

RELIGIOUS MISCELLANY.

FARE-CHURCH.—A third theological chair has been instituted in connection with the college belonging to this body in Canada; and, after a very warm and protracted discussion, Dr. Burns was appointed to it, at a salary of 400l. per annum. No one questioned the eminent abilities of the doctor for the situation, but many deplored the spirit which he had manifested in the past, and the difficulty of working with him. The doctor is about to visit Great Britain on behalf of the college.

WESLEYAN.—The Irish Conference has just closed its sittings in Dublin. It commenced about the middle of the last month. The reports are, upon the whole, cheering. The clear increase in the connexion is 203. There are eleven districts, besides the what are called missionary stations, and 153 ministers. It is the first time within the last ten years that an increase has been reported.

FRANCE.—Amidst the outward show of triumph of the Papacy in this kingdom, there are signs which are significant of the growing power of the truth. In addition to the facts which we have lately laid before our readers, in connection with the various Protestant societies, there are elements within the corrupt Church itself which are exceedingly hopeful. The Jansenists, though crushed, are not dead. A party has arisen far in advance of them in many important dogmas, and also in the breadth and loftiness of their aims, and the boldness with which they avow them. The reformation of the Church, from the bishops and the clergy, is with them utterly hopeless. "The Seine will sooner pass over the tower of Notre Dame," they say. They avow that their aim is to separate the Church from the State, to free it from all despotic authority, and to place it under the control of all its members. Rejecting all others, they will recognise the sole mediatorship of Christ.

Extract from Minutes of the Western Baptist Association.

Circular Letter.

READ BEFORE THE WESTERN NOVA SCOTIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, June 16th, 1856.

A revival of religion is the restoration of suspended religious activity, the living again of what previously existed. It is the rousing of the slumberer, the quickening of the slothful, the return of the backslider. It is the rekindling into a bright steady flame of the smouldering embers which once gave light and heat. It is the return of the "lukewarm" to the ardor and glow of "first love," the recall of the fugitive wanderer from the enchanting labyrinths of sin, the thawing and melting of the frozen heart, the waking of dormant power, the bubbling up again of the pure fountain of the "water of life" in the soul.

It is the re-opening of communications with Heaven, effected by the gracious return of the grieved and insulted Spirit of God to the dark chamber,—the deserted temple of the human soul. It is the visit of Jesus, the excluded friend, to be again a guest in the heart. It is the return to the disconsolate breast, of godly sorrow for sin, of faith, of love, of the joys, the hopes and the peace which had fled;—a new glimpse of Heaven, of the Mediator and the smiling face of God the Father.

It is the awakening of holy tastes and sympathies, the return of "brotherly love" and of ardent desire for the conversion of sinners. Under its influence the lamp of prayer is relighted, and neglected duties are performed.

Such indeed is a revival of religion in its first and stricter import; it has to do with Christians, and with them as individuals.

Then, numbers feel the glow of the sacred fire and the communion of saints is sweet. "The Spirit of grace and of supplication" is richly granted. "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion," "bring again her captivity," bring our kindred to Christ, save a lost world, are but the natural expressions of earnest prayer which leap from the hearts and lips of God's suppliant people; and "God builds again Zion."

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit arrests the unconverted. They hear the truth as for the first time, as for eternity. Guilty, trembling, contrite, they are led to Christ. There is joy on earth and joy in Heaven. "The time of the singing of birds is come," "lo! the winter is past." Such days are "as the days of Heaven upon earth." The church casts aside the mourning drapery of her widowhood, and "comes up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved," "looking forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." Satan and his emissaries stand appalled and retire. The "arm of the Lord" is at work. The community is wrapped in solemnity. The gay youth flees to Christ, the children find the Saviour, and the aged sinner is at the foot of the cross. It is spring-time, summer and harvest in one. More good is done in a little time than for years before. And so far from being evanescent, such a work has the direct and strong tendency to perpetuate itself.

When these blessings are bestowed simultaneously upon many churches and communities, the triumph for truth and righteousness is so much the greater. The ministers of religion take courage, the public morals improve, God is honoured, joy echoes from dwelling to dwelling, and from village to village. The prospects of the cause of Christ for generations to come are seen to brighten.

Let us now take a nearer view of some of the more specific and permanent results of a genuine, continuous, extensive revival of religion.

1. The effect upon Society would be most happy. Renewed, consecrated hearts would yield willing homage to the great Creator and to his laws. The growth of dangerous errors would be checked. Scepticism, the harlot mother of Universalism, would hide ashamed. The claims of time and eternity would be fairly adjusted, and this world, as

Edwards remarks, would be a "thing only by the by." Of the town in which he labored during the great awakening, he says, "It seemed to be full of the presence of God; it was never so full of love, nor of joy, and yet so full of distress as it was then. A loose careless person could scarcely be found in the whole neighbourhood; and if there was any one it would be spoken of as a strange thing." Dr. Griffin speaks of the revivals which occurred about the year 1800, as having "Swept from so large a part of New England its looseness of doctrine and laxity of discipline." Those revivals rescued the U. States from that devastating flood of French infidelity, which at the war of the revolution had well nigh deluged the whole country. And to-day within the bounds of this Association, the mighty spirit of God is needed to intercept the stealthy, hostile tramp of infidelity, radically the same, and of its meaner allies. Under such spiritual influence, there would be progress in social reform; and legislative virtue instead of being, as too often it now is, a poor, sickly, cowardly, foundling thing, would assume the garb and stature of Christian manliness. We should see the last of the dramsellers. The Sabbath-breaker would ponder the precepts, "Ye shall reverence my sabbaths," "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."—"In it thou shalt not do any work, thou nor thy son nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant." That sacred day would cease to be used for the curing of fish and hay, for the manufacture of cheese and butter, for promenading, pleasure driving, boating, visiting, travelling, &c.

2. We notice the salutary effect upon Christians. Primitive Christianity would experience a resurrection. There would be more of practical, earnest study of the Bible, more faith in God and growth in grace. Christians would reflect more beautifully the image of their great Teacher and model; their "meat and drink" would be to do the Divine Will. There would be Christian union. The churches would bid farewell to strife, envies, hatred, and divisions. The people would venerate a deep religious experience, a godly life and thorough faithfulness in their ministers and be less charmed with the mere tinsel and drapery of language, with loud declamation, or appeals to their sympathies, feelings and prejudices. Pastors would less frequently be driven from their flocks by the perverseness and management of small mischief-making groups in their congregations. The closet, the family altar and the prayer-meeting would be resorted to the whole year round. Religious conversation, religious sentiment, religious activity would abound,—instead of rare specimens of Christians rich in experience and ripe for Heaven, there would be many "adorning their profession," ready to "depart and be with Christ." Christianity would become more aggressive.

3. The ministry would be greatly benefitted. Pastors would be nerved with fresh life and preach with moreunction, while the people hung on their lips to hear God's weighty truth. Feeling the worth of souls, they would address chiefly the unconverted, and they would have their reward. Attention would be given to the main and proper business of the ministry, and fruitless controversies, political heat and worldly gain would be less obtrusive. Ministers would so love their Master and his cause as seldom to become party-makers, and ruinously divide churches. Pastors more content with their lot and more absorbed by the attractions of the cross than by the attractions of society, would in fewer cases plan removals every few years or months. Their happiness would be found, in their work. Aiming rather to improve society than to live upon its spontaneous productions, they would dream less of sailing upon the soft wings of sympathy, and luxury, and refinement around them. The preacher would expect by Divine help rather to make a place for himself than to find a paradise ready made to his hand, or to have the place make him.

The supply of laborers would be greater. In the midst of a revival, young men just converted often commence speaking of the love of Christ; and the church, more alive to the duty of "seeking out" such, discovers their gifts, and they are induced to spend their lives in the work. Then also is kindled the missionary flame. English and American missions were the fruits of preceding revivals. Whitfield, Lady Huntington, Doddridge, Davies, Edwards and Brainard prepared the way for Carey, Martyn, Heber and Judson. Revivals in the U. S. churches and colleges gave birth to the F. Missionary enterprises of American Congregationalists, Baptists and Presbyterians. Many of our own pastors are the fruits of revivals. The full prosperity of Acadia College and its connected School of Theology is dependant upon revivals. In a good education the mind and the heart go together. Students for the ministry in large numbers—patient, laborious, earnest students, not quickly tiring of sacred study, but with self-denial, plodding indefatigably on, or marching boldly forward in their holy work—these must be the result of revivals.

4. Finally, Societies, organizations, plans for extending the Redeemer's Kingdom originate under revival influences. When this is enjoyed, Christians think of the perishing around them and all over the world. To "attempt great things for God" or for man is the upspringing outgrowth of converting grace in the heart. How fertile in inventions to effect its darling objects is the heart, renewed and beating with life derived from Christ! Christian benevolence reckons "the silver and the gold as the Lord's." Such a revival as we have attempted to sketch would fill the treasuries of the Lord, and leave no pastors pinched for means, with starving families and starveling libraries, they who "preach the gospel would live of the gospel."

If the effects of a general and continued work of grace are of such a character, we perceive how melancholy must be the absence of such revival. As things are, it is easy to account for the lamentable deficiency of Students for the min-

istry, for the tardy pace of our H. Missionary movements, for the early interment of the F. Missionary feeling among us, for the lack of that deeply religious and richly devotional element which marked the earlier meetings of our Associations, for the prevalence of drunkenness and of Sabbath desecration in our country.

How great then, the need of revivals! How dwarfed our zeal, how meagre our charities! When Christians meet they resemble a congregation of northern icebergs, cooled down to the temperature of the world's chilly atmosphere. Can such agents be expected to do much towards converting the world?

How earnestly should we use the scriptural means for promoting revivals! How important the inquiry, "what those methods are?"

(D.)

REPORT OF THE HOME MISSION BOARD.

The Board regret that they have nothing of a very cheering nature to communicate. The operations of the Board have been limited. We have had but two meetings during the year; nor did there seem any occasion to hold more, since all the appointments made by the Board had been fulfilled, and no applications for missions had been made. Ninety-six weeks of Missionary labour had been assigned last June to different Missionaries, out of which number seventy-five weeks only have been performed. Our missionaries have been kindly received by the people, and we doubt not with lasting benefit to precious souls; but the success has not been of that enlarged measure that we desire. Among other reasons that might be named, the lack of revival influence attending their labours among the people is perhaps one cause why the contributions to the missionaries have been so small, compared to what they ought to have been at least in many cases. It is to be feared that our brethren and friends to whom missionaries have been sent do not feel deeply enough the duty to aid in their support, and thus the funds at the disposal of the Board are soon exhausted, or reduced to a low figure; besides which the Missionaries are liable to be discouraged when anything seems to indicate that their labours are not duly appreciated by the people. Allowances of course ought to be made for localities where pecuniary means are scanty and the people few; but the Board are convinced that more might have been done in this respect during the past year.

For the sake of showing the sums contributed by the Board and the people respectively, among whom our missionaries laboured, the following table is subjoined:—

Table with 3 columns: Name, Paid by the Board, Paid by the people. Rows include Elder H. Achilles, Obed Parker, P. F. Murray, T. Delong, Bro. J. C. Plumb, Elder R. S. Morton, James Spencer.

The number baptized by the Missionaries is nine.

A few remarks must close this report. The importance of our Home Mission is, we fear, but very imperfectly felt by our churches and people generally. It is connected with the highest interests of man—it aims, by the grace of God, to labour for their eternal salvation. The Home Mission has claims upon us that no other mission can have: it is to our own people—the inhabitants of our own Province, whose spiritual good claims our first care.

Then it is important as being very intimately connected with our prosperity and extension as a denomination. Our fathers in the ministry understood its value; hence they laboured so extensively in preaching the Gospel in every place to which they could gain access. Hence the success which, by the grace of God, attended their self-denying labours. We are imperatively called upon to follow up their efforts and like prosperity shall be ours.

From what has been said it is manifest that we have as a people been deficient in liberality in respect to the Home Mission cause. Our churches and congregations have been increasing in numbers and wealth but as a whole have not become, we think, in like proportion liberal in support of Domestic evangelization; nay, we fear that some have lessened their contributions, which had in all reason been "beautifully less" before.

Our people, the Board feel satisfied, might, without much difficulty, double their contributions to Home Missions without reaching the limit of liberality which the Gospel of Christ and the salvation of souls demand.

Let us, for this precious cause, devise liberal things and we shall prosper. But especially is prayer needed, not only that the labours of our Missionaries may result in the salvation of precious souls, but that the Lord would raise up men, able and willing to go forth and preach Christ among the destitute in all our borders. We need many such men. Prayer to the Head of the Church will secure them, if but the proper means are used in connection with it. There are large fields in Nova Scotia, Cape Breton and P. E. Island destitute of a preached Gospel from Sabbath to Sabbath and from month to month, and where the people would cheerfully hear it, if sent by us,—indeed many of them prefer Baptist preaching.

Let us awake to realize the importance of the work before us and our obligations to engage immediately, liberally, heartily, and with earnest believing prayer in the Home Missionary enterprise as being demanded by Christ and required for the salvation of precious souls in our land.

Geo. ARMSTRONG, Secretary.