantage gained, and being in a manner satisfied that enough has been gained, or at least as much as can be expected; the conviction that we need not look for the continuance beyond a certain limited period of such a lively state of religion in a parish or congregation; in short, a taking it almost as a matter of course, that after a *revival* there shall be a *decline*. This, indeed, is what the enemies of such a work are always setting forth, as an objection to any work of this kind, that any benefit which might seem to be gained by the awakened energies and feelings of Christians in such a season, is more than counterbalanced by a consequent depression, or even an outbreaking of opposite passions and feelings. Now, there is certainly *no necessity* for such an unhappy result; no reason why the increase of the power of religious truth over the mind, and conscience, and hearts of men should be attended with so deplorable a result as that which has been alleged. On the contrary, as is true of evil, that a "little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," so also is it true of good. True religion is both of a diffusive and of a perpetuating quality. Genuine piety is not like the seeds which are called annuals; it is rather of the perennial kind. Still the objection of the enemies of revivals, that they are apt to prove like the morning cloud and early dew, may, and ought to be improved upon, as showing us what we should guard against, and that with much concern,

with continued care and diligent use of the means, especially with earnest prayer. Let not diligence be relaxed, nor prayer cease, nor concert for united intercession and pleading be broken or intermitted. Mr. Robe laments this in 1749, and says; "Had the concert been renewed which had begun about 1744, who can tell but that the revival would have been much more extensive and continuous?" The means already pointed out may, by the Divine blessing, secure this most desirable result. But among the errors to be watched and guarded against, this of losing heart, and lowering or stinting our expectation, or shortening our aim, is to be particularly noted; and in opposition to this error, as the apostle Paul exhorts,¹ "Let us labour" — the word signifies let us be *ambitious*— "that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him/" Let us not only "hold fast that which we have, that no man take our crown," but seek with intense holy ardour of sacred ambition, that the temple of the Lord may be carried on, and raised still to a more elevated and cotamanding height, pointing to the skies. Let not the builders slacken their exertions; let not the watchers go to slumber. Let the Lord's remembrancers not keep silence, but "give him no rest till he establish and make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

I will advert to another error, which we may be in danger of falling into in a season of revival; or rather, an error on the right and left, namely, the error on the one hand, of a reluctance to go to any extent beyond the regular dispensation of religious ordinances; and the opposite error of making more of the extraordinary, to the disparagement of the regular and weekly dispensation of word and sacrament. The preaching of the word not only out of the usual seasons, but also out of the *usual place*, some people have such an aversion to, that the very fact of sermons delivered to crowds in a market-place, or church-yard, and the congregating such numbers of people at the communion, are regarded by them with suspicion, if not positively condemned; but the facts are unquestionable, that by this going out as it were to the highways

¹ 2 Corinthians, v, 9.

and hedges, many poor wanderers have been brought in; and the influence of the truth much more extensively diffused than could have been otherwise: the seed of the word has in this way been carried far beyond the boundaries of a small district, and not a few added to the church of such as shall be saved. The dispensation of the Supper in the unusual circumstances of a parish where there is a revival, seems to possess the advantage, besides its direct end in the edification and comfort of newly-converted disciples, of causing the word of the gospel to come to the ears and hearts of many who might not otherwise ever know the joyful sound, and of quickening the affections and graces of God's people. The assembling too in the house of God much more frequently than in ordinary times, while the desire for hearing continues, and sowing in large measure the good seed, assuredly is the part of wisdom, and accordant with the maxim and practice of the wise preacher, who "still taught the people knowledge and the rule, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not, for thou knowest not which shall prosper—*this* or *that*, or whether both shall not be alike good." Beware, then, of the error of withholding abundance of good seed, and of neglecting to afford opportunities of hearing the word; for if you do, the enemy will be at work, and sow a plentiful crop of weeds, which will grow up luxuriantly. To prevent chaff, and worse, even bad seed getting in, fill up the vessel and then the ground with abundance of good seed—even sound and healthful doctrine.

On the other hand, it would be an error still worse than the former, were we to give any kind of prominence to the extraordinary, above the ordinary and regularly recurring means of grace, to prefer the prayer meeting to the church, or to give any countenance to the idea, that there is some unaccountable virtue or charm in an *out-of-door* sermon, or in the congregating of multitudes, which in vain may be looked for within a church or in the ordinary sabbath-day worship. Our Lord assures us, that "wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of my people. Lo! I am with you *always*

I have remarked an evil which did incidentally and in part result from ministers about forty years ago so often leaving their own churches vacant, that they might assist at communions, the consequence of which was that too many of the people relaxed their attendance on the weekly returning Sabbaths, feeling no reluctance, nor thinking it any breach of the Fourth Commandment, to remain in their houses every now and then, as the appearance of a shower of rain, or of snow, or even as indolence suggested. Now it is worthy of consideration that the frequently repeated meetings for worship during a period of revival, unless there be much pains and prayer directed to meet and obviate this evil, may lead or rather be perverted to this very hurtful end, namely, a sinful neglect of gathering the manna fresh every day and every Sabbath. There is certainly this evil to be anxiously guarded against, a depending on new excitements, instead of hearing what the Spirit is daily saying to the churches. The regular exercises of worship and ordinary means of grace may be compared to the regular channels and conduits through which the waters are conveyed, which keep them from overspreading and demolishing the surface exposed to them; and these being kept always open, and in repair, the unusually copious descending of vapour in the abundant showers, or even the flood, has conductors prepared, and in a state of readiness to receive it. In fine, the great and *summing* evil, if we may so express it, is just the "*quenching* the Spirit." We know what quenches flame, to which there is an allusion in the text. It may be quenched by being overlaid;—so is the Spirit by the cares of the world, by cold speculation. Fire is quenched by *neglect*, by being left unstirred;—so is the Spirit by not stirring up the gift; or by withholding material;—so, in a spiritual sense, by not supplying the fuel of meditation and reading the word and prayer; or by *want* of air, or by foul air; for flame goes out in an exhausted receiver, and is extinguished by pouring impure air upon it, or water, or any other element adverse to it;—so is the Spirit quenched by the exclusion of the holy atmosphere of heavenly desire, and by unsavoury temper and conversation, or by con-

formity to the world and secularly of spirit, especially in ministers and elders. The livid flame of envy and malice too eats out the holy fire of divine love; and, as the separation of the embers, and scattering and dividing the material which feeds the flame, soon cause the fire to go out; so the divisions among brethren quench the Spirit, and arrest the-progress of *revival*.

Here I would further suggest, in concluding this head, that there is need of much grace to establish and keep the heart, for Satan is always busy, and when shut out at one avenue he will try another. When he cannot get us inveigled in the snares which have been detected and broken, he will try to get us to worship some other idol, and to make even duties a snare; he will come even into *prayer meetings* when other meetings are abandoned; and he will try to pervert these by spiritual pride,—by speculation,—by setting some of the members, whose natural temper may have that tendency, to vie with others which shall pray most fluently; and may be tempting us to speak of the *number* of our prayer meetings as if these were the certain, and almost the *only* evidences required of real godliness and of growth in grace. Thus we fear the Spirit of God has often been grieved away; and even prayer meetings may have become the germs of division instead of godly edifying. We cannot be too much on our guard in these respects, for grace is a plant of a tender kind, and so is a *revival* of a *tender* and delicate nature. Let none of these social prayer meetings be a substitute for the domestic altar, or the secret worship of the closet. Let us “keep the heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.” Let there be a church in every house—and let every heart be an altar. Thus instead of quenching the Spirit, we must earnestly invite his stay; we must hate and renounce those sibs which cause this “holy Dove to mourn, and which would drive Him from our breast.” In our own spirits—in our families—in our church—there must no wicked thing be endured. Strict *discipline* among our reputed converts, and in our members generally, must be exercised; a fast day may very soon be required, and we humbled because of the sins which we fear may be

committed in the management of this matter, which will be peculiarly aggravated after what has been *seen and tasted and professed*. Here we may truly apply our Lord's words on a certain occasion, in answer to the question of a disciple, "Why could not we cast him out?"—"this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."¹ It is not by mere "bustling activity," nor by wisely laid and strenuously prosecuted schemes of either church reform or enlargement; it is not by good planning, nor good writing and reasoning, nor by large donations, nor by earnestness of zeal—no not by all these combined that the blessing is to be secured. All these are good and needful; but they require to be all consecrated by prayer—drawing down the unction of the Holy Ghost. While therefore we plan and labour and plant; let us also water; for "God—the hearer of prayer—giveth the increase;" "as for God, his work is perfect with him is the residue of the Spirit. He promises to send, not only the soft dew unto Israel, but "water upon the thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground."

I have thus attempted the part assigned to me in this course on the interesting work of revival, treating of the "mode of conducting it and pointing out errors to be avoided." I fear that what R. Baxter remarks will be but too applicable here,—that upon every thing "man touches, he leaves the marks of his fingers." Yet the Lord, whose work every genuine revival is, *can*, and *will*, notwithstanding, maintain and carry forward his cause, as again, his voice is distinctly heard in his church, crying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight a high way: let every valley be exalted, and every mountain levelled; and the crooked and rough places made plain, that Jehovah alone may be exalted." Verily, "revival" has come most seasonably. No time it is true is *unseasonable*; but in many points, the present is a very perilous and momentous crisis; and nothing we are persuaded could save us but a *powerful* awakening from the deadly slumbers of spiritual insensibility, and the pervading influence of genuine godliness. There is only one way to regenerate society—the same by which

¹ Matthew, xvii, 21.

the individual is regenerated; namely, "by the word of truth, which liveth and abideth for ever." The first teachers of Christianity had no devices but those of plain truth, and strong faith, and humble boldness, and fervent love; and the giving themselves to prayer and the preaching of the word. Let it be said of us, as of them, "We believe, and therefore speak; we feel and therefore persuade; we desire to do nothing *against* but *for* the truth, that God in all things may be glorified, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory now and for ever!"

LECTURE XII.

Hindrances to a Revival of Religion.

BY THE REV. PATRICK FAIRBAIRN,
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“Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumblingblock out of the way of my people.”—ISAIAH, lvii, 14

THE context leaves little reason to doubt, that these words carry an immediate and primary reference to the conversion of the Jewish people, and their ultimate restoration to the land of their fathers. They are words put into the mouth of one, or rather of the whole nation represented under the character of one individual, as fitly to be spoken then, when they shall have seen how all their fleshly confidences, instead of delivering them from trouble, and securing to them the inheritance they so much delighted in, had but carried them away like a whirlwind. When they shall have been made fully alive to the vanity of such confidences, and effectually taught to put their trust in the living God, then the time to favour them shall indeed be come—they shall receive power from him again “to possess the land and inherit his holy mountain,” and shall be able to say—to say with authority and effect, in regard to whatsoever may withstand the work of God in their behalf—“Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumblingblock out of the way of my people.”

I need hardly tell you, that the period of Israel’s return into the bosom of the church of God, and restoration to the land of their fathers, shall be one deserving above every other to be called a season of revival. It will bring showers of refreshment to the whole church, Gentile as well as Jewish, and shall be felt like a great moral resurrection, “life from the dead,” throughout the bounds of Christendom. In the things, therefore, which are predicted to happen or commanded to be

done concerning it, we may reasonably expect to find much that is capable of being applied to any other work and season of revival within the pale of the professing church of Christ. Now of the grand revival, which is to attend the recovery of ancient Israel, it is clearly intimated in the words before us, that there shall be certain hindrances or stumblingblocks standing in the way, which every one is required to do his utmost to remove. And in like manner, in regard to that revived state of religion which we are seeking to promote in the congregations and parishes of our land, there are hindrances of various kinds, which all who love the cause of God and desire the advancement of his kingdom should endeavour, as far as lies within their power, to cast up, and take out of the way, that a path may be prepared for the triumphant march of truth and righteousness. That such hindrances should exist, however much to be deplored, is no more than what might be expected in a world, where every work of God is naturally disrelished and opposed; but so much the more is it to be expected of his faithful people, that they shall not only themselves abstain from taking part in anything which might "hinder the gospel of Christ," but also seek with solemn care and application to effect its removal, wherever it may exist.

In drawing your attention to the hindrances in question, as we have undertaken to do this evening, the precise connection must be borne in mind, in which the general subject now under discussion calls us to contemplate them. It is not every hindrance we are to notice which may oppose the entrance of the gospel into each individual heart, but only such hindrances as tend to prevent that general awakening to divine things and increased liveliness and vigour in those who have already been awakened, which we understand by the name of a revival. The principle, therefore, of man's indwelling depravity, which ever opposes itself to a work of grace in the soul—the power and malice of Satan, which strive without ceasing to pervert in the apprehensions of men the right ways of the Lord—the cares, the pleasures, and the possessions of a present world, which are most apt to pre-occupy the desires of

the mind, and shut out all dutiful regard to what is spiritual and divine—these hindrances, which are common to all states of society, and are felt by every soul withstanding the entrance or weakening the influence of the truth as it is in Christ, do not come within the line of our present observations: we are to speak only of the things which have a special bearing upon the work before us, and exercise an untoward influence in regard either to the commencement or the spread of a revival of pure and undefiled religion.

IV. The first hindrance of this description, or rather the first kind of hindrances, which we shall mention, is found in the present state and constitution of society, which in various respects is unfavourable either to the commencing, or to the continuing of a revived state of religion.

1. In this point of view, *that* may be said to be an evil and a hindrance, which in another may be regarded with satisfaction—I mean the almost universal profession of Christianity. The world with us has become religious in name, but with many I need scarcely say *only* in name. Men here regard it so much as their right to be acknowledged Christians, that if withheld from them they feel themselves to be insulted or wronged. But there are thousands who feel thus, who yet, while they do so, present, not the less under the mask and appearance of a Christian profession, every feature and aspect of worldliness. Society in its public and acknowledged character—in its upper surface, so to speak, is all Christian, while in the underground of its feelings, principles, and habits, it remains in great part carnal and worldly; and though the difference as really exists now as ever it did between the Christian and the worldling, the religious and the irreligious, as a professed and visible distinction it has well-nigh ceased to exist.

This is a state of things in itself most deeply to be deplored, as betokening the prevalence of much spiritual delusion, and in its influence upon the work of which we now treat, most hurtful and pernicious. For this worldly leaven continuing under the form of religion, is not merely so much profession unquickened by the true Spirit of the gospel, but *that* placed at the same time

in a position where it can most effectually lower the tone and mar the exercise of what *is* quickened. It is not simply an adverse power, against which vital religion has to make head in the land, but an adverse power, in the guise and attitude of friendliness, planted in the very home and bosom of religion, to chill its divine warmth and damp its heavenly aspirations. Not only does it serve by its impure and gross adulterations to deprave in men's minds the character of real piety, but wherever the Spirit of God causes such piety to spring forth anew with becoming vigour, there it is ever ready with its cold suspicions and discouraging fears and cruel mockings to breathe as with a withering blast upon the opening blossoms of spiritual life and beauty. Oh painful thought to be found thus hinderers of the work of God in a region where all should be fellow-workers with him—at once refusing to enter into the kingdom of God and proving stumbling-blocks to those who are seeking to enter in! Who would not shrink from acting so unseemly a part in the fold of Christ? Remember, then, there is but one way of fully and properly avoiding it, and that is by walking in the power as well as in the form of godliness.

2. Another evil, not far removed from this, in the present state of society, as it exists especially in the large towns and in many also of the villages of Scotland, is the depressed and hard-wrought condition of the great mass of the people—which at once furnishes them with a ready excuse for neglecting the means of grace, and tends, by excessive and long-continued employment about worldly things, to induce upon their whole feelings and character an impress and character most unfavourable to a work of genuine revival. Some men may work long and hard at their worldly occupations as a matter of choice, prompted by the stir and competition of a commercial age, and in the expectation of acquiring a larger increase of temporal gain. But the hard-wrought condition of which we now speak, as extending far and wide through the present state of society, is the result of necessity—a necessity growing out of the kind of employments commonly engaged in, as either imperatively requiring long hours of service, or virtually re-

quiring it in consequence of the small rate of profits connected with them, so that there may be obtained from them the means of livelihood. It would be of little use to dwell upon a state of things which, however much it may be regretted, and however extensively it may prevail, is the result of circumstances which lie beyond the control of man's will, and are not to be remedied by man's device. But when you think how multitudes of our working population are every day employed in manual labour, some for twelve, some even for fifteen hours, with such continued and incessant application as shuts out almost the possibility of meanwhile entertaining a thought or exercising a care about the concerns of the soul, and inevitably reduces the bodily frame to a state of languor and exhaustion;—and when, moreover, you think how in the case of vast numbers this prodigious amount of labour is coupled with such scanty remuneration as leaves the unhappy workman hopelessly impoverished in his circumstances, as well as jaded and fatigued with excessive toil;—when you think of such a state of things prevailing so extensively as to comprehend entire classes of our countrymen, you may easily conceive that it will form no slight discouragement and hindrance to the revival of a sound and living piety—but the extent to which it does so can only be estimated by those who have the misfortune to witness its baneful operation. The worldly habit of mind, the depressed spirits, the languid frames, the straitened circumstances, the little opportunity and less inclination for minding spiritual concerns, which such a state of things tends to produce, are working with so destructive an influence on the religious interests of the people, that the very form and appearance of religion can with difficulty be preserved among them—how much more difficult, then, to introduce a revived and lively state of religion!

3. It were well, however, if the form of evil now mentioned were the only hindrance of this nature which we had reason to bewail, but there are other peculiarities in the framework of society, especially in our large towns, very closely connected with this, and hardly less unfavourable to the production of a work of genuine revival. The peculiarities I refer to are chiefly to be

traced to the change which has sprung from the extensive use of machinery in business; in consequence of which immense multitudes of people have come to be congregated together, and the leaven of sin is thus furnished with opportunities of diffusing itself, which it could not otherwise enjoy. And not only so, but the people themselves, used chiefly for the purpose of working machines, and supplanted in a thousand departments of labour by the introduction of machines, have come in a sense to be viewed as a part of one great system of machinery, having no other connection with those in whose employment they serve than that of conducting some particular branch of the complicated but regular scheme of operations. And if only this be suitably performed by them, and the stipulated sum be paid for it by the masters, it is the whole that in general is thought of or expected on either part—no other link for the most part exists between them—no feeling as of a great moral stewardship, on the one hand, to be exercised for the best interests of the employed, and of conscientious and dutiful regard, on the other, to be maintained toward the authority and interests of the employer.

We mean not to complain of the change which lies at the root of this state of things—for it proceeds by a law which cannot be controled; it is the natural and necessary result of the greater command which men have acquired over the powers and resources of nature; and though many have suffered by it both in their temporal and spiritual interests—though its progress is unquestionably tracked by many a ruined constitution, many an impoverished family, many a neglected and profligate neighbourhood; yet in itself it is a natural good, tending to promote the temporal welfare of society, and if rightly used and directed, not inconsistent with the advancement of religion and virtue. The thing to be regretted and complained of is, not the change itself of which we speak, but the derangement which it has been allowed to bring into the relations of social life, and the corruption it has thereby been the occasion of spreading through the community. Were sufficient care taken to check the tendency which it naturally has to relax the tie that should bind together the upper

and the lower ranks of society—were the employers and the employed alike solicitous to honour the relations in which they stand to each other by the mutual interchange of kindly feeling and affection—above all, did those who stand at the head of large establishments in business but feel and endeavour to acquit themselves of the responsibility which lies upon them in regard to the faithful management of these, by gathering into their service persons of worth and principle,—by maintaining a due regard to the character as well as to the workmanship of those whom they employ, and exerting their influence and authority to encourage and foster the interests of righteousness among their people:—Were all this faithfully and properly done, the new form and aspect of things which has come in upon us in this respect, instead of being the source only of evil, might be made to minister to the moral well-being of society, and we might have the satisfaction to hear of revivals in our workshops, as well as in our congregations and colleges. But while matters proceed as for the most part they have hitherto done, we can only view our manufacturing establishments as introducing an order of things greatly prejudicial to a work of real godliness—strengthening in many respects the bands of vice and hindering the manifestation of gospel principle. Yet not, let it ever be remembered, as a matter of necessity but only of actual operation—it *might* be otherwise—even now we can point to examples of large establishments in which the moral and religious is never forgotten amid the laborious and economical concerns which belong to them; and therefore let every one who has at heart the interests of godliness strive as far as in him lies to cast up, and prepare the way, and remove the stumblingblocks also here, and let not, if by any means he can prevent it, our advances in mechanical skill and commercial greatness be purchased at the fearful cost of raising new and increasing barriers against the spread of pure religion.¹

¹ Much more might have been said under this head of the hindrance occasioned by what may be called the Factory- or Public-work system, comprehending so large a part of our town population. But it is not one of the least evils connected with it,

4. There is yet another evil, though of a different kind, which we descry in the present state of society, and which from painful observation has been often pressed upon us as a great hindrance to the revival of living piety—namely, the deep and wide-spread political character of society. We need not enquire how or when it may have become pervaded by such a character; the fact that it is so, unhappily admits of no dispute; from the highest to the lowest ranks of society every man is more or less a politician, and with multitudes politics form such an engrossing theme as to consume nearly the whole of their leisure thought and reading and converse. It is not any particular shade of politics of which we now speak, as thus deeply rooting itself in the public mind and forming a hindrance to the reviving of the work of God—though doubtless in particular cases much may also depend on that—but politics at large in whatever shade or form they may take possession of the mind. We say, that whatever be a man's political creed, if he is so enamoured of the views embraced in it as to make them the object of his greatest concern—to fill up the most of his leisure time by busying himself with them—to identify, not only his own temporal interests, but the interests also of religion and virtue and the general good, with the success of these political views, and eye with suspicion and dislike every one who has espoused other and opposite views—if this should happen to be the case on any thing like a general or extensive scale, politics

that it in a great measure prevents the proper working of the parochial machinery, and indeed cuts off in a manner one main channel of pastoral usefulness. Ministers may visit their people or their parish, but they can find no opportunity of seeing that part, in many districts the largest part, of the population who are connected with the public works, and who, with scarcely time enough to take their meals, are confined to unremitting employment from a very early to a late hour. This may be said to be an unavoidable consequence of the artificial state of things into which we have come, but the evil does not less really exist and mar the operations of a gospel ministry; and it should at least have the effect of leading those who are at the head of such establishments to exercise a closer superintendence over the persons in their employment, and strengthen the hands of ministers in other respects as much as they can.

will unquestionably be found a powerful bar to the revival or spread of living godliness in the world; for as a subject of engrossing interest., and giving rise to governing principles of action, the two things may be said to run in opposite directions. The one is spiritual, the other carnal; the one in every event eyes pre-eminently the hand of God, the other regards only the hand and agency of man; the one breathes the elevated purity of heaven, and manifests itself in the stern principles of godliness, and the labours of a generous and self-denying love—the other savours of the corruption of the world, and runs out into manifestations of jealousy, bitterness, and strife; the one comes to lift the soul above its present tabernacle of clay, that it may seek its home and its inheritance in those realms of light where alone glory that is abiding and joys that are imperishable can be inherited—the other comes to enchain the soul to what is earthly, to swell it with high thoughts of a greatness either already possessed or yet attainable on earth, and render all-important in its eyes the objects and events of a present existence.

Now while there is this essential contrariety between a political and a religious spirit, that the case now exists as we have supposed in regard to the extensive and pernicious influence of the former, we need not stand long to demonstrate. Who does not know, how much the emulations, wraths, strifes, and similar works of the flesh, which disfigure so much the aspect of our social condition, and counteract the work of the Spirit of God, spring from political grounds? Who does not know, we shall not say, how much precious time is wasted, but how much those times and seasons which ought to be consecrated to sober thought and exercises of devotion have become utterly lost to these hallowed purposes, by undue regard to publications and concerns merely political? Who does not know, how much the political have of late become interwoven with the religious distinctions of Our land, and particular churches are viewed as objects of favour or aversion, according as their respective ministers or communions are understood to adhere to one or another party in the state? And so completely has the spirit we now de-

plore distilled its malignant poison into many bosoms, that we have known men on their dying beds spurning from them the ministrations of the gospel because offered to them by the hand of one who was looked on as a political opponent—and men consciously wasting under the power of a mortal disease, yet clinging with such melancholy fondness to their views of political government, that on these their mind still found its choicest employment, and no effort even then could avail to turn its thoughts into a higher and holier channel.

Ah! who can think of such a sore evil as this, and the other kindred evils already adverted to, spreading their noxious roots through the whole fabric of society around us, without mourning at the success with which the god of this world has reared his bars and hindrances against the blessed influence of the gospel, even amid the full sunshine of its divine truths. It well becomes us indeed to mourn—yet not as without hope. We know, that hurtful and pernicious as these must be, there is in the word and Spirit of God what is more than able to overcome them; the Church, as we shall afterwards see, has in her own hands the power to dislodge them all, and in the confidence of her heaven-derived strength may say to each one of them in succession, “Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubabel thou shalt become a plain,” But let it never be forgotten by the people of God, that the removal of the hindrances in question is *their* immediate and personal concern; *they* are not to wait till the world rights itself, but consider themselves peculiarly charged with rectifying, by every means in their power, that which is disordered; not only as members of the church of Christ must they employ the spiritual weapons with which they are furnished, but as members of a present society, which is overrun with so many forms and elements of evil, it is their imperative duty to be ever witnessing against the evil, and as far as the influence of their example and authority can reach to cast up, and prepare the way, and take up the stumblingblocks out of the way, that when God is pleased to revive us again, his word may have free course and be glorified.

II. We proceed now to mention, as a second great hindrance to a revival of religion, the spirit of division and discord, which prevails in the church, and the consequent absence of that fervent love in which Christ enjoined his disciples with the utmost care and devotedness to walk.

I need not repeat the many precepts in which this great duty is enjoined in the gospel, or the manifold considerations which are employed to enforce it on the observance of Christ's followers. These must be familiar to the mind of every one that hears me—would that they were also engraved upon your heart and reflected in the course of your every-day procedure. For consider in what light the requirements of the gospel place this exercise of love among the Christian community; it is, as something indispensable to the existence of a Christian condition, and the grand testimonial by which the truths of the gospel were to be commended to the notice and acceptance of men. "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." History has recorded how faithfully down to a certain period the precept was observed, and how well the manifestation of love it called forth from the followers of Christ answered the expectation he had formed concerning it. Men *were* constrained on this account to recognise them as his disciples; the expression was everywhere heard from the lips of heathens, "Behold how these Christians love one another!" and their favourable regard being thus won, the prejudices of ignorance melted away, and the truth advanced with rapid strides through the world.

Alas! that we should have fallen so far from our proper calling, and have exhibited so little of the badge of true discipleship. We not only have our political divisions, rending with a spirit of fierce and angry partizanship the whole framework of society, but we have also our religious animosities, leading the professed members of the church of Christ to bite and devour one another. It is not simply that one church is divided from another by some minor shades of difference in

doctrine, or by a different platform of government and worship, but that through the loop-holes of these smaller differences a spirit of discord and jealousy has been permitted to enter, and party interests to a great extent are more set by than the triumph of gospel truth over the ignorance and wickedness of man. This unquestionably is one of the leading causes by which Christianity has been staid in its progress through the world, and the precious blessings have been retained within a narrow compass, which God designed to have no bounds but those of the habitable globe. It is also one of the darkest clouds which overhang our prospect for the future; for the signs of the times hold out little or no promise of its disappearing, and so long as it exists it must operate most injuriously upon the interests of religion, and hinder its revival in the hearts of men, by preventing the just exhibition of Christian principle, grieving the Holy Spirit of God, and marring that union of counsel, prayer, and exertion, on the part of God's people, which, having so many obstacles to encounter, the cause of righteousness most urgently requires.

The history of past revivals furnishes striking and impressive lessons on this point, which at the present time ought to be deeply pondered by the people of God. Wherever the Holy Spirit has been poured out with great power upon a people, in nothing has his presence been more uniformly displayed than in diffusing a spirit of fervent love—giving us thereby to understand how much his mind must be grieved and his work hindered by the prevalence of an opposite spirit. It is noticed in almost every revival from the day of Pentecost to the present times, that believers were made of one heart and mind, old quarrels soon made up, former animosities banished, new breaches speedily healed, and the pleasing spectacle exhibited of persons shaking hands together who were wont to pass each other with a frown before. And it is an instructive and solemn fact, brought out in the history of more than one revival, that when a whole neighbourhood had been well watered with the showers of grace, no drop of blessing has descended there where a spirit

of controversy and strife had obtained a footing¹—the Spirit of God hovered around, but fled from the scene of discord, as from a doomed region, where his dove-like temper could find no resting-place. Sad but instructive lesson indeed! Oh may the Spirit himself impress it in deep and abiding characters on the tablet of your heart. Ever remember, that “his work is sown in peace of them that make peace,” and no dwelling can be more distasteful, no vessel more unsuitable to him than a heart which delights itself with matters that provoke contention and strife. There are many grounds of division both in the church and in the world, which, however much you may deplore, you may be able to do little or nothing personally to control; but we entreat you by “the love of the Spirit,” by the bowels of Jesus, by the regard you bear to his most solemn command, and by your desire to promote the interests of living piety, to labour with all diligence to keep your own minds in the peace of God, and in your intercourse and connection with others ever to strive for “the things which make for peace.”

III. Another serious hindrance or stumblingblock in the way of a general revival of religion is the laxity of discipline, or the toleration of scandalous offences in the church.

The great Head of the church knew well that his church on earth should not remain free from worldly intermixture, and that even within its outward pale offences should be found to come. Therefore, in one place, he likens his kingdom to a fishing net, which gathered fishes of all kinds, bad as well as good; and in

¹ Wherever our lamentable divisions prevailed, serious religion declined to a shadow. The work of conversion went but slowly and indiscernibly on. The influences of the Holy Spirit were restrained.” (Mr. Robe’s narrative.) “It is particularly worthy of remark, that in the districts where a spirit of controversy had got a footing by means of the Secession from the Church, which had recently taken place, neither Church nor Secession partook of the good gift which God was bestowing. Hearts hot with contention are not in a position to receive divine truth.” *History of Revivals in British Isles*, p. 282—See also at p. 339 an instance of a work of revival being completely staid by the introduction of a subject of controversy.

another, to a field sown by himself with wheat, by the enemy with tares—the children of light and the children of darkness living and growing together, as members of one Christian community. But though this is the state of things which the unerring foresight of Christ predicted should continue even to the end of the world—though up to that final period Satan may in every parish and congregation be expected to have his members, no excuse is thereby given to the Church for relaxing the bonds of discipline, and allowing sin to proceed unchecked within her pale. She has the powers of a government received from her divine Head, for the express purpose of maintaining the efficiency of her discipline, and the purity of her communion. In the exercise of these powers of government she is commanded to beware lest any root of bitterness should grow up and trouble her—to rebuke, admonish, exhort those that are out of the way—to purge out the old leaven—and deliver such as have been guilty of gross sin and repented not, over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that is, formally to eject them from the communion of the church.

It is impossible to glance ever so hastily over the condition of the church, as it at present exists, without perceiving, that as a whole it is very far from being what it ought to be in its zeal against iniquity and care to separate itself from the corruptions of the world. Individual churches, having fewer difficulties in this respect to contend with, from some peculiarity either in their position or in their method of government, may be able to keep themselves comparatively free from these internal disorders. But there are very few communions, we fear, which have not need of some improvement in this respect—very few churches which deserve the commendation that was bestowed on Ephesus, that “they cannot bear them which are evil.” The leaven of sin has spread too far, and the wholesome restraints of a pervading piety have become too much enfeebled and broken for the work to be easily done; a spirit is abroad—“heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God”—which will not endure sound discipline; and to deal with the covetous,

the dishonest, the fornicator, the drunkard, the Sabbath-breaker, the blasphemer, and others guilty of like flagrant transgressions, requires, especially in such evil and disjointed times as these, a firmness and vigilance, a zeal for God's glory and fidelity to the souls of men, but rarely exercised either in the measure or with the regularity that they ought to be.

The toleration of such offences, however, in the church of Christ, however difficult it may be to prevent them, is a very sore evil, and most disastrous in its influence on the work of reformation. So far as it prevails in any church she virtually lays down her testimony for holiness, and suffers to leave unemployed the most effective means for impressing upon men the guilt and danger of sin. The Church appears in the humiliating attitude of descending into an unseemly alliance with the pollutions of the world, and by so doing loses, in the estimation and feeling of the world itself, her dignity, her consistence, and consequently her moral power.

But even that is not the worst—for by her unfaithfulness she loses more a great deal in her connection with what is above, than in her standing and influence with what is below. Every profane or impure person admitted into the bosom of the Church, like another Achan in the camp of Israel, carrying defilement into the house of God, lessens her interest in his favour and diminishes her dowry of blessing. Her strength to prevail with God and make inroads upon the kingdom of darkness does not depend upon the greatness of her numbers, but upon the amount of holy principle which she brings into the service of God. "What is the chaff to the wheat?" Better a congregation of a handful of members, if like Gideon's army it were pervaded by one spirit of resolute and devoted zeal, than one tenfold larger, if overspread with signs of depravity and corruption. Strong in the might of the Spirit, and full of the favour of the Lord, they should be, though few in number, "in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men." Therefore let all, ministers, elders, and people, each in their

respective places, give diligent heed to secure the maintenance of a proper discipline, and protect the church from the reproach and injury of scandalous offences. Let those who bear rule in the house of God, as put in charge with a most solemn stewardship, beware of encouraging sinners in their iniquity, by winking at their misdeeds, and of permitting the precious ordinances of God to be desecrated by the pollution of wicked hands; and let congregations by their countenance and prayers be careful to promote and strengthen the cause of reformation, so as to make it seen and felt, that they cannot and will not "bear them which are evil."

IV. The last thing to which I would call your attention, as a hindrance to a revived state of religion, is the want of a right state of mind among real Christians in regard to such a revival. In what do we conceive such a state of mind properly to consist? Chiefly in two things—faith in the possibility of the work, and a sense of personal responsibility in regard to its production.

1. Faith in its possibility—faith, that is, to believe that it is not a vain and chimerical thing—a fine or extravagant idea floating in the brain of a heated enthusiasm—but a state of things which, as it often has been, so may it again be realized and seen amongst men. I mean not now to search out and set before you what grounds there are for believing, that a revival of religion may in any particular place or period of the church's history be made to appear. This has already been done in the two discourses which treated of the encouragements given us in the word of promise, and in the page of inspired history, to warrant and beget expectations of such a work. But it is one thing to know the grounds, and another thing to rest on them with realizing confidence, and draw from them life and energy. Yet to do this is an important, and for the most part an essential step toward the end in question. God honours the faith of his people, by giving to it the promise of blessing. "To him that believeth all things are possible." But without faith nothing is possible in the matter now under consideration; for where

it is not, there will be no expectation or desire pouring themselves out in prayer to God for the needed supply of grace, and no application of the means through which grace works to produce and carry forward the spiritual renovation. We fear, however, there are few comparatively, who have any realizing faith or even any settled convictions upon the subject. They are too much satisfied with things as they are, or disposed to make too much of the difficulties standing in the way of reformation. Ah! did they but know it, no difficulty stands so much in the way as their own unbelief, and were that supplanted by a clear and living faith, those things which now seem as mountains would soon flow down and melt like wax before the fire. For what is the word of promise? "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say to this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." Oh cast up, therefore, cast up, by removing out of the way the deadly stumblingblock of an evil heart of unbelief, and seek through divine grace to have your hearts rooted and grounded in that faith unto which God hath given such mighty power over the adverse and corrupt influences of a sinful world. Were there but the faith which there ought to be in the sincere people of God, it would soon overcome them all and win for the truth of God a glorious victory.

2. This, however, is not all; for with faith in the possibility of a revival, there must be a sense of personal responsibility in regard to the means necessary for producing it. That it is God's work, requiring at every step the interposition of his hand, and manifesting often in a singular manner the sovereignty of his grace, does not the less render it dependent on the instrumentality of his people; and if the greatness of the effect produced appear many times so completely out of proportion to the smallness of the means employed, that we feel constrained to look almost exclusively to the hand of God, so far from regarding this as a proof that little or no account should be made of human instrumentality, it should but stimulate us the more dili-

gently to employ it, as being evidently crowned by God with such superabundant honour and blessing. But to put forth the instrumentality necessary to bring about, or to sustain a revived state of religion, a feeling of personal responsibility on the part both of pastors and people, is indispensable. In the pastors no doubt first and most prominently—but not in them alone—there must be the sympathy of other hearts, leading to the united co-operation of other hands. But if men sink the feeling of their own responsibility in that of the minister or the church at large—if, seeing so much iniquity prevailing and so many difficulties standing in the way of reformation, they look each one to his neighbour for giving the requisite application, and satisfy themselves with the thought that *they* can do little or nothing in the matter, what reasonable expectation can be entertained of the needed reformation ever taking place? Who then will pray as if any thing depended on the success of his prayers? Who will manifest a proper and becoming concern for the prevailing sinfulness? Who will order his conversation, and lay out his talents and use his opportunities, as if it stood with him in a measure to turn the tide of ungodliness and revive the interests of piety? We may confidently answer, none—for a want of felt responsibility on the part of individual members will never fail to produce the sad spectacle of a slumbering church carelessly looking on while iniquity proceeds in its course, and sinners are perishing in their guilt.

Oh! that we could get you to feel aright the obligation which rests on you as individuals to promote this divine work—we should not despair of vanquishing every other difficulty and dislodging every other hindrance. And yet what should be more seriously and constantly felt by every true follower of Jesus than this? If that be indeed your character, then ye are witnesses for the truth as it is in Christ, to go forth and confess him before men—ye are “the light of the world” to relieve its darkness, “the salt of the earth” to restrain its corruption—the priests, who must intercede for its ungodliness and draw down on it the blessing of Heaven—the regenerating leaven, which is to spread from

heart to heart, from life to life, till the whole is leavened. For *you* to be unconcerned about the salvation of men, and bear no effective hand in it, would be to leave one great design unfulfilled for which salvation has been extended to you—ah! it would be to show that you are yet yourselves strangers to its blessings. The progress of salvation is an object of intense interest to the angels of heaven, who bend from their habitations of glory with eager desire to behold the turning of immortal souls to the way of peace—and O can it be viewed with silent indifference by the Redeemed on earth, themselves rescued from the pit of destruction, and spared for the very purpose of being fellow-workers with God in the operations of his grace? No, it is impossible they can be unconcerned and inactive spectators of this blessed work; as members of Christ's body, and having the principles of grace implanted in their souls, they are bound and called upon to interest themselves in the redemption of sinners; they must not roll it back upon the ministers of the gospel, as if it belonged only to their line of things, nor indeed can they do so without turning aside from their Christian calling, and virtually becoming chargeable with the blood of souls.

We cannot speak otherwise of the responsibility which cleaves to each individual member of the church of Christ—for it necessarily grows out of their standing and character and yet the want of a proper feeling of this among even the better part of Christians, and consequently a want of lively and active faith in the possibility of attaining to another state of things, these are what we have most reason of all to deplore as standing in the way of a diffused and living Christianity. It is not that the world is doing so much to withstand it, but that the church will do so little to establish and promote it—not that there are such giant forces to contend against, but that there is such a mournful deficiency of those feelings and principles, to which the promise of success and victory is given; this is what chiefly fills us with concern and makes us tremble for the issue. Did we but see a feeling of solemn responsibility taking possession of the Lord's people, each one charging him-

self with concern for the salvation of those around him, and in a spirit of faith going on to strive and look for the performance of that which is promised, then should we rest assured that the Lord was about to revive his work in the midst of us—for then would his people have become alive to their proper calling, and be in a fitting condition to receive and manifest the divine energy, the covenant-blessing, which through them as its appointed channel, the Lord is purposed to shed forth upon a sinful world. Go, then, we beseech you, and take the matter home to your own bosom, and consider with all solemnity what is required at your hands; it is with you that the work of reformation must begin, and from you and through you that it must proceed; the quickening impulse of renewed life must first be felt to throb at the heart, must first move and animate the sincere people of Christ, before it can reach those, who are in a state of distance and alienation. And if you do indeed cherish and manifest it in the manner we now exhort you to do, the Lord will assuredly for your sakes “rebuke the destroyer,” and cause righteous judgment to proceed.

LECTURE XIII.

The Necessity of the Revival of Religion in the present circumstances of the Church.—Encouragements especially applicable to the present time.

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“Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?”
Psalm lxxxv, 6.

THE subject which I have been requested to illustrate is the necessity for a revival of religion in the present circumstances of the church, and the encouragement especially applicable to the present time,—a subject which you will at once perceive embraces two very different and distinct topics—the necessity and the encouragement; the former pointing to facts and circumstances humiliating to the believer and condemnatory of the church; the latter to promises and prospects, illustrative of God’s abounding grace, and calculated to inspire his children with holiest expectation and devoutest gratitude: the lesson inscribed on the one is, “Be ye afflicted and mourn,” &c.; that on the other is “Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs.” In the subject, therefore, there are all the varieties of light and shade. The encouragement, like the bright figures on the foreground of a beautiful picture, are relieved against the dark object that forms and fills up the background; and the effect of the whole harmonises with the portraiture of the plan of God’s grace in Christ, wherein the darkness of man’s ruined and undone condition sets off the splendour of Emmanuel’s love, and the creature’s hopelessness furnishes the appropriate contrast to the freeness and the brilliance of the Creator’s promises—a contrast beautifully exemplified in such passages as these—“O Israel,

thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help:" "Ye have sold yourselves for nought; but ye shall be redeemed without money." Let me call your attention,

I. To the necessity for a revival in the present circumstances of the church; and here there are obviously two questions to be considered, viz.—When is a revival necessary? and what are the specific circumstances in the present state of the church that demonstrate the existence of that necessity? The former of these questions has, I have no doubt, been already largely discussed in the previous lectures, and therefore I shall content myself with a very general and rapid notice of it. Wherever there are the proofs of spiritual death in, or around the professing church—wherever there is an actual decay or dormancy in the energy or activity of its members, or wherever there is the absence of a progression in those habits and feelings and principles that distinguish the divine life, there is a necessity for a revival. If, among the professors of a holy faith, we find a growing conformity to the world in its passions, its policy, or its practices,—a want of sensibility to the claims of God, to the glory of Jesus, or to the imperishable interests of immortal souls,—a deadness in devotion—a lack of spirituality in sentiment and feeling,—a willingness to parade a dwarfed and shrivelled Christianity before the world, as if it were the healthful and full-grown impersonation of a living and energetic faith—we say a revival is necessary; and this notwithstanding any scattered and splendid exceptions of almost apostolic zeal, or seraphic fervour, that may give lustre or dignity to the age or the church with which they are connected.

There is no difficulty in deciding when a revival is necessary in the world of nature; let winter protract her reign through the months of spring; and spread her mantle of snow, like a spotless winding sheet, over the fields that were wont at that season to be green and gladsome; let the time for the singing of birds roll round, and no music be heard in the leafless groves; let the sower fill his hand with the precious seed, but be denied the opportunity of scattering it over the earth; and although we may witness here and there the snowdrop rearing its head,

as the harbinger of vernal beauty, amid the ungenial snows, we at once conclude that a revival is necessary; and we long for the genial breeze, the refreshing shower, the invigorating sunbeam, that earth may escape from the blight of a long winter, array herself in all the bridal loveliness of an opening spring, and give forth the promise of a rich and luxuriant harvest. The same conclusion forces itself upon us, when a cold and withering summer succeeds an early and promising seed-time, checking the advances of a needed vegetation, and almost quenching the hopes of the husbandman. The half-opened flower-bud that bends on its weakened stalk seems to plead for the reviving sunbeam to develop its hidden loveliness, and throw the blush of summer beauty on the faded cheek of a drooping world: and so in the world of grace, in the great spiritual garden—when the winter of worldly conformity seems either to retard the buds of promise, or to check their growth after indications of vitality have appeared, we say that a revival is necessary. Or, to drop all metaphor, when there are few conversions under the ministrations of the church, and souls are perishing around her, unpitied and unhelped,—when there is an evident suspension or withdrawal of those spiritual influences that are alone efficient to convince or to comfort; when there is a visible defection from acknowledged principle, or from attained piety—a cold, lukewarm formality, usurping the place of a generous, devoted, living Christianity, we say a revival is required; and every believer who grieves when the Spirit is quenched, or the great salvation is neglected, or the commands of Christ are contemned, or the glories of the latter day are retarded, is bound to utter the prayer—“Wilt thou not revive us again—O that thou wouldst rend the heavens, and come down:” “Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out:” till the Lord fulfils his own gracious promise: “Thy dead men shall live, together w’ith my dead body shall they arise; awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs.” But let us attend more particularly to the specific circumstances in the present condition of the church that

render a revival necessary: and the first proof that presents itself to our view is the limited extent of the visible church in the present days. If we examine the dimensions and extent of the church, either as laid down in the covenant made with Emmanuel, or as described in the clear and undoubted language of holy prophecy, we find, that these are immeasurably vast, when compared with the actual and limited territory that owns and acknowledges the sway of the Redeemer: In the one, all the kingdoms of the world are delineated as filled with the knowledge of God, kissing the sceptre, and proclaiming the praises of an adored Saviour,—his dominion is from sea to sea, and from the river to the end of the earth; in the other, the territorial extent that is occupied by the professing church of the Lord is very inconsiderable indeed; more abridged I believe than it was in apostolic times, when the word of God had free course and was glorified, and when the gospel of the kingdom was preached amongst all the nations under heaven. Let us take a rapid survey of the state of the earth, beginning with Jerusalem, from whence the light originally emanated; and if we enquire for the church of Christ amongst the Jews—for the descendants of the great companies of priests and people who were added to the faith, we shall ask in vain: the Jews, as a nation, are still obstinately opposed to the very name of Jesus, and amongst them the gospel can scarcely be said to have made any conquest at all. Passing down to Asia Minor, we naturally enquire for those flourishing churches that were the scenes of the miracles and ministrations of our Lord's personal disciples, and history replies that they have passed away: what the power of the false prophet has spared, the superstitions of the Greek church have defaced; and the abodes that were consecrated by the tread of prophets, and hallowed by the residence of apostles, are now the grave-yards of a buried Christianity, or the chosen seats for the palaces of a proud and licentious superstition. And now all is darkness—a darkness, like that of Egypt, that may be felt—standing amid the ruins of the fallen and dilapidated church of Smyrna. If we cast an eye

over Turkey, down to Egypt—athwart Arabia—into Persia, and across it to a great portion of Eastern India, we perceive all these lovely lands, the fairest and richest section of this globe, with a population of at least a hundred millions, under the dominion of the false prophet—living in willing subjection to a system which has rightly been denominated a compound of falsehood, licentiousness, and cruelty; where sanguinary enactment and cunningly-devised legislation seem to render the conversion of its votaries an almost impossibility, and threaten a long and determined resistance ere it will yield to the sway of the cross of Christ.—Arrived at the confines of Mahometan delusion, we find ourselves amongst the high places of heathen idolatry; amid all the wild and revolting abominations of that unhallowed system,—a system pregnant with all that is insulting to humanity,—debasing to the creature, and dishonouring to the Eternal. But who shall describe its fearful limit?—from the torrid zone to the arctic circle, throughout Africa and Asia and much of America—amid the islands of the great sea, it maintains an almost undisturbed sway: and everywhere, from the rude idolatry of Labrador to the more refined and mystic absurdities of Hindostan, it presents the same loathsome, demoralizing, soul-destroying features, burdening the world with its atrocious and cruel ceremonial, and causing to ascend in daily memorial to heaven, the groans of a suffering creation, steeped in unalloyed wretchedness, and oppressed by a system which, while it promises relief, only embitters the misery and aggravates the woe. Ye privileged sons of a happy clime, whose lines have fallen in pleasant places, and whose is a goodly heritage, cast your eyes across the broad waters that roll between and heathen shores; look out on the boundless ocean, not when it sleeps in sullen majesty—a mighty but a waveless sea; mark it at the moment when the hurricanes of heaven have lashed it into wildest fury; when its tossed and angry bosom is strewn with the wreck of a thousand hopes; and it is peace, it is serenity itself, when compared with the tempests of passion and of pride, of lust and of rapine, of cruelty and of crime, which heathenism has let loose on wretched

man, to desolate and destroy the hopes and the happiness of the five hundred millions who live, who die, who perish beneath its sway,—perish without a ray of mercy to gild their path to eternity, or a word of grace to whisper peace to their undying souls. No doubt there are here and there amidst its territory some standard-bearers of the cross, but these are too few and insignificant to affect the general enumeration, or to relieve the hideous gloom;—like scattered stars in a stormy night, twinkling past the edges of the dark clouds that roll above in stupendous masses, they rather serve to reveal than to relieve the intensesness of the gloom that overspreads the sky.

But then, there is Christendom, and surely this at least will be occupied by the visible Church of Christ,—alas! no,—there the Man of Sin reigns, “that son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. And what is there of the church of Christ within his domain? Its every truth is defaced and deteriorated by the admixture of heathen rites and Rabbinical superstition; and crosses and penances and saint worship, with all the other devices by which that merchandise in souls is carried on, are substituted for a simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and for the cordial embracing of the Redeemer, which is required of the sinner in the everlasting gospel.—Christendom—there infidelity has her abode—that system which, robbing the soul of its fond immortality, heaven of its charm, and hell of its horror, is little belter than a noisome sepulchre for all that is lofty in creature hope, and dignified in human virtue. Like heathenism, it assumes many a form, but its leading characteristics are ever the same—the combination of profanity in sentiment with pollution in practice. In Germany, it is seen disguised amid the fascination of an elegant and erudite philosophy,—in France, amid the attractions of a professed liberalism,—but in Britain, once exalted but now disgraced Britain, it is struggling for the ascendancy in the social edifice, undisguised, in all its natural loathsomeness,—a combination of

blasphemy and brutality, most aptly described by the apostle Jude, when he said these men speak evil of those things which they know not; but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves.

Nor is the sad survey complete even now, in Protestant Europe and America, thousands, nay millions have scarcely a "name to live,"—the Sabbath profanation—the neglect of ordinances—the open fraud—the undisguised formality—proclaim how many have a gospel, and yet are ignorant of its glad tidings; and how necessary it is to reduce the bounds of the visible church even within the narrow limits of a professed Protestantism. And what is the conclusion at which we have arrived?—that instead of the church being co-extensive with the world, it is shut up into a corner; and that the truth and the tidings which angels sung of as being tidings of great joy to all people are known only by a few millions on this mighty globe, who scarcely amount to a tenth part of its vast population; and oh, is there not in this melancholy fact an argument that overbears all opposition and demonstrates the necessity for a revival,—yes, for a revival on a grander scale than earth has yet witnessed, as the only mean of fulfilling the blessed promises of a gracious God?—for what is earth when thus spread out before the eye?—a mighty pest-house, a grave-yard—a land of death, with its million piles of dry bones; but even these can live; and it is ours if we have tasted the joys of salvation to utter the fervent prayer,—“Come from the four winds, O Breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live.”

Again, I would remark, that the want of zeal in the church for Emmanuel's glory, the feebleness of what has admirably been termed “the evangelistic spirit,” and the lethargic unconcern with which the perdition of immortal souls is regarded, prove that a revival is necessary. Such a charge may, at first sight, appear scarcely admissible in this bustling and active age,—amid the numerous institutions in vigorous operation for the conversion of the world, and the splendid array of names and contributions that annually attract the public eye, and the dazzling eloquence with which every

triumph on foreign shores is heralded from pulpits and from platforms, it might be imagined that intrepid zeal and sleepless activity were the undoubted characteristics of this excited age; and certainly, if we were called simply to institute a comparison between the criminal supineness of the past century, and the vigour of the present, the efforts of those days will seem at once momentous and magnificent; but when we calmly consider the amount of energy put forth, *as a means to an end*—as the devised and existing machinery to convert the world to Christ—as the effort which is put forth in answer to the claims of God and the calls of a perishing world, we feel as if we would require to blot out such terms as sacrifice and self-denial from the Christian vocabulary altogether. No doubt there are in the present day many able and devoted men in the missionary field,—who are daily proclaiming to us that the heathen are without God and without hope in the world,—that they are hateful and hating one another, and we profess to believe all the dismal representations that are made of those dark places of the earth that are full of the habitations of horrid cruelty—but we meet these cases, not with the sympathy or the sacrifice of generous and noble and sanctified hearts, but with the idle sentimentalism, the sordid avarice, or the grudging and paltry contribution that betokens how utterly insensible we are to Christ's honour as denied by a heathen world, and to the miseries in which earth is steeped as alienated from God.—Yes, instead of Christian zeal and philanthropic effort being now in their prime, they are but in their infancy. If we take the Saviour's command as our rule, his kingdom as the sphere of our appointed operation, the zeal of his apostles as the model of our own,—we cannot fail to be humbled and ashamed. We must be persuaded and convinced that a mighty impulse must be given to the sluggish Christianity of the times,—that there must be an increase of what is called benevolence, both in spirit and in act,—that in fact a revival is necessary, ere the church can take up the language of the apostle and say, "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then are all dead; and that he died

for all, that they who live *should not henceforth live unto themselves*, hut unto Him that died for them and that rose again."

A third remark on this subject is—That the divisions in the church, and the jarring controversies of the age, demonstrate the necessity of a revival, ere the Church can regain her shattered strength, and become beautified with that brotherly love which is the bond of perfectness. Controversy is not in all cases a symptom of a weak or decayed Christianity; on the contrary, the fearless exposure of error, the maintenance of sound principle, the refutation of unsound doctrine, and the resistance of every sentiment that militates directly or indirectly against the faith as it is in Jesus, is indicative of a healthful and vigorous spirit; but, alas! this is not the character of the age—its present contentions have been within the church itself; and its holy unity has been rudely rent by disputes as trivial as those which saddened the heart of an apostle, "when he found one saying I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, and a third, I am of Cephas. It has been nobly said by one of the masterspirits of the age, whose fame is in all the churches, that there is a sad disposition amongst Christians to overlook their great points of agreement, and unduly to magnify their points of difference; that while the latter are minute and microscopic, amounting to no conceivable magnitude when contrasted with the transcendent and all-important subjects on which there reigns the entirest and most perfect agreement, that these infinitesimal distinctions have been made the rallying-points of bitter contention, the very thought of which is enough to humble us all in the dust. And what has been the effect of these intestine oppositions?—not merely that the strength and power of an united church has not been brought to bear upon a wicked and unsubdued world, but that a deeper injury has been done to the interest of truth and righteousness than all external hostilities could by possibility have effected.

I sometimes think that Christian grace is like the diamond. That gem may be cast into the fire, but it will not consume; it will only glow with the lustre of the ruby; it may be struck at with the sword, but it re-

mains a diamond still. It may however be ground down with its own dust,—and the harsh collision of kindred gems will abrade the polished surface of both, and dim and darken their lustre more effectually than all the appliances which science can suggest; and what are the graces of the Christian but gems taken from the mine of God's eternal love, scattered in rich profusion by the hand of his Divine Spirit on the hearts of believers—the ornaments of that robe of needle-work wherein the Spouse of the Redeemer is clad—that no fire, no sword of persecution can destroy? The world's violence cannot spoil them of their sparkling; but the rude and the jarring controversies of Christian men themselves may so darken their surface, that it can scarcely be known whether they are the graces of the Spirit, or the workings of unsanctified passion and unsubdued pride. There is nothing extravagant in this idea; for what have been the effects of these divisions? have they not broken in upon the communion of saints, and rendered it impossible to say as of old, Behold how these Christians love one another? Time was when the circle of holy fellowship was wider than it is now; when it might be said as in apostolic days, that "they ate their bread together with singleness of heart and joy, praising the Lord;" but now each travels on his own path, or if brought together by the unforeseen occurrences of Providence, spend their time in contending for their respective peculiarities, and separate weakened rather than recruited in the faith. And have not these contentions hindered our prayers, distracted the attention from nobler occupations, and retarded the growth of vital godliness? The hours and opportunities that might have been employed in assaulting the strongholds of sin and Satan have been spent in repelling internal assailants, and the gifts that would have been most usefully employed against the empire of darkness have been exercised against the real obliquities or the fancied aberrations of the soldiers of the cross; and thus has the lustre of Christian charity been darkened, the strength of Christian principles been weakened, and the power of Christian prayer been enervated: For if it be the solemn charge of the Lord Jesus that we should

love one another, as he gave us commandment—if his parting prayer for his church was that it might be one—if his marked declaration was, By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, by your love one to another—must not unnecessary division, unauthorised schism, provoke his displeasure, quench his Spirit, and result in the withholding of the grace without which the church must wither and weaken and decay?

And how can this state of things be remedied? either by fierce persecution or by a revival of religion. Let times of trouble again return: and let malice armed with power go forth to destroy the saints of God; let the furnace and the scaffold be prepared again; let the great contest between truth and error be waged openly as of old; and when the fire blazes hotly—the masses of precious metal that are to be found in all Christian communities, with their respective amount of alloy, will be melted down—much of the dross will be separated from them all, and the pure metal will run together, and form one flood of molten gold. But is such a process of union at all desirable? Blessed be God, there is another:—the effusion of the Holy Spirit will effect the same end by a gentler and more gracious operation!; it has accomplished it in other days; it has partially effected it in the times in which we live:—the Spirit of the Lord is a Spirit of peace, of meekness, of love, of gentleness, of patience; it is his to draw our souls near to Jesus, to bring us to his bosom, till our hearts are replenished with the tenderness and affection that throbbed in the spirit of the Redeemer;—it is his to teach us how to love Christ's image in all his children, enabling us to throw the mantle, not of a spurious, but of a spotless charity over the weakness of our brethren, sweetly uniting all who are in the faith in one holy, happy brotherhood, and repressing the first movements of bitterness or clamour in the soul by the gentle but effective reproof—Peace, be still, for ye are all brethren; therefore “let all bitterness and wrath, anger, clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice, and be ye kind one toward another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.”

Finally, I remark that the languor of the devotional spirit in the church, demonstrates the necessity for a revival of religion. It is one of the strange anomalies of these times, that we meet with a ready assent to all that can be urged or argued on the omnipotence of believing, importunate prayer; and yet rarely are brought into contact with the thing itself. The theory is universally accredited—the act is generally neglected; just as if the clear statements of Scripture regarding the potency, the almost miraculous efficacy of prayer were designed as a pillow on which the church might slumber, rather than as a mighty stimulus to rouse to heroic achievements and urge on to glorious efforts in the cause of the Redeemer. Let a spirit from the upper sanctuary enter into our halls of sacred convocation, or stand upon our hearths amid all the quietude of the domestic circle, or enter into the deep recesses of our secret chambers, and would he imagine that our faith was this—that prayer had power with God, and could prevail; and would he return to yon bright and blessed abode, assured that we felt that earnest, humble, persevering prayer was the mightiest creature instrumentality for hurrying on the mirific splendours of the millennial age? Ah! there is need for a revival here, that which alone will be produced by the outpouring of the Spirit, the Spirit of grace and of supplication. O ye professed followers of the Lamb, who are apt to imagine that the piety of the age is more fervid and extensive than it is, listen to this command so truly applicable both to ministers and people: “I have set watchmen on thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace, day nor night: ye that make mention of the name of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish and make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.” There is the command, but where is the obedience? Jerusalem is in heaps, the wide earth is the palace of sin and the prison-house of piety—there is not yet the lighting down of Jehovah’s arm, nor such displays of glory as when he shook the house, and filled all the disciples with the Holy Ghost; there is not the simultaneous conversion of thousands to God—and where is the prayer—the prayer without ceas-

ing—the watching unto prayer, the being instant in prayer? In this we are short, far short of what duty and grace demand. Only reflect on the chilling formality and the withering faithlessness that too often attach to the devotions of the sanctuary—on the homes in which baptized children sleep, that are never consecrated at all by the voice of prayer—on the closets that have never been sanctified as the scenes of a soul's breathing after God; on the limited number of prayer associations in the land, and on the difficulty of preserving them from instant and rapid decay; and the proof will be more than sufficient, that it is time for God to work, yea to revive his work in the midst of the years. Gather up these scattered thoughts: the abridged sphere of the church's efforts, and the feebleness of these efforts themselves—her divided condition, and her lifeless piety—and say is there not a necessity for a revival? Shall we believe that when God's Spirit is poured out from on high, his graces, like tides of molten silver, shall first enrich his chosen ones and then roll out to the whole earth to aggrandise and ennoble its impoverished children?—shall we believe, that when the showers come down on the mountains of Zion to beautify and refresh its drooping herbage, that they will sweep in resistless torrents over the whole world, overturning in their course the idolatries of the nations, fertilising every barren land, gladdening every wild and wilderness, and causing the most blighted regions to blossom like the rose?—shall we believe that when a revival takes place on a scale commensurate with the Church's necessities, that she shall awake from her slumber, put on her beautiful garments, and, rich in all the graces wherewith the Saviour so plenteously adorns his chosen Bride, go forth in his name to speak peace unto the nations,—to unfold to them the blessings of the new and well-ordered covenant, and invite them to enter on an age of almost seraphic happiness?—shall we believe that when a revival is produced, that the internal harassments and vexations of the church shall cease,—that the Eternal Spirit shall hush into silence all contemptible disagreements,—“that the envy of Ephraim shall depart, and the adver-

saries of Judah be cut off—that Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim,—that the hearts of Christians shall become almost visibly the habitation of God through the Spirit, and be irradiated with all the moral glory of his Divine presence,—and shall we not plead and pray for such a time? The loftiest patriotism, the noblest philanthropy, the purest faith demand that we shall cry aloud and spare not,—yea that we shall mourn and lament because that day is delayed. Oh, if the Church were but alive to this urgent necessity,—if she but felt how much of guilt attaches to her because the blessing is withheld,—if she but considered how *her* unbelief and prayerlessness stands in the way, as it were, of Jehovah's sweetest promises,—it would humble her to the very dust because of her sin, and her acknowledged guiltiness would be the harbinger of the day of love. Ye children of the covenant—go, weep amid the graves of perished millions,—weep amid the graves of buried graces,—weep amid the ruins which your own lifelessness has caused in the church and around it; and when the tear-drop of contrition has filled the eye of the soul, look through it to a wounded Saviour, and say, “O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the year—in wrath remember mercy.”

The second branch of the subject assigned us, is—What are the encouragements especially applicable to present times?—that is, what reason has the Church of Christ in those days for expecting a rich and plenteous, effusion of spiritual influence throughout her borders? The general dissatisfaction with the existing state of things, or in other words the general agreement that a revival is necessary, we regard as an encouraging symptom. During the lapse of the last century, the Church settled upon her lees, slumbered and slept, dreaming of the security of her position, and the sufficiency of her effort,—as if exhausted with the immense outputting of energy which the Reformation called forth, she fell back into a false and fatal indifference to the glory of her divine Head, and the all-important ends of her own institution; she seemed to forget her holy calling altogether; error was extensively disseminated, and

formalism became prevalent amongst many of her professors, while a perishing world was left to pursue its career of destruction unpitied and unrelieved. But through the tender mercy of the Lord, that state of apathy exists no longer; and although it cannot be said that it is supplanted by the zeal and activity and faith which the Lord demands, it may at least be affirmed—that sorrow for past neglect, confession of present deadness, and a keen, a growing sensibility to existing deficiency prevails in the church; and this we hail as the prospect of better days. When we examine the word of God, we find that before the great resurrection in the valley of dry bones, the prophet was led to mark and bewail their lifelessness;—the period of reconstructed symmetry and of celestial life was preceded by the picture of unburied skeletons, on whose ghastliness the prophet mused, till he felt it to be almost impossible that they could live at all; but that deep conviction was the precursor of a rustling amid these piles of death,—the Spirit had entered into them and they became a great army. We read moreover, that before the prodigal was enfolded in his father's embrace, and enriched with all the precious tokens of his favour, that he had become thoroughly dissatisfied with his estranged and outcast condition, and was bewailing and confessing the sin of his past misspent hours. And who does not know that in the history of the soul, the consciousness of misery, the feeling of guilt, the humble confession of unworthiness, the sensibility of much unthankfulness and unfaithfulness to the Lord of all, is symptomatic of a work of grace within, and is most usually the harbinger of a revival in that soul? Just as the glimmering of the morning star, the last in the train of night, while it speaks of the darkness that was, but is passing away, heralds in the rising of a cloudless sun; so the gleams of conviction, shining upon the soul, warrant the expectation that the Sun of Righteousness is about to arrive with healing under his wings. When therefore we find the Church, throughout her different sections, deeply impressed with the fact that she does not occupy that position in the world that she ought, sighing after an enlarged spirituality, grieving over her

withered condition, and proclaiming at once that her defections have restrained the effusions of grace, and that her all-transcendent duties cannot be discharged till her righteousness be made to go forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burneth, we may rest assured that the set time to favour Zion draws on apace—and that the Lord will speedily beautify her abundantly with the joys of his presence, and render her a praise and a glory in the earth.

A second encouragement especially applicable to present times is the missionary zeal of the age, and the success that has attended the labours of Christian missionaries in modern days. There are two great duties incumbent on the church in all ages, the simultaneous discharge of which is essential to her prosperity, namely, the maintenance of the truth, and the propagation of it in the earth. She must hold fast the form of sound words; and she must go out into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. In fact, the former necessarily implies and leads to the latter; for the faith once delivered to the saints clearly demands a persevering and continued effort “to make the ways of the Lord known upon earth, and his saving health amongst all nations.” Now, although this was not denied by the Church during her age of apathy, it was literally neglected in practice; and the close of the last century may be named as the date of the rise of modern missions. It would be no easy task to trace the progress of the noble efforts made since in that holy cause—to describe the large and comprehensive plans that are at this moment in operation for the evangelization of man—or tell of the languages in which the word of God can now be read—or detail the names of the tribes and nations on every quarter of the globe which the heralds of the cross have visited;—“the angel is in fact flying through the midst of heaven having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell in the earth, and to every nation and kindred and people and tongue:” and while his sound is going out unto all the earth, the dews of grace are silently distilling on the souls of thousands, and preparing them to appreciate the messages of mercy and the glad tidings of great joy which the gospel un-

folds.—Never before were efforts so many or so mighty employed; and never had the church such prospect of a blessed result: the fields are already white unto the harvest—and where we only expected that the ranker weeds which for ages have been exhaling their noisome vapours on the breeze would be withering, we already behold them torn up by the roots, and their places supplied by those flowers which at once exhibit the humility of the lily of the valley, and exhale the fragrance of the rose of Sharon;—even on Judah's withered stem, there are symptoms of efflorescence; and here and there, like Aaron's rod of old, it is beautified with the lovely almond flower and enriched with the ripened fruit. Amongst the nations where the power of heathenism was most deeply riveted, the most marvellous changes are going forward, through the combined influences of Providential movement, and the workings of grace. Who can read the splendid and gorgeous illustrations which Dr. Duff throws around this subject in his treatise on India and its missions, or trace the noble and successful inroads on idolatry made by Dr. Wilson, (in whose character we find so richly blended the erudition of the philosopher with the devotion and piety of the believer,) not to speak of the success of others connected with kindred associations, without feeling that God is beckoning the church onward to certain success,—that he is calling on her emphatically to arise and put on strength, *for the glory of the Lord is risen upon her?* And when we behold her beginning to respond to that call—shaking herself from the dust—claiming the earth as the Lord's—gathering in her trophies ere she has scarcely planted a foot on the field of conflict at all; when we hear of whole islands, as in the South seas, turning from dumb idols to the service of the living God—nations being literally born in a day, can we fail to regard this as a precious encouragement not only to persevere in the work which the Lord hath blessed, but to believe that he is about to open the windows of heaven and drop down fatness on all the pastures of Zion?

The third encouragement to which we would point is the increased spirit of prayer in the church. In the

records of the church of Christ, it will be found that there exists an invariable connection between the grace of supplication and the gift of the Spirit, the former being in fact the result, the first result usually of his blessed influences—the very utterance of an importunate petition in the immediate presence of the Eternal God, in tones of deepest humility and loftiest confidence, being itself an indication that the Holy Ghost has touched that heart, and is preparing to associate with the very feebleness of these petitions, effects of the most magnificent and divine character. Indeed all the remarkable interpositions of Sovereign goodness have been preceded by the revived spirit of prayer. Moses cried unto God amid the varied distresses of Israel, and the Lord opened a pathway through them all;—he earnestly besought God's favour for himself—and the Lord passed by and proclaimed all his goodness. Solomon laid aside his regal crown—and amid the gathered thousands of Jacob, entreated God's favour for his church and people, and the fire came down from heaven, and the light of God's glory—the splendour of the Shekinah filled the temple. Elijah, who was a man of like passions with ourselves, prayed, and the heavens became as brass; he prayed again and their windows were opened. Amid the idolatries of Baal he stood alone on Mount Carmel—a witness for Jehovah;—a resistless testimony was about to be vouchsafed to the cause of truth and for the overthrow of error: it was preceded by prayer: that holy man, dauntless and unmoved, amid the fretted passions, and the wild orgies of the priests of sin, cast himself on the arm of God; pronounced his simple request at his throne, and scarce had ceased his utterance till the required proof was gloriously furnished. The outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost was preceded by prayer. In short, with reference to all the promises of God, whether these affect the individual or the church, it remaineth true,—that for all these things, saith the Lord, will I be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them. Now, while we dare not think with complacency on the evidences of the Church's spirituality, or say of her avowed adherents as was said of the penitent persecutor of old, Behold he prayeth, still

we must not despise the day of small things, and when we find a greater prominence given in all the ministrations of the sanctuary to the office and work of the Spirit, an increased attendance on meetings for prayer, a more willing disposition in all emergencies to have recourse to public and united prayer;—and above all, when throughout the entire church there is a union of sentiment and a harmony of hearts on one topic issuing in the ceaseless supplication from the closet, the domestic circle, the prayer meeting, the solemn assembly, that the Lord would revive his work—can we doubt that he who has quickened the desire will abundantly satisfy it; and that the rekindled and enlarged fervency will usher in a pentecostal day brighter and more blessed than any which the world ever saw before?

A fourth ground of encouragement may be found in the actual revivals that are taking place in various parts of the world at present. Into the details of these it is not necessary that I should enter—a passing glance is all that our subject or our circumstances will admit of. In America, for example, there have been unquestionably in many congregations the evidences of the glorious marchings of the King of Zion; for after all the abatements (and we confess they are not few nor small,) that require to be made, because of the spurious excitement, and the wild reveries, and the undisguised fanaticism which in the land have occasionally been substituted for a genuine revival of religion—there remains enough of decided proof of multitudes of perishing sinners subdued to the obedience of the faith, and led willingly to glory alone in the cross of Christ, to warrant us in exclaiming what hath not God wrought. In Eastern India, too, in the district of Krishnagur, God's power has been gloriously manifested: seventy villages in one neighbourhood are enquiring after Jesus; one thousand of their inhabitants are already received into the fellowship of the church of Christ, and many more are seeking the way to Zion with their faces thitherward. In the islands of the great Pacific, the same holy scenes are transacting; for we find it thus recorded in recent intelligence: "Since the commencement of the year 1838, a remarkable change appears to have taken place;

the outpouring of the Spirit has been of a very marked and extensive character; all ages, from the hoary head to the child of eight years; all classes, from the highest to the lowest, and from the most moral to the most profligate, appear to have partaken more or less in the excitement and awakening that has occurred." "The king and queen of the islands, with all their train, have become regular attendants upon the means of grace, and we cannot but hope that the latter is decidedly born of God." From the island of Oahu, Mr. Bishop writes: "That at his station he hopes that about a thousand have already experienced the power of renewing grace, and seven hundred and sixty have been received into the church." On the continent of Europe, amidst the neology of Germany and the infidelity of France, there is much to cheer; the evangelical spirit is awakening from its torpor, and the churches abroad are being furnished with the demonstration that the time to favour Zion is at hand; and in our own beloved and highly-privileged land—the scenes of Shotts and Cambuslang, with all their wondrous results, of which our fathers told us, have been graciously renewed, and both in the Church and amongst the Dissenters have there been repeated shakings of the dead and dried bones; our ears may even yet catch the sound of the rustling as bone comes to his bone, under the potent, irresistible efficacy of an Almighty Spirit. And just as, when we witness the large and heavy rain-drop descending on the withered earth, we conclude that the shower is at hand—that this is but its harbinger; and just as, when we witness streaks of golden light impinging the dull and gloomy eastern horizon, we conclude that the sun rolls on, and will speedily look forth from the windows of the morning, rejoicing, like a strong man, to run his race: so do we regard these gracious visitations in the spiritual world, not as the ample and completed accomplishment of specific promise, but as the commencement of an age of grace—the preparatives for earth's approaching jubilee,—the pledge of a Redeemer's unchanged love—a love yet to be more universally realised, when, amid the harmonies of the world's praise, it shall be announced, "The earth is full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

We would advert very shortly as a fifth ground of encouragement, to the difficulties with which the cause of God is now embarrassed, to the false spirit of the age, and to the evil temper of the times: all these warrant the hope that the Lord will vindicate his own cause, and prove that verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth. Undoubtedly the present age is pregnant with principles directly subversive of truth and righteousness; the political heavens are in many places veiled and gloomy, and clouds are hurrying over the horizon of the Church that forebode a coming tempest,—the supremacy of God's word, as the ultimate standard by which all opinions and practices must be tried, is questioned in a thousand ways—and men, boasting of their own prodigious wisdom, attempt to narrow the application of its eternal truths—to subordinate its express dictates to the fiat of fallible man, and to banish it altogether from its place as the guide of faith and of manners. *We regard in fact all the dangers with which the vital Christianity of the age is menaced as hinging on the doctrine of the Bible's supremacy.* The controversy with Popery, the warfare with a daring infidelity, the contests with errorists of all shades, and the resistance of the graspings of a disguised or open Erastianism, all turn upon the simple question of the supremacy of the Scriptures over all men, all laws, all powers, all principles, and the repeated, determined, hitherto unheard-of invasion of that truth in various forms, constitutes one of the darkest features in these troublous times. But even this we regard as fraught with encouragement; it has thrown the Church on her spiritual resources; it has led her to a closer and more affectionate reliance on her divine Head; and as the result of this, her strength is consolidating, even while her difficulties increase; and the cry that is wrung out, perhaps in bitterness, from her wounded and aggrieved heart, "It is time for thee to work, O Lord, for man has made void thy law," is the recognition in faith of Jehovah's sure and unalterable declaration—that at even tide it shall be light; for "when the enemy cometh in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him."

Finally, encouragement may be drawn from the belief that the days of latter glory are near at hand. We have no intention of entering the field of unfulfilled prophecy, to draw therefrom any minute illustrations of this position; all that is requisite is evidence of the facts that there is a period of coming enlargement and prosperity to the kingdom of the Redeemer, and that there are peculiar features in the present times different in many respects from what has been witnessed before, and evidently prognosticating immense changes in the world at large, which in all likelihood will illustrate the judgment as well as the mercy of the Most High. Whatever opinions any man may have formed of the immediate prospects of the church of Christ, he cannot doubt that there are great though hidden results on the wheel of providence. The revolutionary spirit which is shaking Europe to its centre, the waning power of the crescent—the dismemberment of the Turkish dominion—the symbolical drying up of the great river—the shaking of the papal power in Russia and in Prussia—the general preparations for war amid universal eulogies on the blessings of peace—the approaching closeness of the conflict between light and darkness; these are some of the plain and unambiguous movements in providence that cannot be overlooked, the evident intimations that the prophetic periods are rapidly filling up, and that the latter days, the times of glory, are near at hand. True, there is much of perplexity and fear associated with the intermediate procedure: the stone cut out of the mountains without hands must dash in pieces all other dominions, and scatter their power and their pride like chaff out of the threshing-floor, before it becomes the mountain filling the whole earth; but that need be no cause of alarm to the people of God,—no, not if the powers of heaven were even now shaken, for “when these things begin to come to pass, the Lord hath said, Lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh—Behold the fig-tree, and all the trees, when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own-selves that summer is now nigh at hand; so likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.” Having then these

holy encouragements, let us as the professed and covenanted children of the kingdom, arise and work the Lord's work in the earth, with a fixed belief in the sovereignty of God: let us combine assiduous effort with importunate prayer for the erection of this kingdom around—let no apparent difficulties enfeeble our faith or enervate our exertions, for the work is the Lord's, and he who is infinitely concerned about it will be our strength and our shield. But oh let us all remember that we have something more to do with a revival than to philosophise about its character, or to dwell upon its likelihood. The first, the great question with us all must be, Has the Spirit quickened my dead soul—Has he convinced *me* of sin and righteousness and judgment? for what will it avail that you cordially entertain the most scriptural notions of the glories of the coming kingdom of Jesus, if there is not established within you the kingdom which is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost? Awake, ye slumberers who are at ease in Zion, and search your hearts with this simple question, Have I believed in the Lord Jesus? and then, when you have given your own souls to the Saviour, you will be prepared to plead in sincerity, "Wilt thou not revive us, O Lord? O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years," &c. Amen.

LECTURE XIV.

Practical Addresses and Counsels, pointing out the immediate Duty of Christians and others in connection with the Revival of Religion, and the Advantages of Expecting, Seeking, and Labouring for it.

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“Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger towards us to cease. Wilt thou be angry with us for ever? wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations? Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee? Show us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation.”—PSALM lxxxv, 4-7.

HE is no Christian who cares only for his own soul; he is no “fellow-citizen with the saints and of the household of God,” if the desires of his heart and the energies of his hand be limited to the affairs of his own household; nor can he be regarded as an heir of the heavenly Canaan whose soul breathes not the constant fervent prayer that peace may be within Jerusalem’s walls and glory given to Jerusalem’s King. You will try your heahs by this test when you think with what overflowing love your Lord forsook the glory of his Father’s throne, and died, the Just for the unjust, that he might bring you unto God. Have ye his spirit? are ye his, and one with him, without a longing of heart for the honour of his cross and the coming of his kingdom?

Behold in our text an example more befitting the followers of the Lamb. The prayer of the Psalmist is not for himself: “Turn *us*, O God of our salvation;” neither is it for his own household: “Wilt thou not revive *us* again, that thy *people* may rejoice in thee? Show us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation.” It is not for himself, or family, or national prosperity, in a worldly sense, but for the whole body of the people, and as a people of God; that they may be

turned unto the Lord, revived from their spiritual deadness, delivered from their present distresses, saved from impending wrath, and made to rejoice in the loving-kindness of him who is King of kings, and Lord of lords.

It is generally, and with good reason, supposed that this beautiful and affecting psalm was written after the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon: "Lord, thou hast been favourable unto thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob." But that they have since become estranged from God, and are lying under the tokens of the Divine displeasure, clearly appears from the humble, earnest supplication of our text: "Turn us, O God; wilt thou be angry with us for ever?" It is devoutly to be observed; and Oh! most of all ought Christians, in the clearer light and more bountiful grace of the gospel, to observe it, that past mercies, so far from being forgotten amidst present troubles, should then more than ever be gratefully called to mind, and used as arguments to self-abasement, and as pleas in prayer for a restoration to the Divine favour. And true it is, that when God has that favour in store for any people, he gives first the spirit of grace and of supplication to sue for it; and hence a prayerful heart in the people is at once the surest sign of the coming favour, and the fittest preparation for receiving it. And be it remarked, that this text, as it is given by inspiration of God and for the service of the sanctuary, is thus made in reality not the prayer of the Psalmist for the people, but the prayer of the people for themselves.

And thus we behold the people of God recounting the mercies which had restored them to their beloved land, lamenting their subsequent estrangement, and deprecating the wrath due to their ingratitude and deadness of heart: as much as to say in their communings before God, Will nothing do?—neither the severity of an ignominious exile, nor the kindness that has brought back their captivity? Must they go on to multiply their provocations, and will God be angry with them for ever? No, there is a remedy for these sore and otherwise interminable griefs and fears—one that will

heal the fountain of bitterness in their own hearts, and prevent the Divine anger from being drawn out to all generations. That remedy is just the prayer of our text. Let it be in every heart, as dictated and taught by the Spirit of God; and as the Lord liveth, and cannot deny himself, the prayer of a convicted, fearing, and penitent people will be all fulfilled. The nation, brought to a sense of their ingratitude for past mercies, and blessed with a true spiritual and religious revival, will praise the Lord for this new manifestation of his goodness, and as sure as they depart from their provocations, the Lord will cause his anger towards them to cease, and his people shall rejoice in him.

But what of all this, if the affairs of the ancient church be all that we have to learn from our text? Far from it. The Psalmist merely pens what the Holy Spirit indites; and the prayer of our text is given to the church of God for every age. It is not set down in the way of historical record, to tell us how this ancient people prayed; but to teach us how we and every people under heaven ought to pray. And the more humbly and hopefully ought we to take the lesson thus conveyed, seeing that the circumstances of our text bear a striking parallel to those of our time. Thus serving to fix in every mind the conviction that we are divinely called, in our equal need of a revival, to betake ourselves to this very prayer as the mean of recovery from our spiritual deadness, and as certainly prescribed to us as to the ancient people of God.

You cannot fail, after what you have heard in the preceding lecture, to be deeply impressed with the necessity of a religious revival in our land. And notwithstanding all that you have heard and felt with deep sorrow, I notice a few things by way of renewing the impression, as on the strength of that will depend much of the practical application which we would urge on every soul in the conclusion of this course. It has been well ascertained, that in the head city of this empire, nearly half a million of souls are without a bible in their possession. Think of half a million of heathens in one city, and in this 19th century of the Christian era. In the two chief cities of Scotland—a land once

so famed in all the world for piety and religious knowledge—far upwards of a hundred thousand souls are habitually estranged from the house of God and the decent observance of the Christian Sabbath. We fear there is no prayer, no catechising of children, no voice of salvation and rejoicing in all their tabernacles. And in the whole of this smaller division of the island, not less than half a million of people are living in the like ignorance, and dying in the like dreary prospects of eternity. Then look to the papal millions of Ireland, at this day insulting God with idolatrous sacrifices, and training the young in the superstitious rites of the darkest ages. See what apostles of Socinianism are travelling from city to city, and finding a ready way to inculcate upon the ignorant, the vicious, and the worldly, the belief that the Saviour is not the Son of God, and that there is no healing balm for sinners in the blood of atonement! And now the like classes are equally accessible to that monster Socialism; so zealous as to employ its missionaries in public works; and so cunning as to entrap the unwary by its new name, which, being somewhat engaging, may serve also to disguise the utter infidelity and detestable morals of its system. Is not a revival of the work of God much needed in the midst of moral pestilences such as these? But alas! whilst your souls shudder at the outward spreading of these deadly mischiefs, you are called to look within the pale of professed communion; and who is able to reckon there the amount of open vice, of secret heart-cherished sin, of covetousness which is idolatry, of mammon worship, of hypocrisy and spiritual deadness with its name to live?

And whilst we have before us so great a prevalence of wilful and deep-rooted sin, as dishonouring to Jehovah as it is humbling to our hearts; have we not reason, as directed by our text, to recount the many mercies which God, in former times, hath so abundantly vouchsafed to this highly-favoured land—a land rescued from popish ignorance and superstition—a land once esteemed the fairest daughter of the Reformation—a land of bibles, of churches, and schools; of prayer, of piety, and intelligence—a people whose sires bled on

every hill and dale for upholding the Headship of Christ, and have handed down to our day those sacred rights and privileges which they bought with their blood? Truly we may say, on looking to the past, "Lord, thou hast been favourable unto thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob." And seeing now so much division amongst us, so much indifference to truths once so dear, so malignant an hostility in multitudes to the very name and cause of our Redeemer; can we fail, amidst these proofs of church-defection and decaying godliness, to be moved by these obvious tokens of the Divine displeasure, and to exclaim with the Psalmist in godly fear, "Wilt thou be angry with us for ever? wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations?"

It is time, from such tokens, to take the alarm, and seek our refuge in the prayer of our text: "Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger towards us to cease: wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee? Show us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation." We are now as the church was in ancient times, when the Spirit of God imparted these appropriate terms of supplication; and when we contemplate the church of our Redeemer as the ark in which our immortal souls are carried, when "deep calleth unto deep," and the signs of judgment surround us, we regard also the prayer of our text as the dove sent forth to seek a token for good from Him who can say to the troubled sea, "Peace, be still" and we are led to thank God and take courage when we see the dove return with this answer to the church's prayer which we have in the words immediately following our text: "I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints; but let them not turn again to folly. Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase. Righteousness shall go before him and shall set us in

the way of his steps." This answer to prayer, this grant of the revival prayed for, is all that the hearts of God's people can desire. And if, from the present aspect of things around you,—the abounding iniquity, the spiritual deadness, and the signs of impending judgment, you are convinced of the necessity of a religious revival in our land; if thus you learn what is the mind of the Spirit respecting it,—how it is promised in answer to prayer, and how certainly it must prove remedial of the evils you have cause to deplore; then come with one heart and aim to the practical end which this course of lectures has in view; and let us unite, in humble dependence on the Divine aid, to consider,

I. How devoutly is such revival to be desired;

II. How confidently to be expected; and,

III. How earnestly to be sought.

I. First, then, we are to speak of the extreme desirableness of a religious revival. We do not of course include every thing that may bear that name. We offer no defence of whatever may be false, spurious, hypocritical, or of mere temporary excitement; but mean only that which is really the work of the Spirit of God, in awakening sinners to a sense of their danger, in fastening on their souls a conviction of sin, from which they shall find no rest till they flee to the atoning blood and saving grace of the Redeemer, receive him as he is offered, embrace him as all their salvation, and esteem him infinitely precious, because full of compassion and mighty to save. Such operation of the Spirit is the great gospel-promise to the church; and is not the fulfilment of that promise, of all things on earth, the most devoutly to be desired? "I will pray the Father," said the Saviour to his disciples, "and he will send you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you." And again, "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, he shall teach you all things. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." Can any man, professing the faith of Jesus, disregard this gracious promise? Can any one

believe in the efficacy of the Saviour's death, and not appreciate the gift of the Spirit, which the Saviour by his death procured? Shall any disciple of Christ learn from his Lord's own mouth, that an agent almighty and holy is provided for the effectual teaching of the church, and will he yet expect to be otherwise savingly taught—to be convinced of sin and led to the only refuge for lost souls?

But look on the Divine record to an example of this promise realized, and seeing that a serious concern for the soul—the acceptance of Christ as a Saviour—and a new holiness of heart and life, are the immediate effects, surely there will then be no doubt that a revival so glorifying to God, and blessed to man, is infinitely desirable. “Behold I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high.” On the day of Pentecost the word of promise was fulfilled by the outpouring of the Spirit on the apostles and people; when Peter, bearing witness to the divinity and glory of a crucified Saviour, now exalted to the right hand of God, exclaimed, “Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” Hearing these words uttered with demonstration of the Spirit and with power, the people were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do? and the same day there were added unto the church about three thousand souls.” When did such effects appear by the preaching of the Saviour himself? Enough to show that he will be glorified, and sinners saved, only in the way appointed in his word. Nor was the emotion thus produced in the minds of so many at all of a transient nature, though it was obviously sudden and simultaneous. On the contrary, we read that “they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers; and further, that “they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people.”

Thus, when we would show how greatly the revival of religion is to be desired, we can refer to an exemplification of the work so authoritative and complete as to place equally beyond all controversy either the excellency of a revival, or the precise meaning which that term conveys. Nor are we confined to a solitary case. As in the aspect of the heavens, we have alternations from lowering shades to "the clear shining after rain;" so in the moral vicissitudes that pass over the sacred page; we have many periods of portentous gloom, and as often the eye is gladdened when the Spirit of the Lord appears in Zion, and "the righteousness thereof goes forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." In the history of nations also, how numerous have been the times of refreshing to the people of God when they have been visited with tokens of the Divine power as manifest and gracious as on the day of Pentecost. These have been fully unfolded in a previous part of this course; and to all such periods we refer for proof how good, on the part of God, and blessed to his church, have all those seasons of revival been. I instance one, which as it is memorable ought to be long and universally remembered—I mean that glorious era when the dark cloud of papal superstition was rolled away from our land, and the Sun of Righteousness, long hid, shone forth with healing in his beams. The strongholds of Satan fell; his servants fought not; they fled from the light; the sword of the Spirit was the only weapon; and the victory was the more joyful that it was bloodless: you could not tell what became of the enemy; but you might see a nation who sat in the region and shadow of death, brought of a sudden to the temple, "praising God with one accord, and eating their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." In many places of our land, at clivers seasons and after long decays of religion, there have been times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, by a signal outpouring of his Spirit. As no instances of that kind have been more remarkable than those of our day, and as they have been nigh to your own doors, it must be a shame to the coldness of your hearts if you have not been eye-witnesses to the work. And confident we

are, that all who have will be ready with one mind to set to their seal, that of a truth the work is of God, and that it is above all things to be desired in behalf of all men. He whose work it is takes care that it shall be well attested; in order that his hand may be recognised, and his name glorified; that they who receive the blessing may know its source; and to this further end, that of the world it may be said, "Many shall see it and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." He provides that there shall be a two-fold testimony to the work of his hand;—one the consciousness of a new state; the other, the exhibition of a new character. The one is satisfying to the individual who is the subject of a divine operation; the other is convincing to such as are strangers to the work of the Spirit; and both united afford the strongest evidence to all, that a work so good and gracious is in reality the work of God. The testimony of the individual, under the consciousness of a new state of mind, is expressed in this way: whereas I was blind, now I see;—whereas I obeyed the lusts of the flesh, I now hate all sin and strive against it;—before, I lived unto the world, followed its fashion, satisfied my soul with its enjoyments, and sought no other portion; now, the love of Christ constrains me to live unto him, to walk in his steps, to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, believing that all other things shall be added unto me. This we say is the experience of every one who is savingly awakened, and turned unto the Lord; and if you ask those who are the subjects of a genuine revival, however numerous they maybe, they will all speak the same thing; they will speak according to the witness within, and give thanks to God for the tokens of his grace and love. But along with these declarations of a felt experience, God in his wisdom provides that there shall be another source of evidence in the manifestations of a new character; and wherever there is a true revival, as the many so influenced bear witness to the work of God on their inward man, so there will be found also a concurrent and outward testimony, which may be drawn, not indeed from every individual of the district, but from the renewed aspect of life and manners presented by the general population of the district.

Let me briefly notice some of the happy features of that moral reformation to which we refer, and as they have appeared in the parish of Kilsyth to very many and the most competent witnesses. The books of the great day will show what faithful labours of an evangelical ministry, and what persevering prayers of elders and other pious parishioners have been blessed by an outpouring of the Spirit, producing those effects to which, in a few words, I direct your attention, and from which the most incredulous will be convinced how truly a religious revival is to be desired in all places, and for every member of the human family. Men naturally do not love either God or the gates of Zion; but a worse state is superinduced when to this inherent dislike there has been added, amongst many, the force of a habit, growing more inveterate, both in the neglect and contempt of the sanctuary and its sacred ordinances; and if in such circumstances there be multitudes, as there are in the place we have named, who crowd to the house of God even on week days, and Sabbath after Sabbath, have we not proof most convincing that they are the subjects of an extraordinary gracious influence, that the hand of God is there, and the effect so good as to rejoice every soul that loves the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity? This attendance in the house of prayer, by many previously estranged, is accompanied with the "voice of salvation and rejoicing in all their tabernacles/1 The old have deserted the standards of the enemy, and the young are enlisted in the service of their Lord. When I think of dear children, what temptations beset them, and how hard it is in their levity of temper to impress their minds with serious and sacred things, I know not in all the world a sight so touching to the heart, and fit to draw forth tears of gratitude, as the spirit of prayer diffused amongst these youthful disciples, who form themselves into little groups in godly friendship, and pray with and for each other, for their parents, ministers, and elders, with a grace and wisdom worthy of advanced Christians. How sweetly do they inhale the promise, "They that seek me early shall find me." It seems as if their dear Saviour were on earth, and took them in his arms and blessed them, and said

to you, Behold these, "for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

It may be further seen in that same place, as might be expected, where old and young are brought under the influence of Divine grace, that there is nothing of Sabbath desecration, or profane jesting, or filthy communication among the people; nor is it heard, whether in places of concourse, or amongst children at play, that the name of God is taken in vain.—Drunkenness, once prevalent, has so given way to a godly sobriety, that tavern-keepers have been threatened with ruin, or, being themselves converted, have sought some other way of earning their bread. And it is not easy to estimate what comforts will accumulate in the homes of the labouring poor, when not only that vile sink of intemperance, which drained off the life's blood of their families, is done away; but industry, like a tree of paradise, now cultivated with steady hands and cheerful hearts, is ever yielding the happiest shelter and the most delicious fruits. O it is in this well seen that godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as that which is to come. The masters of public works bear witness to a much altered and nobly improved condition of the working classes—better work, more of it, punctually executed, and, contrary to former practice, attended with next to no craving of payment per-advance. Do not these things speak what is good to the worldly wise, not less than to the lovers of Zion? The fierceness of disputation too, whether arising from political or religious division, is lulled into an unwonted repose; and those who were so hostile to one another as not to meet on speaking terms, or meet in strife, now, united to the same loving Redeemer, dwell together as dear children in love, and go to the house of God in harmony, as it becomes those who have one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and are united in one hope of their calling.

I notice one other effect which, though it may seem small, is yet of great moment. The robbing of field produce by juvenile offenders is a vice that is notorious on every way-side and about every village. The husbandmen and peasantry of the place we have specified will tell you how wonderfully this annoyance has re-

cently disappeared; and if such theft be commonly regarded as insignificant, the more credit on that very account must be ascribed to the might of those religious principles by which it is restrained. The event shows that the power of divine truth has reached the youngest and most neglected of the community; that if there may be some whose minds are not directly so influenced, yet are they overawed by the prevailing tone of sentiment, or they fear lest they should be marked as offenders, where there are few to be partakers in their shame. And from things small in themselves, we are led to the grand conclusion, that the fear of God is a better defence to the fields in question than the highest wall; and that no sin appears little to those who recognise the presence of the Lord, and look for "the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works."

On the whole view of the case then, regarding these and many other happy and outward effects, we would say, let ministers of Christ try their strength to draw out a godless people and settle them in church-going habits; let patriots and philosophers employ their wisest schemes to produce the like reformation of morals; let magistrates put in force all the vigilance of police and the terrors of a prison: and the result will be, that no department of such agency or the whole taken together, will at all avail to produce such a renewal of heart and transformation of life, as are here most obviously set before us.—And why then not readily acknowledge the hand of God as manifested in such perfect accordance with his word?—why not see, and be convinced, that the good done can in no other way be accomplished; and that such a revival of religion is really the most desirable of all things here below? Is the awakening of one sinner to a care for his immortal soul not to be intended for, and devoutly to be sought? and is it less to the glory of God, that many, in the same place and at the same time, should be the subjects of a work so gracious? Is the turning of one soul from darkness to light a cause of rejoicing in heaven, and will there

not be a louder acclaim amidst the heavenly hosts, if a thousand in one day are turned from the power of Satan unto God?—A revival then just means the awakening and conversion of many at once, instead of one at a time, to which last if there be any valid objection there ought to be no ministry at all; and if the work be good in the case of solitary conversions, the more joyfully is it to be hailed when conversions are many; for then it is the same grace manifested in greater abundance. Who that delights in the springing of the earth, would prefer a drop, here and there, on the parched ground, to the bounteous shower by which the Lord crowns the year with his goodness?—who that admires a lonely flower in the wilderness, would not conceive more gladness of heart were the whole desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose?—who that goes forth weeping and bearing precious seed, would not rejoice, to come again bringing his sheaves with him? and how woful is the plight of the husbandman who sees an enemy reap the harvest, and leave only a few gleanings to be gathered by himself. Yet some there are who object to those seasons of revival, when there are showers of blessings and bountiful fruits.—They would limit the power of God, and suspect a spuriousness in the work of salvation if thousands are suddenly brought to the question, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”

I warn thee, O man, take heed that such thoughts be not in thy heart. Thou art in the presence of God, who has promised that he will pour out his Spirit on all flesh: “ask and it shall be given thee.” Dost thou shun the prayer?—then the precept of thy God is disobeyed; dost thou ask and not care whether the Spirit be given?—then thy prayer is a mockery of the Most High, and the answer to prayer is despised; do others pray for an outpouring of the Spirit, in behalf of all around them? and when the blessing is bestowed, is it thy part to cavil at the manifestations of divine grace? Let this be proof to thee that thou art yet in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. Who shall contend with God and prosper? Quench not the Spirit: grieve not the Holy Spirit of God. “Be not ye mockers, lest your bands be made strong.”

There will always be gainsayers when a godly zeal is stirred up in the church of Christ, when any signal tokens of God's favour are vouchsafed to his people, and when thus an inroad is made on the empire of darkness.—But we hope better things of you. From all that you have heard in this course of lectures—from all that you have read of gospel-promise or its fulfilment—from all that you have seen in the history of the church, or witnessed of revivals in your own day,—we confidently hope that your hearts are moved to a just conviction, that of all desirable things on earth, whether for God's glory or the salvation of perishing sinners, a religious revival, in the present aspect of things around you, is most devoutly to be desired.

What delight must it afford to faithful and zealous ministers of Christ to see the work of the Lord prospering in their hands. What shepherd can look without sorrow on a flock that is weak and sickly and vanishing away? What husbandman can behold without grief the luxuriant growth of thorns and thistles amidst the choaked and fruitless corn—a field of his labour as unsightly as it is unprofitable. But how much more, in the Lord's vineyard, is the sight to be deplored when the eye rests upon desolation accompanied with the vivid prospect of ruined souls, and the reckoning for eternity? Ministers are commanded to preach the word, to be instant in season and out of season; to exhort, rebuke, reprove, with all long suffering and doctrine. Let us suppose the ministering servant to be duly impressed with the solemnity of the charge, "O Son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die: if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand;" in the deep awe of a charge so momentous, he labours with all earnestness to shake the strongholds of Satan, to subdue the enmity of the carnal mind, and gain a willing ear. But the sound of his voice is as the wind passing over a grave, his words as the rain not falling on the

grateful soil but on the rock of the mountain. "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." The Lord sends forth his Spirit, and his word prevails. The dry bones awake to life; the hard heart is no obstacle; the way is easy; "the mountains melt, and flow down at his presence." In such a stirring time the minister's hands are full indeed, but his heart overflows with gladness. It is evidently the Lord's work in which he is engaged, and he is a fellow-worker with him. All around is full of life and joy; the vineyard is fruitful; "the mountains drop sweet wine, and his soul is cheered by the songs of the vintage." What a blessed deliverance from the burden of careless souls, deaf to the call of the gospel, and dying it may be without "benefits in their death!" What bright anticipations of those numerous converts in whom the Saviour "shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied!" What minister of Christ will not ascribe to God the highest praise, and say of such a revival it is more to be desired than all the triumphs of conquerors, and all the crowns they have won?

One word to you who have children to rear: a revival is much to be desired by you. How dearly you love your little ones, and how awful the thought that one of them should perish! And yet they are so thoughtless, so full of levity, and so hard to be impressed with the love and the fear of God. You have sworn to train them up in the way that they should go. But you see that folly is bound up in their hearts; that whilst they run after evil examples, they may die in their youth. How precious for their sakes is the revival of religion in all the place of your abode. Its effects are as conspicuous in the minds of the young as of the old, and what aid is thus afforded to the strivings of parental love? Not only are the youthful examples of evil in a great measure removed from the path of your children; but those who in other circumstances were seducers, now ranked on the Lord's side, are ready to take another by the hand and say, "Come thou with us and we will do thee good." Your lines have fallen in pleasant places when the promise is realized, "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed and my

blessing on thine offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, and as willows by the water-courses. Oce shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." Thus dear to parents on account of their children, as to ministers on account of their flocks, is a time of revival and of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; and not less to all the household of faith on account of the cause and kingdom of our blessed Redeemer. It is the highest aim and delight of all who are his that he should be glorified and sinners saved. In a time of revival the eyes of the blind are opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped, and the lame man leaps as an hart. Waters break out in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. A highway is there, and it shall be called the way of holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, and the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein. "The Redeemed shall walk there: and the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." From all these views we trust ye have come to the strong conclusion, that a revival of religion, fraught as it is with such proofs of a life-giving and saving efficacy, is of all things on earth the most devoutly to be desired. And with what enlightened devotion ought we to give thanks to God for the assurance we are permitted to entertain, that that which is the most desirable of all things is also the most confidently to be expected.

II. To this confident expectation we now proceed, as was proposed in the second place, to direct your thoughts, and to show that this good hope through grace is grounded on the good-will of God toward his church; on the blessing with which he accompanies the faithful preaching of his word; and the gift of his Spirit promised in answer to the prayers of his people. In speaking of these it cannot be necessary to detain you long, considering what was so amply unfolded in the 8th Lecture of this course, namely, the encouragement to look for revivals from the promises and pro-

phesies of Scripture. But as our efforts to promote the cause of revivals will ever depend much on the strength of that faith in which they are expected, it cannot be unreasonable to say a few words on each of these topics we have named.

1. Then, we are warranted to look for a revival in any corner of the vineyard from the good-will of our Lord towards his church and people. Could we take into our hearts more of the Divine love as manifested in the salvation of souls, we would expect more of the Divine favour in behalf of religious revivals. The love of God in the gift of his Son has no parallel; it is above all height and depth and breadth and length; it passeth knowledge. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life: for God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." Add to this God's own view of that love as heightened by the previous ill-desert of all to whom it is vouchsafed: "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet *sinners*, Christ died for us." To this, which is already marvellous beyond conception, must be superadded what is a less observed proof of the greatness of that love which God has shown to lost sinners, namely, that Christ, who was dear to the Father from all eternity, is exalted to a still higher place in the Father's complacency, because of the love he showed to our race in giving himself for us. The Saviour's words to this effect are: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again." What then, it may be asked, could God do more? he gave his only-begotten and well-beloved Son; what could Christ do more? he gave himself for us—he died, the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God—he became sin for us, that we might be righteousness of God in him.

As there is nothing which it is so hard for carnal minds to believe, so nothing in the compass of revealed truth is so largely insisted on, as the immeasurable extent of Heaven's undeserved love; and whilst that is coldly regarded, it will be no wonder at all if there be a doubtful or indifferent looking-for of that favour which

is implied in a religious revival. Let us see then yet more what pains are taken by the Spirit of truth to make the testimony of the Divine love more clear to the understanding and 'more affecting to the heart. Illustrations are tried by similes drawn from those relations of life in which love is the most deeply felt and best exemplified: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." Thus the strength and tenderness of the love which the Lord bears to his people is compared to that subsisting between those who by the ties of nature are no longer twain but one flesh; and surely if there be such union of the church with her Lord; if he desire that she should be presented to himself a glorious church, it cannot be that he will admire her spiritual deadness and decay; and therefore he will in no way be unwilling to grant her that revival by which she may appreciate his worth, and in purity of heart repay his affection. Again, recourse is had to another comparison: "Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth, and break forth into singing, O mountains; for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy on his afflicted. But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, but I will not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee on the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." Let every hearer who believes in Christ take the comfort of these words, as well for all that concerns his own soul as the well-being of the church. Art thou in sorrow, O man or woman?—murmur not, and never despond. Rest in thy Saviour's love—a love manifested in deed and in truth—proved by the cross he suffered for thy sake, and by the glory of the crown to which he will exalt thee. Affliction is his refiner, and applied, not for his pleasure, but thy profit, that thou mayest partake of his holiness—a gracious

sign that thou art not forgotten, but engraven on the palms of his hands. Is the Church in trouble?—her Lord sees that she too has need of purifying, and she is afflicted that she may be holy and without blemish. Let her not murmur, nor be dismayed; but trust in the Lord, for her walls are continually before him. “Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him who is the health of my countenance and my God.”

Thus may we confidently look for revivals from the affecting demonstrations of the Divine love, and still more from what we learn of our Lord's gracious designs, which embrace all ages and every tribe and tongue and people. He would have all men to come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved. He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him. There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all. Of a truth, says the apostle, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him. And not only does this good-will of the Lord embrace all lands, but in the counsels of heaven it is fixed that the grace of our Redeemer shall one day reach the remotest regions and enrich them all. In him shall all kindreds of the earth be blessed, all the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of God, and of his Christ. His dominion shall extend from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. The glorious accession of the Gentiles into his church is thus foretold in the beautiful and glowing language of the prophet: “Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee; and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about and see; all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from afar, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side.”

Whether then ye think of the love so manifested, or of the grace so designed, you are prepared to say, There can be no place in the Lord's dominions—no quarter in the habitable globe, where you may not confidently look for the coming of his kingdom, or expect a revival of his salvation-work where it has once begun, however wofully it may have fallen into decay. And this conclusion is most precious; it is not less authorised than it is delightful. We may suffer grief and humbling of soul because of much sin, on account of which the favour of God is justly withdrawn; and we may be left to look on scenes of consequent loathsomeness, desolation, and death; but with what reassurance and comfort may we recur to the imperishable records of the Divine goodness, to the sure decree which Jehovah will maintain, and to the contemplation of that loving and Almighty Saviour who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. As in the individual case, he has no pleasure in the death of the soul, but says to the sinner, Turn and live; so in the case of his church, in whatever quarter it may have sunk into deadness of spirit, he has no pleasure in the sight of its perishing souls and lifeless sacrifices. It is not in such a way that he shall be the First-born of many brethren,—that he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied. Surely he takes a loving concern for the vineyard which he watered with his blood,—in those trees of righteousness which reward his toil and bring forth fruit unto God. "Herein," he says, "is my Father glorified in that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." And how is his compassionate heart grieved with the sight of those trees of his vineyard which prove unfruitful and only fit to be cut down as cumberers of the ground. That he delights in revivals rather than death and a sentence of righteous condemnation, may be clearly seen by these words of the parable, which show at once the tenderness of the heart that would spare the dying, and the skilfulness of the hand that would employ the wisest and the best of means for the preservation of life: "Lord, let it alone this year also, till I dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, *well*; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down."

Again, we may confidently expect a revival of religion in every place from the blessing with which God has promised to accompany the preaching of his word. His command is, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature and his promise is, "My word shall not return to me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and prosper in the thing whereto I sent it: for as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth." Nothing can more plainly speak of the Lord's goodness in promoting a spiritual revival in the hearts of his people. Look to the dry cracked furrows of the ground, consumed with drought, and see how the sickly crop is revived when the heavens pour down their beneficent treasures; and it is by the like figure that the Psalmist expresses his joy and gratitude for spiritual blessings so bountifully realized: "Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance when it was weary."

But well it ought to be observed, that if we would expect such blessings on a gospel ministry, there must be by a full and free and faithfully preached gospel; it must not be man's word but God's; it must be the word of truth having nothing of man's device super-added—nothing of God's counsel withheld. There is in the world much preaching in Christ's name that has yet but little connection with the gospel of the grace of God; and if spiritual deadness and not spiritual life be the fruit of a faithless ministry, there is not from that to be inferred any unfaithfulness in him that hath promised; for it is only to the word as it proceeded out of the mouth of God, that the blessing of its author is vouchsafed. And it is no less confirmatory of our hope in the promise than instructive of the way in which the hope may be realized, to find in fact, that wherever true revivals have appeared they have been preceded by what alone can be called a faithful proclamation of the gospel to lost sinners;—insisting much on man's utter depravity by nature and the necessity of

regeneration; the sufficiency of Christ to save, and the sinner's justification by faith in him, together with an entire dependence on the Spirit of God as a Sanctifier, Comforter, and Guide. Let there be on the part of all heralds of the cross, such announcement of plain scripture doctrine, urged with a diligence and godly zeal becoming the work of salvation; and then, whether we look to the love of God in the gift of his Son, or to the faithfulness of him who hath promised by his word to bless the souls of men, as by the rain that falls he blesses the springing of the ground; we may in all places and at all times expect a revival of religion, wherever it is yet wanted, either to promote the glory of the Lord, or the well-being of his church and people.

And lastly, as the ground of this confident expectation, we rest on the purchased and promised influence of the Divine Spirit. As the Spirit of God is the almighty agent by whom alone a true revival of religion is produced; as the word, though ordained for life, is without the Divine teaching, known only in the deadness of the letter; and as the Saviour, by virtue of his death and ascension to glory, hath procured the effectual working of the Spirit in behalf of his church; we are warranted most confidently to look for a revival of religion, because the life-giving and sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost is promised of God in answer to the prayers of his people. If we would comfortably and profitably entertain this holy and earnest expectation, we must have clear views of our destitution without the Divine aid, of the Spirit's work, and of the way in which that gracious influence is bestowed. Without the Divine agency the enmity of the carnal mind remains unbroken; the ear is not open to the call of the gospel, and ministers, loud or low in speech, are but as a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. There is, therefore, no hope at all even of a solitary conversion, and still less of a general revival, save only by the teaching of the Spirit of God. But it is just to meet this exigency that the Spirit is procured, and that we are plainly taught what the working of the Spirit is: "Howbeit, when he the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all truth." Again, "It is expedient for you," says our

Lord, "that I go away; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you; and when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." Now, see how this gracious and effectual working of the Holy Ghost is promised in answer to prayer. In the words of our Saviour, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." In the words of the prophet, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes: and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." Here is the abundant gracious promise, needful alike to every living soul; and given to many, it implies all that a true revival can mean. But what is the method of conferring the promised gift? It is given in answer to prayer, "Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." How confidently then may we look for that which God has promised to give to them that ask;—but see also how our suit is encouraged by terms the most endearing, and the fittest to win our confidence. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." How kind the encouragement! and who but the Giver can tell how great the gift? "For since the beginning of the world, men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him." Thus see what is the agency of the Spirit in the work of revival; how unavailing, without a Divine power, all human efforts are; and how certainly procured for the church of Christ, and promised in answer to the prayers of his

people, is that gracious influence by which souls are quickened in their spiritual deadness, and made to live and rejoice before God. And then taking into one view our Lord's great love to the church for which he gave himself; his blessing on a full and freely preached gospel; and the sure promise of his enlivening and purifying Spirit; what heart can fail to have the fullest persuasion that a religious revival is in every place and time of need most confidently to be expected?

And now, when you have come to the conclusion in the first topic of our discourse, that a true revival of religion is devoutly to be desired, and have seen in the second that it is confidently to be expected; it can only remain that you either deny the grace of our Lord, or would rather prefer to the life which he gives, those shadows of death which are darkening around you, if you do not with one heart and mind resolve that that which is in the highest degree to be desired and hoped for is also most fervently to be sought. This is the

III. Third and last thing to which we proposed to direct your attention; namely, that the revival of religion in our land, and in this time of need, ought through the use of divinely appointed means to be most earnestly promoted. And

1. By faithful, fervent, and persevering prayer for the outpouring of the Spirit. And O when you think of approaching the ear of the Eternal; when you contemplate the "glorious high throne which from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary;" when you look to God and the mercy-seat; to Christ, ever appearing in the presence of God for us; and to the Holy Spirit making intercession with groanings that cannot be uttered; you will be shocked at the thought of those cold, heartless, formal, and aimless prayers, which are frequently offered in the name of Jesus and at a throne of grace. Let it ever be remembered that he who is the hearer of prayer is also the searcher of all hearts; and knows whether you draw near to him with your lips, whilst your hearts are far from him. And surely when you consider with what a cause it is that you come to God—pleading for the revival of religion—that dead souls may be quickened, that thousands sickly and per-

ishing, through lack of knowledge, may be saved from death, and fed with the bread of life; when you estimate the privilege of approaching a throne so high and a God so holy,—the grandeur of the pleading in the cause of revivals, together with the sin of indifferent prayer; surely the serious view of such things will serve to humble your souls and deeply convince you, that in the exercise of prayer you need the aid of Divine grace as well as in any other duty to which you are called. “Lord, teach us to pray;” “quicken us and we will call on thy name.” It is only in such humbling conviction of our insufficiency, and such dependence on the Spirit of grace, that we commend to every disciple of Jesus an outpouring of the heart before God for the revival of religion in our land. We say then, in the earnest expectation of an end so desirable,

Pray for yourselves. What need has every one of you to be more alive than you have ever been to the great concerns of salvation. How near is death! how awful is eternity ! Have you mourned for sin? Have ye fled to the refuge? Are ye living unto God? You can do ill by your example but no good to the cause of revivals unless you be yourselves revived. This is one instance in which charity must begin at home. You cannot commend that which you know not; you cannot exhibit or impart that which you have not; you cannot pray that others may obtain that which you do not yourselves appreciate. In this cause therefore your own soul is the first concern; and, how deeply ought that concern to be felt; for death may come quickly, and in spiritual deadness your souls cannot be saved; therefore to get the greatest good and promote the well-being of others also, pray earnestly, pray continually that the work of revival many be carried on in your own souls.

Pray for your children, for whom you are responsible, and whose temporal and eternal interests are so closely interwoven with your own. “All souls are mine,” saith the Lord our Maker; “as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son: The soul that sinneth it shall die.” You cannot of yourselves convert your children; you can train and qualify them for the

world, but you cannot win them to Christ; and except they be converted they cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. Are ye willing to see them lost—to be separated from these dear little ones for ever? Can heaven be sweet to you if a *gulph* be fixed between you and them? The Spirit of God only can renew their hearts, guide them into all truth, and unite their souls in love to Jesus by a living faith. Wherefore teach them to pray, and pray ye for them; relying on the gracious promise of their Saviour and God,—“I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing on thine offspring.” Giving praise for a promise so blessed, be fervent in prayer that it may be all fulfilled. Make this your great aim—your constant endeavour in behalf of those most dearly loved. Be not content with their fitness for the world, nor boast of the friends you can procure amongst men; but let their training accord with the immortal being that God has conferred, and tell them kindly of a Father in heaven, and the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother—of that great and good Shepherd who gathereth the lambs in his arms, and carrieth them in his bosom. Fulfil the vows you have taken in their infant baptism: bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; teach them to remember their Creator and Redeemer in the days of their youth, to get by heart the songs of Zion, and show by patient instruction, by catechising, family prayer and pious example, that you care for the Saviour’s glory and their salvation. This is the way that each of you in a narrower sphere and in the nearest and dearest concerns, may take your part in promoting the work of revival. This is the least you owe to God, and to those whom he has for a time committed to your care; and O if such were made the rules of parental administration; were such the conduct of all the families throughout our land who profess to be of Christ; we should indeed be nigh to a time of revival and of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. We are not in urging such duties putting the effect for the cause. We speak of the means of promoting a revival for diffusing good; and where are we to begin, if it be not with such as have the profession of godliness;—with

what are we to begin if it be not with the dearest of all ties and the strongest of all obligations: and having spoken of prayer as the mean of revival in the heart, of the individual anti then of the household, we say, Pray for us who are called to minister in holy things—for all ministers of the everlasting gcttepel, and especially for your own pastor. Pray that the pastoral tie, which is ordained of God for his glory and the saving of the flock, may be hallowed and endeared and strengthened and blessed; that a door of utterance may be given to the speaker, and a door of entrance to the hearer; that with all faithfulness the truth may be spoken as it is in Jesus, and carried home to the hearts of the people with demonstration of the Spirit and with power.

If such be no theme of your daily devotions, then, most certain it is, that, not cai'ing for a gospel ministry, nor desiring to live as "the beloved and elect of God through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth," your souls are in a very dead and languishing state; either indifferent to the divine precept respecting the pastoral relation, or holding no faith in the power and promise of the divine Spirit. And little likelihood there is that in such a condition you will either seek a revival of religion in your own souls, or promote that cause for the well-being of others in your land. But here again I would call your attention to that which is your personal interest, and which because it embraces eternity is the weightiest of all; and I would observe that a prayerless attendance on the ministers of Christ is a sure proof that you regard not him whose ministers they are. You may indeed respect their persons as you would those of worldly friends, but you respect not their office; and Christ the chief Shepherd says to them whom he invests with the sacred calling, "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth Him that sent me." These are the words of your Lord, the judge of all the earth, and how shall you meet him in the day of judgment if you disregard him and his message in the courts of his own house, "where he hath set his eye and his heart continually"? How very

different from all this is the hearing of those whose prayers for their minister and the success of the word arise from their families and closets morning and evening before God? With what other mind do they approach the sanctuary? with what open hearts do they come? with what desire that the word, being mixed with faith, may profit their souls? with what hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and reliance on the promise that they shall be filled? The effect of this longing for the word of life is not confined to their own bosoms—it is seen in their looks,—it diffuses a sympathetic influence on all around them; the congregation is lively: And whilst the very sight of this ardour communicates a liveliness and enlargement of heart to the pastor, it is his supreme delight to feed the loving disciples of his Lord with the good word and bread of life.

These are the fruits of a prayerful disposition on the part of the people, and wisely ordered for the encouragement of the ministerial labourer; but we do not say that the good effect on his spirit is left to depend on any confidence he may gather from the animated eyes and listening demeanour of his audience. No: we believe God: we believe in the efficacy of prayer: we believe the word that says "Ask and it shall be given you." And so believing, we see by the eye of faith, and are sure that the united persevering prayers of a congregation for the success of the gospel ministry is answered by the outpouring of the Spirit on the heart of the minister. No prayer is more sure of an answer in peace. We can figure no attitude of a Christian people more pleasing to God than when, as a flock of Christ, though dwelling in their several homes, they are held together by a common tie of love to their pastor and to the chief Shepherd and Bishop of their souls; all united in the sacrifice of praise for the blessings of a gospel ministry, yet putting no trust in the erring counsels of the creature, but depending on the Lord and praying that his ministering servants may be clothed with salvation. It is to the church in this lowly plight seeking nothing selfish, nothing earthly, but looking for the coming of the Lord in his glory,

that we trust her Lord will say, "Thy Ups, O ray Spouse, drop as the honey-comband while she is yet speaking he will hear and answer all her prayer. He will shed abroad his love in the heart of his ministering servant,—will touch his lips with a live coal, and purge away his sin,—will cause his mouth to speak right things, and make him wise in winning souls. The good thus obtained for their minister by the prayers of his people will be amply repaid into their own bosom, and the benefit will extend to all the flock under his care. The word accompanied by the working of the Spirit will greatly prevail; the hard and stony heart well experience the transforming power of divine truth, and they that are of a broken spirit the tenderness of its consolations:— "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew: as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." How earnestly then ought every member of the flock to seek God for a blessing on his word.

Never till the Spirit be poured out on all flesh will it be known what is the might of prayer as the means of revival in the church; and never till lost souls are numbered in the depths of perdition will the neglect of such prayer be estimated to the full amount of its wickedness and ruin. Yet, even now, it may be clearly seen that a congregation without prayer, and consequently without the Spirit that is given in answer to prayer, may long remain amidst the light without knowing the life of the word. If the truth be not fully and freely spoken, or otherwise learned, the people must be in darkness; for what they only partially receive is not the will of God for their salvation, and cannot be a guide to heaven. But let the truth be faithfully proclaimed from Sabbath to Sabbath; yet if ye be not given to prayer for the Divine blessing on the ordinance of the word,—we say ye may long dwell beneath its light, but ye will certainly be strangers to its life-giving power; you will be as a vineyard exposed indeed to the brightness of the sun, but covered with snow. In such circumstances there is light but no life; and the clearness serves only to reveal the desolation and render its aspect more woful. There are groves, but no music—

flowers without perfume—trees that yield no fruit. Art thou convinced, O mortal creature, that thou art as fruitless unto God as a snow-clad vineyard is to thee? Then here is thy resource: “Awake, O, north-wind, and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.” By the breath of the Spirit the icy barriers are dissolved, and the vital ray penetrates the living soil, giving motion to the sap and awakening to life and beauty every tree and flower.—Then the lily of the valley vies with the whiteness of light, whilst the rose of Sharon reflects the morning beams; and the vine, putting forth her tendrils, prepares the cluster that shall be spared, for there is a blessing in it. The voice of singing and sweet odours fill the air; and the vineyard is all life and loveliness like the paradise that God first made. “Let my beloved come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruits.” O I it would mortify our pride, and cover our face with shame, could we discern the disorder and sterility of the Lord’s vineyard as we do the state of our own. “If I tell you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things.” The heavenly are spiritual, and infinitely transcend all that eye hath seen or heart conceived. Think of a lost crown and the ruin of outcasts; look on the other hand to the favour of God here, and the joy of his kingdom hereafter; see the real dignity of a renewed and spiritual life,—the pleasure of progressing in the holiness meet for heaven, amidst the pains, the decays, the nothingness of our temporal lot; and then conceive the widest diffusion of all this gain—reaching to and blessing all your friends and neighbours, the community in which you dwell and the whole earth. For an end so worthy of God and good to man is the ministry of the word ordained. It has indeed wrought out great beneficence, and will yet do far more; but it will be fruitless without the prayers of a hearing people, and so neglected it will add to the weight of their reckoning for eternity. But it is the Lord’s will that all should pray for the efficacy of his word, and it is his pleasure to work by it infinitely beyond all that you can ask or think. Wherefore, we beseech you, for your own sake,

for the sake of your pastor who prays for you, for the Lord's glory and the great salvation,—seek the Spirit of grace, and with one accord, without ceasing, pray for a blessing—showers of blessing—on the ministry of the word. So shall life and beauty and fruitfulness abound; “yea, the Lord shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase. Righteousness shall go before him and shall set us in the way of his steps.”

Thus it accords with all Scripture, with reason, and with the experience of those who have witnessed a revival, that no means are more efficacious than prayer; and next to this, as the two are strongly united, and alike strictly enjoined, we call you.

2. To the exercise of fasting for the promotion of religious revivals. The precepts respecting it in the Old Testament are numerous as they are solemn and peremptory: whilst the effects that have followed its observance have ever showed that God had regard to the mourners in Zion. But instead of urging these precepts as they were practised under the Old Testament dispensation, we shall rather observe with what clearness the duty of fasting, as an ordinance of God, is carried into effect and established in the New. As Moses fasted forty days before receiving the tables of the law, and Elijah as long in the wilderness of Arabia; so Christ, in another wilderness, fasted an equal period before he commenced the labours of his holy ministry. And as the duty is thus enforced by his example, let us attend also to the manner in which it is taught in his word: “Moreover when ye fast.” Thus it is spoken of as an ordinance already known and all along in use, and thus emphatically authorised under the Christian dispensation. And we are the more earnest to have this duly noticed as we are well aware of a prevailing levity in regard to that solemn institution in our day. “Moreover, when ye fast,” our Saviour continues, “be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou when thou fastest anoint thine head and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast,

but unto thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Again, says our Lord, "Can ye make the children of the bride-chamber fast while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days." And surely when a general deadness of spirit appears in the church, it may well be said that the bridegroom is taken away; and as plainly are we taught that in such a time there is the fittest occasion for fasting and humiliation before God. And as a further proof that this is not only to be held as a Christian duty, but as means eminently fitted to procure the Divine favour, we find that when our Lord rebuked the disciples for their want of faith on their failing to heal one who, in a peculiar manner, was possessed of a devil, he said, "Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by fasting and prayer;" and thus our Saviour showed that fasting for gracious purposes is efficacious in a way that prayer without fasting is not.

Let us see how well enlightened reason corresponds to these dictates of Divine truth; and how religious fasting may, as a duty, be argued from the very constitution of nature, and the course of Divine providence. In sorrow we forget to eat our bread; and in proportion to the depth of sorrow will be our inability to receive and relish the ordinary supply of creature comforts. But a sense of sin—grief for having offended God—the shame of our guilt, ingratitude, and unprofitable services, together with the terror of deserved and impending wrath, may justly occasion a deeper affliction to the immortal soul than any causes of suffering which are of a temporal kind. But if we naturally feel the temporal, and not so the spiritual; if recourse to creature comforts—such as eating and drinking, society and mirth—tend to make our minds easy amidst the strongest reasons of spiritual mourning; and if that mourning be a right thing in the sight of God, and the way to obtain forgiveness; then ought the things which hinder the afflicting of the soul to be put away; then ought ye to fast and mourn that sin may be pardoned, and that the favour of God may be restored. And ob-

vious it is, that such fasting is enforced at the most needful time, by a law of Providence which, no mortal can resist. That law may be resisted now, but a day awaits you when it will not,—unless you die by a sudden blow, which few, if it were left to their own choice, would prefer. It is appointed for all men once to die; and God ordains a time of fasting before death. It is a season of dread solemnity—the judgment is nigh—you are about to hear from the Great Judge, once for all: “Come, ye blessed,” or, “Depart, ye cursed.” Then sin is remembered, and the remembrance may not be hindered by any arts of amusement, or the indulgence of sleep, or society, or food, or drink. This is fasting; and it is ordained by a law of Providence as plain and powerful as any that is written in the word of God. And O we do fear that if this ordinance so written be now despised, when the devout observance of it might be followed by the richest gains, and the sweetest consolation, it will remain to be kept at a time when the griefs will be many, and the consolations few.

Now, if fasting, as an ordinance of God, be of everlasting obligation in his church,—exemplified by Moses and the prophets, and especially by the Saviour himself; also, enjoined by him, and declared to be efficacious in a way that prayer without fasting is not; if it do so well accord with the humbling of the soul before God on account of sin, and with God’s gracious dealings in giving grace unto the lowly; then, most of all, is fasting to be recommended under the deep sense we entertain of the worldliness and spiritual deadness so prevalent in our land; it is to be recommended that we may, by its devout observance, more deeply afflict our souls, and mourn not only for our personal sins, but for those of our church and people; that God may look on our affliction,—that he may turn from the fierceness of his anger, and grant us a time of refreshing and revival from his presence. The broken and contrite heart God only can give. Seeing that his judgments are abroad, we would ask God to give us the Spirit of grace that we may fast and mourn in those days.—Better fast now for your own sin, than at the hour of dissolution, when there may be nought but a fearful looking-for of

judgment; better fast now for national sin, than wait the sinking pulse of spiritual life and soon see nothing around you but the region and shadow of death; better fast now when the Lord is nigh and willing to be entreated, than delay,—it may be till the Bridegroom be altogether gone—“Then shall they fast in those days.” And have we not cause enough for fasting and humiliation?—have we not reasons, as urgent as any that are recorded in holy writ? Do we find that God’s people fasted because of locusts—of mildew—of the sword without, and distracted counsels within? And have we no fear of infidel swarms gathering around us and darkening the air, and settling all over the vineyard? Is not this a time of rebuke and of fear when multitudes, in defiance of all law, and without religion, are stirring up sedition, and already invading the quietude of the hearth as well as the holiness of the altar? And to meet such dangers, what preparation have we amidst our internal divisions—our carnal security—our mammon-worship, whilst the enemy is coming in like a flood? Is this a time for Judah to vex Ephraim, and Ephraim to vex Judah? “Is it a time, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste”—this house of the Lord unheeded though falling into decay? Surely it is time to seek the Lord by fasting and prayer;—to cry unto him with one voice, “Turn us, O God, of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease. Wilt thou not revive us again that thy people may rejoice in thee? Show us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation.” And the more to induce every soul to this humbling before God as the means of promoting a religious revival in our land, call to mind as you have formerly seen how blessed such a revival is as a remedy for spiritual evils whether felt or feared. In a time of revival, divisions cease—the love of truth prevails—and iniquity, as ashamed, hides her face. It is thus, “when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.” And how needful is all this admonition respecting the solemn duty we are now considering. Fasting is not in our day denied to be an ordinance of God; but how seldom, how feebly and formally is it observed,

even at those stated times when it is used as a preparation for sitting down at the Lord's table to commemorate his dying love. How few comparatively wait upon God in his sanctuary on a day set apart for fasting, humiliation, and prayer. Around this city and other towns in the neighbourhood, crowds are seen not repairing to the courts of the Lord's house on the day of sacramental fasting, but hastening away from it in all directions. This is no sign of revival, but of its need; and shows how that which we hold to be efficacious as the means, is wilfully and extensively shunned. It is a sign of coming judgment, and a reason why, with all our heart and soul, we should lift up our testimony against this contempt of God, and exhort to better things. Why are so many withheld from the house of prayer at such a season? Some are allured by the love of pleasure; they have no sorrow for their sin, and therefore no fitness for a communion table: Some are busy with the world; and yet they would be ashamed to say that they have not as much freedom as to command a few hours to serve any ends of their own. They too must be far from that frame of spirit which is fit for commemorating the Saviour's death; for their hearts are given to the world, and they cannot serve God and Mammon. If either the lovers of pleasure, or the votaries of earthly gain, who both unite in profaning the day of fasting, think of repairing to the Lord's table to take into their hands the symbols of their Saviour's death, O let them enquire what trust have they in God? what communion with Christ? what crucifying of themselves unto the world? what glorying in the cross? what hope in a once crucified and now exalted Redeemer? And let me now warn you: If one of you, next fast-day, make light of that ordinance, and shun the house of prayer; then I say, no sorrow for sin, no joy in the great salvation. Sickness and death will soon come; then shall ye fast. Rut let us hope better things of you. We look to the fruits of revival around us; we pray for a more bountiful outpouring of the spirit, and hope that on the approaching solemnity of the Lord's supper you will fast more like the followers of Him "who was delivered for your offences and is

risen again for your justification." We urge you to a more humble devout and prayerful observance of the day set apart for that solemn service as a fit preparation for sacramental communion. We do this most earnestly from the authority of God's word, and from the experience of all godly ministers who have witnessed the work of revival, and have seen the most marked effects of divine grace on days of fasting and humiliation. Prepare for this homage by remembering past vows, and present sins; then look to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, and plead the promise, "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him as one that mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." Let such be your mourning—such the mourning of this people; and God who is true—who loved you—who is willing in his love to embrace you all, will to the letter fulfil his own word; and then shall ye have the comfort of another promise—"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

3. And lastly, as the means of promoting the revival of religion in our own land, and the work of the Lord all over the world, let me exhort you to a careful imitation of Christ in deeds of benevolence—doing good to all men as you have opportunity, especially to the household of faith. On this field of Christian duty your time will not permit me to dwell. It has many attractions which we are compelled to resist; and many excellencies to which our observations may not, in an adequate proportion, extend now in the close of this already lengthened discourse. Let me only refer to some of the more prominent duties in the way of Christian benevolence to which you are called; and show how, under a gracious providence, the giving is accompanied with the getting of good; whence it will appear, that the imitation of Christ in charity to men, on the part of the Lord's people, is eminently conducive to a religious revival amongst all the people of the land.

The connexion between the outgoing of love from the heart, and the inflowing of grace upon the heart, is thus marked in the word of inspiration: "The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." And not only so, but the favour of God accompanies that stream of benevolence which honours him as its fountain. Thus it is that mercy is twice blessed; it blesses him that gives and him that receives. The receiver in his gladness is constrained to own, that the good of which he is made to partake must have proceeded from some other source than any previously found either in his own heart, or that of worldly men; and thus urged to a diligent search, he is gratefully led to God the fountain of all good; of whom he now entertains better thoughts, and is soon brought to realize the truth of the word, "Every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

The good works then to which as Christians you are called, and to which we specially refer as conducive to the revival of religion are, the building or repairing the house of God—in other words so extending the church or multiplying the places of worship, that the gospel may be preached to every creature in the land; sending the gospel to the heathen; providing for the godly upbringing of the young, by erecting schools in necessitous places, and supplying the means of a sound scriptural education, that children may learn the fear of the Lord; and not forgetting the relief of temporal wants—feeding the hungry and clothing the naked: even as Christ had pity on all bodily sufferings at the same time that he fed the souls of his people with bread from heaven. And how far are you required to extend your efforts, in performing these works of mercy? Let every man give as God hath prospered him—"As I have loved you, so ought you to love one another."

We esteem it a token for good, and see in it the hope of revival in our day, that the church of our fathers has of late in a remarkable degree been roused from past slumber, and is now bent on various schemes of benevolence embracing the best interests of men—both at home and abroad. And as we have already

marked the principle which unites the giving with the receiving of spiritual good, we shall now by two examples illustrate that union, with a view to increase your charity, and thereby promote the cause of revivals. In a populous parish towards the south, the people under an able and prayerful pastor were invited to meet earlier on Sabbath than the ordinary hour of worship, for the purpose of receiving missionary intelligence and uniting in prayer for a blessing on the various schemes of benevolence conducted by the General Assembly of our church. This was continued from Sabbath to Sabbath with a view to enlighten and interest the parishioners in such works and labours of love; to draw forth their charity, and promote the glory of their Lord by doing good. The attendance gradually increased; and as the growing zeal for knowledge of gospel missions could not be gratified by the limited time which might be spared from the other services of the Sabbath, it became necessary to hold these meetings on a week-day. Still more assembled, and soon it appeared that the people were alive not only to the demand of charity but to the importance of prayer, till at length, by a spontaneous impulse, no less than forty prayer-meetings, held at suitable intervals of distance, were established over the parish. This is indeed a good earnest of revival, and that not directly sought, but the result of a different aim. Thinking how to communicate, they receive;—watering others, they are watered also themselves.

The other example to which I refer is taken from a distant land. And the distance affords the advantage of showing how the like principles will operate in the like manner wherever you go; for God is over all, and his word is the same to all, and his love in the heart of man will speak his praise in every clime. You have all heard of a recent and remarkable revival extending to ten villages of heathens in India. Missionaries of the Episcopalian church had been at work in these places for several years, but with little sensible effect of their labours. The district was visited by a famine caused by floods, and help come to the perishing natives from various quarters. Grateful for their preserved lives, and enquiring into the sources whence their deliverance

came, they found that it all proceeded from Christians; that the surrounding idolaters, though not involved in the like calamity, did nothing for their afflicted countrymen. The conviction became instant and universal, that that must needs be the true religion which teaches men to love one another. The corn of their own sowing had failed; but He who makes all things work together for good, caused the seed of the word, before unheeded, to spring up in their hearts: and the whole people with one accord turned from their idols, renounced their false prophets, applied their minds to the gospel of Christ, and very many, after due examination, were baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Here then is one green spot in a far desert; and whilst we entertain the hope that ere long the wilderness to a greater extent will rejoice and blossom as the rose, we would learn by this affecting example, how effectually the revival of religion, whether at home or abroad, is promoted by a faithful imitation of Christ in those works of charity and mercy by which we adorn his doctrine, and show, that God is love.

In conclusion:—Ah! my brethren, it is a solemn thing on the present occasion to give utterance to that term. It is not now used as it was by any of my predecessors; it has now to be pronounced, not as signifying the close of a single lecture, but the end of this present course. And what has the fruit been? Are we prepared for heaven? are we nearer to God? are we ourselves revived? This conclusion reminds me that it will soon be my lot—that it will soon be the lot of everyone of us to say, “I have finished my course.” O that each one of us may then be able, in holy confidence, to exclaim, “I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith.”

In conclusion then let us give thanks for the Divine countenance with which this course of lectures has been signally favoured. The attendance has been unprecedented for its magnitude and constancy and zeal. A further proof of a widely-diffused interest in the cause is that a single tract on the subject of revival has been circulated to the extent of forty thousand copies within the space of a few months. And we trust that

many, from their devout and prayerful attendance here, have been edified in the faith; that not a few have been turned unto the Lord; that the fruit will be unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. This course of lectures, like all things human, must come to a close: we now leave it, but the cause itself we commit to God and to the word of his grace. We beseech you to give all diligence to the means we have unfolded, and the admonitions we have sought to impress upon your minds. Let our text be committed to memory, and dwell in' your heart. Teach your children to repeat it, and make it the pleading of your prayers morning and evening in the closet and in the family. See its application to our time. Amidst signs of coming wrath, there is enough of spiritual deadness to show our need of a revival. It is of all things the most devoutly to be desired; confidently to be expected; fervently to be sought:—sought by prayer for yourselves—for your families—for your ministers and the success of their labours; sought by fasting as well as prayer; and by a careful imitation of Christ in doing good. The time is short. Think what evil some of you have done by speaking against, or not speaking for the honour of your blessed Redeemer; scoffing at revival, perhaps, encouraging sin and promoting the powers of darkness. “Who shall stand before thee, O holy Lord God?” ToMrtime is short: do all the good you can. Your Lord and Judge hath declared, “Except ye be converted ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven and again he says, “When thou art converted strengthen thy brethren.” Pray with and for them; mourn with them on every appearance of sin; and make your religion lovely in their eyes by imitating Christ in love to their souls. Strive at least to save some, and so promote the cause of revivals. Let those on the Lord's side take each one his fellow-traveller by the hand and say, “We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said I will give it you: Come thou with us and we will do thee good.”