

Religious Intelligencer

BIBLE SOCIETY, MISSIONARY, AND SABBATH SCHOOL ADVOCATE.

E. McLEOD, Editor.

That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ.—PETER.

TERMS.— ONE DOLLAR A YEAR, IN ADVANCE

VOL. V—NO. 12.

ST. JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK, FRIDAY, MARCH 19 1858.

WHOLE NO. 220

THE RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCER.

Published in St. John, N. B., every Friday, for the Free C. Baptist Church, Conference, (Incorporated by Law,) under the direction of a Board of Managers, chosen annually by the Conference.

B. J. UNDERHILL, Agent.
OFFICE—No. 28, GERMANTOWN STREET.
All letters and notices connected with the paper, should be directed to the Agent.

TERMS.

ONE DOLLAR A YEAR IN ADVANCE:

For One Square of 12 lines, first insertion, \$2 00

Do. do. each subsequent do. 0 10

Yearly Advertisements—One Square, 2 00

Six Months, do. 1 00

Three Months, do. 0 50

Religious Intelligencer Book Store.

An excellent assortment of Religious Books, Sabbath School Libraries, Hyatt Books, Bibles, &c., &c., are constantly on hand at the office of this paper, at the lowest possible prices.

THE GREAT REVIVAL.

We transfer to our columns this week from recent numbers of the New York Tribune, a secular paper, the following narrative of the remarkable work of God which is now in progress in that city, and throughout the greater portion of the United States. Our readers will remember that we gave a short notice of this work about three weeks since, but the subjoined account which we extract from very extended notices in the Tribune is so deeply interesting that we think we cannot please our readers better than by giving it insertion. We trust it will be read by many with grateful hearts to God for this manifestation of His "saving health" among the people, and that fervent prayer will be made to Him that the same divine power may be felt among the churches in the Province, resulting in equal displays of His grace in the conversion of sinners. The first part of the following narrative is taken from the Tribune of the week before last.—

Ed. Int.

"It can hardly have escaped general observation that there is now being manifested, in this city, an unusual and increasing attention to religion. A remarkably earnest state of feeling on this subject has been developing itself for some time past among all classes of the community here—from the highest to the lowest—including those out of the church as well as those in it. Nor has this quickened interest in religious meetings, been in any wise confined or peculiar to this city; for it extends in an equal and, in many instances, in a still greater degree to all parts of the country. The exchange newspapers, both religious and secular, that come to us from all quarters, speak of an unbroken revival of religious feeling in this vicinity, and in the country far and near around them. In fact, a sudden fervor seems to have seized the public mind. Every where men are crowding to religious meetings, and the spirit with which the crowds are impressed, and which incites them to so general an attention to religion and religious services, seems to be animating the whole land. The revival spreads almost like contagion. It is everywhere expected, like an epidemic. A meeting is organized in one place, and in a day or two afterward another is sure to follow in the nearest neighborhood. One church breaks out into a revival, and in a few weeks the next in the village, or the town, or the city, follows the example, until the whole district is awakened and aroused. In some instances the enthusiasm seems to have spread from place to place with all the rapidity of a fire on a prairie. It is believed, for instance, that as many as a hundred prayer-meetings have been established in different cities and towns throughout the country, from the single example of the noon-day meeting held in this city in the "Old Dutch Church." Not all of these meetings are held at the same time of day, or even daily, yet they have been called into existence from the fact that this was called into existence before them.

A similar religious feeling has not been known in this city for twenty-five years.

About twenty-five years ago a revival of great power, which excited the sympathy and cooperation of great numbers of persons, both church members and others, occurred in New York, though its extent and results were far less remarkable than those which have been already witnessed in the present instance. Public religious meetings were then held in unusual places, and at unusual hours, and were thoroughly attended, but we believe that a midday prayer-meeting, held in the center of the business circles of the city, and sustained largely by the most prominent business men, is a novelty that was not then known. In fact, if the idea of such a meeting had been proposed six months ago, with any probability that it would soon be attended to such an extent as to require three rooms for the divided and overflowing audience, it would have been regarded as hardly less than preposterous.

And it is a precisely similar feeling to that which is exhibited at these and other religious meetings in this city, that is now spreading throughout the country.

IN NEW-ENGLAND.

In New-England, and particularly in Connecticut and Massachusetts, an unusual spirit prevails; and the numbers of conversions, and

of additions to the membership of the churches, are unprecedented. Since the first great revival New-England—which was known as the "Great Awakening," and occurred in the time of the celebrated Jonathan Edwards—there has been nothing equal to what is now passing. In fact, the present revival is said to exceed the former—in the extent, at least, if not in the fervor of its work. The memory of Whitfield, and the effect which followed his eloquent preaching, cannot but be forcibly recalled in view of the great numbers of persons that are now everywhere professing conversion and entering the church. We are informed that there are several towns in New-England in which not a single adult person can be found who has not been converted, and become a member of a church!

IN THE WEST.

Similar accounts are received largely from the West, and in some instances from the South. Multiplied religious meetings are everywhere held in the churches, and a widespread and a wider-spreading interest exists. This feeling, and the efforts which are put forth to retain and increase it, are not exclusive or peculiar to any single Christian denomination, but seemed to be shared equally by all.

The present revival, as it is manifested both at the East and West, is marked with great sobriety, and a commendable freedom from excess. It gives evidence of a well-regulated enthusiasm rather than a wild excitement, and as such has better promise of better salutary effects than any previous revival that has ever passed over the country.

CAUSES.

Of the causes to which these unusual and memorable effects may be traced, it is hardly necessary to say that they will be everywhere recognized as providential and divine. It may be stated that the immediate occasion is very widely believed to have been the recent severity of the times, by which men were forced into an acknowledgment of their dependence on Divine Providence, and their minds made ripe and susceptible to the operation of spiritual influence and the reception of religious truths. If such a cause is adequate to such a result, it is, perhaps, not surprising that this city, whose part of the general burden during the commercial troubles was greater than that of any other in the country, should afford a marked instance of awakened interest in religion.

A CONVENTION ON REVIVALS.

Just before the close of the year a Convention, consisting chiefly of ministers and members of Presbyterian Churches, was held in Pittsburgh, Pa., and continued in session for three days, for the purpose of considering the necessity of a general revival of religion throughout the country, the hindrances, the means, and the encouragements. Two hundred ministers were present, and the meeting throughout was one of great solemnity. The time was occupied chiefly with a discussion of "The Obstacles in the Way of Revivals of Religion," "The Means of Promoting Them," "The Encouragement to Seek for Them," and an inquiry into the existing "Spiritual Condition of the Churches." A Committee, appointed for the purpose, drew up a paper on the subjects in the form of a "Pastoral Letter." The Convention on this letter passed a vote recommending that this letter be read from the pulpits to the congregations of all churches that were willing to accept it; that a special meeting of the "Session" (or primary body) of each Presbyterian church be held at an early day, to discuss the subject, as the Convention had discussed it; that a general pastoral visitation to the churches should be begun, the pastor to be assisted in the work by the officers and other experienced members; and that the ministers should take early and frequent occasion to preach on the subject. In conformity with these arrangements, the first Sunday in January was made the occasion, in multitudes of Presbyterian and of some other churches, for sermons on the "Necessity and Practicality of Revivals," and the first Thursday of the same month was appointed and observed as a "Day of Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer."

THE EXTRA PRAYER MEETINGS.

The prayer meeting held every day at noon in the Consistory Rooms of the Reformed Dutch Church in William street, near Fulton, has become well known over the whole country. This meeting was begun in October last, and was first held weekly, on Wednesdays, until it became so largely attended that a general desire was expressed for a daily session. The change was then made, and after being publicly announced, a single room was found insufficient to accommodate the great numbers that crowded into it to participate in the exercises. A second room was then added, and afterwards a third. All three are now not only filled to their utmost capacity, but would be still more largely attended if there were sitting or even standing room to be offered to the multitude. On Saturday last more than 200 persons were compelled to go away, unable to get a place in either of the rooms. A placard is posted on the outer gate inviting persons to enter, though such an invitation seems no longer necessary: "Step in for five minutes or longer, as your time permits." Inside notices are hung on the walls, to the effect that prayers and remarks should be brief, "in order to give all an opportunity, and forbidding the introduction of controverted points," for the purpose of preventing theological discussions. These precautions are taken, in order to give as much variety as possible

to the exercises, for it is always unpardonable to render a crowded meeting dull. The frequenters of this meeting come from all classes in society, and are invited as much, without regard to their differences. Many clergymen of the city churches, and many prominent laymen, including merchants and medical professions, are seen there every day—as they ought to be seen—side by side with the mechanic and the day labourer, and even the street beggar. Draymen drive up their carts to the church, and, hitching their horses outside, go in with the crowd; and "fine ladies," who sometimes have Christian hearts in spite of unchristian fashions, drive down from "up town" in their fine carriages also step in and mingle with the same multitude. The exercises consist about equally of prayers, remarks and singing. Of course it is impracticable for so many to take part in the speaking or the audible praying, but they all join in the singing with great zeal and emphasis. On one occasion the volume of sound was so heavy as to dislodge from its place on the wall the clock which had been securely fastened, as was supposed, and bring it crashing to the floor. It is not infrequently during the continuance of the meeting, to see a crowd of persons collected in the street in front of the church to listen to the spirit-stirring hymns that are sung inside. It is seldom that the "Doxology in long metre" is ever heard with such effect upon the mind as by persons who lean over the iron railings on the outside to catch the sound of the chorus of voices within. On Saturday the venerable Dr. Lyman Beecher was present at the meeting and made some remarks.

SYSTEMATIC VISITATION.

Some time ago, a plan was set on foot, which was adopted by a large number of churches, of various denominations in this city and Brooklyn, for the purpose of promoting attendance at divine service on the Sabbath, by systematic visitation of assigned neighbourhoods. Each church that entered into the enterprise was allotted a certain bound or parish, of which it was the centre, in which every house was to be visited and the religious condition of every family enquired into. The districts at first chosen to be visited were chiefly poor and low neighbourhoods, where both the temporal and the spiritual destitution of the people were painfully apparent. Parents were solicited to go either to the church in the district, or to some other out of it which they might prefer instead, and to send their children to the Sunday, the Mission, or the Industrial School. In this way thousands of persons, many of whom were formerly degraded and vicious, have been reclaimed to a better moral character and a higher social standing. Gradually this scheme of visitation was extended so as to include the respectable and fashionable streets, as well as the "highways and hedges," until finally no "passover" was written even on a brown stone front, and Fifth Avenue itself was not left to be exempt. And from the reports that have been presented, the results of these efforts, as seen among the higher classes of society, have been of equal interest with those in the lower. The number of rich people, of a high life, who were found never to attend any church, was enormous; though, of course, not so large as of the poor; for, not only are our poor people in the majority in these times, but in upper circles, religion is to a certain degree "fashionable," and church-going is taken as an evidence of "respectability."

The plan is still continued in vigorous operation. The "visitors" are persons in every church who voluntarily take upon themselves the task, dividing it among them.

THE EFFECT IN THE CITY.

The "Great Revival," as all men call it is now an absorbing topic even for ordinary conversation. The religious meetings that are held in various parts of the city during every day, are matters of common and street talk. Notices of meetings for prayer and other religious exercises have been publicly placarded in many of the places where handbills are usually posted. In many counting rooms and stores, similar printed advertisements have been hung up, calling the attention of business men and others to the devotional convocations. In addition to these tracts have been distributed in the cars, in the omnibuses, and in the ferry boats, calling the attention of the chance reader to the subject of religion, quoting passages from the Scriptures, and giving notice of the meetings. Such tracts have even been dropped on the pavements of the streets, for passers by to pick up—so that "he who runs may read."

The prevalent feeling extends also among Sunday Schools, as well as among churches. Many of these schools have, within a very recent period, doubled, and, in some instances, tripled their membership; many conversions have occurred among the young people who have attended them as scholars. In many of the schools, special efforts have lately been made in order to make them more profitable and useful, by making them more attractive; and special services are regularly held in some of the churches, once a month, for the benefit of the children connected with them.

THE NUMBER OF CONVERSIONS.

It is of course impossible to give accurately, or even to estimate approximately the actual number of conversions which may be set down as the results of such work. All such

results are expressed, to some minds, somewhat repulsively by mere figures. The actual increase of religion in a community is not to be measured by statistics. But to give a partial idea of the remarkable effects which have thus far been produced, it may be mentioned that more than a thousand conversions have been reported in the correspondence of a single religious newspaper, for a single week. A journal of the religious press in this city recently stated that it had counted seven thousand in two weeks; and this was merely the number which happened to be given among the "religious items" of only a portion of the general newspaper press during that time. It is not unlikely that there have actually occurred, in a single week, all parts of the country taken together, as many as fifty thousand conversions. This statement, surprising as it may seem, is simply borne out by the facts.

POWER OF CONSCIENCE.

Conversing with a worthy pastor in regard to this movement, he said: "The prospects are grand; everywhere the people are filling the churches, and the congregations becoming deeply interested in the work of spiritual regeneration. And we find, too, that the Spirit has quickened a class of people who were not church-goers, who never before felt an interest in religion."

Business men, sea captains, sailors, and others, who have been notoriously irreligious are beginning to realize that their spiritual life is destitute and undeveloped. These men fill the prayer meetings, and become powerful instruments for the salvation of others. Our daily meetings are conducted by clergymen and laymen, but chiefly the latter. The principal work is accomplished by some means outside of church influence. It is a marked feature of the revival that most of these persons are led to serious thoughts by other instrumentality than mere church effort. Those who meet at the church in John street belong, for the most part, to no particular denomination." He called attention to the following curious case of the power of conscience:

A few days since, Mr. Elias Fountain, of No. 11 White street, received the following letter from a lady inclosing \$120, principal and interest of a sum which had been wrongfully withheld by the writer in the course of a settlement many years ago. The letter was accompanied by such evidence as led Mr. Fountain to believe that the restoration was one of the fruits of the present revival:

New York, 18th February, 1858.

Mr. Elias Fountain, No. 11 White street:

A long time ago, settling an account with you, I could not recollect a charge of some goods, and declined paying the bill, and you said at the time it must be correct. I insisted to the contrary, and you very politely deducted it from the bill, and it was settled according to my wishes, and I thought nothing more of it for twenty years. A few days ago it flashed over my mind as plain as if it had happened the day before, who I bought the goods for and all about the transaction, and inclosed you will find sufficient to pay it in full up to this date. The amount deducted was 50 dollars; I do not understand calculating interest, but it must have more than doubled by this time. I will not enter into any explanation, for it would be quite too long an explanation. I am sure you will receive this, for I have sent it by a very trustworthy person.

AVENUE.

"I have many persons," said he, "in the same condition who come to me for advice. Men have come to me in great distress of mind, and I have found that they failed to obtain peace until they had made restitution of that which they had wrongfully withheld. The revival in our denomination is quite unprecedented in this city and its vicinity. Such a revival has never been known among the Methodists before."

LATEST ACCOUNT!

The following is taken from the TRIBUNE of Tuesday, the 9th instant, and is the latest detailed account of the work published.

PROGRESS OF THE WORK.

The revival does not abate, but rather increases. This is true both of this city and of the whole country. The number of conversions reported in various journals, both secular and religious, during the past week, exceeds the number of the week previous, and the work is everywhere spoken of not only as continuing, but increasing, and as becoming more and more a matter of common conversation, eliciting oftentimes expressions of wonder and astonishment. It is spreading more and more widely over the whole land, and extends even to California and Oregon. We hear of large numbers of conversions in some of the churches of San Francisco, and of religious meetings of unusual interest in Sacramento and many adjacent places. It cannot be questioned that the revival is longer lived than it would be if partook more of the character of excitement; for mere excitement, whether religious or otherwise, does not last long. But the progress of the present work, while it is rapid, is temperate and is marked with very few instances of wild and unregulated enthusiasm. It is, of course, impossible to predict how long such a state of things may exist, though it is likely that as the present popular interest in religion, which has created the revival, was not of sudden but gradual growth, the general feeling will subside much in the same way as it arose. At present, however, it shows no sign of decline, but, on the contrary, its power and influence seem everywhere augmenting.

INCIDENTS.

At the prayer-meeting in the Methodist church in John street, on Friday, it was announced that several losses of money had been suffered, from pickpockets in the crowd, whereupon the conductor of the meeting said "that they were proper persons to be prayed for," and a petition was accordingly made, "that if they had come to steal purposes, God might steal their hearts."

A young man, in a store in Park place, was met by a stranger who asked him the question, "Are you a Christian?" to which, on his replying "No," the stranger said to him, "If you will pray to-night, I will pray for you." Next morning the stranger met him in the same place, and after a salutation was surprised to learn that he had been converted since the previous day.

A young man attending a Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, a few days since, received a copy of the tract circular of the Young Men's Christian Association, accompanied with a printed card of invitation to the John-street prayer-meeting. On Thursday, at this meeting, he introduced himself to a member of the Association and stated that he had experienced conversion, through the instrumentality of that tract.

A law-student in this city was handed a tract, about three weeks ago, by a person before unknown to him, who also gave him a card containing his address. A few days since, this distributor received a note from the student, saying, "I feel very serious on 'the subject of religion, and hope I may be soon converted. Pray for me.'"

A young man, formerly a Sunday-School scholar, recently received one of the Christian Association's tracts, with a request to attend some one of the noon prayer-meetings. Shortly afterwards he wrote, "I received 'your kind tract. I have been often warned 'of the dangers of city life, and have been 'trying to come to the Savior. I hope I may 'soon be changed in heart.' In a day or two afterward he called upon the person who sent him the tract, and said, 'I have found God.'"

The son of an eminent clergyman in this city, writing as a student from Williams College, Mass., says: "We are having a pleasant time, and there is a deep religious feeling in the College."

A resident of New-Haven, formerly a clerk in a bank in New-York, while on a temporary visit to this city, was converted through the agency of one of the midday religious meetings. On his return to New-Haven, he interested himself in the spiritual condition of a younger brother, who within a week was also converted. They are sons of a prominent minister in that city.

A man who recently experienced a spiritual change stated to a member of the Christian Association that his attention was first seriously turned to religion on reading one of its circulars to young men.

A gentleman who is greatly interested in the progress of the revival recently called at the store of a friend to whom he wished to present the claims of religion. His friend was not in, yet he, being unwilling to go away without having accomplished some good, spoke to one of the clerks—a young man about eighteen years of age—to whom he was a stranger, on the same subject, and after a few days was apprised of his conversion through the instrumentality of this conversation.

A New-York merchant, residing in a town in the vicinity of the city, on returning home recently after having attended a crowded prayer-meeting, determined to make an effort for the spiritual good of some of his friends and neighbors. One of these was a man who called himself an infidel. A prayer-meeting was organized, to which this man, with others, was invited, and after several days' attendance, rose on one occasion, and requested that prayer should be made in his behalf. To the surprise and almost astonishment of his acquaintances, he shortly afterward renounced infidelity, embraced the Christian religion, and is soon to become a member of a church. The cousin of this man was recently converted in this city, through attendance at the prayer-meetings, and two brothers and two sisters in the same family have since followed his example.

A young man stated at a prayer-meeting, on Thursday, that he had just experienced conversion. On being asked what had first arrested his attention on the subject of religion, he replied "that it was the reading of the account of the general revival of religion contained in THE TRIBUNE."

REQUESTS FOR PRAYERS.

At all the prayer meetings many written requests for prayers, from various persons, are every day read by the conductors. Among those presented at the meetings of Thursday and Friday are the following:

"The writer requests the prayers of this meeting in behalf of an aged uncle, who is dangerously afflicted, and who has lived an unholily life, that he may obtain remission of his sins, and that he and his family may be brought to repentance."

"The prayers of Christians are requested for a young man—the son of a clergyman—who is an idle jester on the subject of religion, and who has, within the last hour, been heard to ridicule these meetings, and to jest upon these subjects."

"A lady, 87 years of age, who has always lived a worldly life, and who seems bent upon going into eternity trusting in her own righteousness, declined an earnest invitation of the writer, to accompany him to this meeting; but she seemed unusually impressed

when told that between 1 and 2 o'clock to-day, the prayers of this congregation of several hundreds of persons would be offered up to God in her behalf. The writer, on leaving her, requested her to pray for herself at the same hour of the day."

"A sister earnestly entreats the prayers of God's people in behalf of four brothers, that, in this time of his mercy, they may be all gathered into the fold of Christ."

"Prayers are requested for a young man who has thus far resisted all persuasions to attend these meetings, and who is in these rooms to-day for the first time."

"The writer asks the prayers of the audience in behalf of three of his friends who have manifested a desire to seek Christ."

"A lady who was present yesterday, and much afflicted with the prayers, &c. of the brethren, wishes prayer for her two sons, one seventeen and the other nineteen years of age, who are the last of the family remaining."

"A brother who has been a constant attendant upon and laborer at these meetings, asks an interest in your prayers in behalf of two brothers for whom many prayers have been put up 'with strong crying and tears' by a now sainted mother."

"A sister who has been praying daily three years for the conversion of an only brother, asks an interest in your prayers."

A brother requests the earnest prayers of this meeting in behalf of a loved but a thoughtless sister, that she may be led to think more of the things which pertain to her peace, and to choose that good path which shall not be taken away from her."

"Christian friends—I would request the prayers of this meeting in behalf of a father-in-law, and mother-in-law, who are still out of the fold of Christ. I would also request your prayers in behalf of three young men with whom I am daily associated, who scoff at God and ridicule everything of a religious nature."

THE MEETING IN FIFTH AVENUE.

At the prayer-meeting on Friday afternoon in the Rev. Dr. Macauley's church (corner of Fifth Avenue and Twenty-first street), which was filled with ladies, it was stated that not only in these "upper circles," but among the poor, among criminals, the work was going on. The city missionary found a very different spirit among those whom he visited; it was no longer difficult to call attention to the subject of religion, but he was urged to afford help and support by persons who had hitherto been cold or lukewarm. At the Penitentiary in Albany, the speaker recently saw upward of 100 of its inmates, most of whom were under 21 years of age, seated together, each with a Bible or Testament in his hand. When addressed, they burst into tears, and gave unmistakable signs of the change which has taken place within them. The next speaker rejoiced to hear of these good tidings, but begged the brethren not to believe that the work was done. There were still many churches which had not been aroused, and many families which had not received the Gospel. All should be vigilant over themselves and take care to be more than half awake. He had that morning parted from a young lady, who lay upon the bed of death. She did not fear the future but the passage thither; not death, but dying. He prayed with her that the transition might be peaceful and easy. On taking her hand at parting, to the surprise he found it cold. She was dead. During the recital of this narrative, the church was perfectly still; a whisper could have been heard across it. At the close of the services, parents were urged to bring their children and Sunday School teachers their pupils to the meeting this afternoon, which will be at the usual hour.

PRAYER-MEETING IN PLYMOUTH CHURCH.

A prayer-meeting of deep interest was held on Sunday afternoon in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, of which the Rev. Mr. Beecher is minister. Several sailors, recently converted, were present and related their spiritual experience; and, from the feeling manner in which their stories were told, there was hardly a dry eye in the room. A prayer-meeting is held in the lecture-room of this church every Sunday afternoon, from 3 to 4 o'clock. It is not attended by the pastor, being exclusively under the control of the laity of the church. The conductor of each meeting is appointed by the conductor of the previous meeting. The exercises are opened with a prayer and a hymn, after which a passage of Scripture is read, of which an exposition is made. The further exercises vary according to circumstances. Most of the time is usually occupied with prayer and singing, though any one is at liberty to make such remarks as he may think proper on any subject connected with religion, or more particularly his own Christian experience. A great variety of remark is sometimes elicited, and the meetings of this kind have an air of great novelty and interest.

THE SAILOR'S EXPERIENCE.

On Sunday afternoon, a gentleman who is connected with some missionary enterprises in behalf of seamen, introduced the cause of the sailor. The duty of caring for the sailor was urged as part of the general Christian duty of the Church, both as a collective body and as individuals.

The leader of the meeting then announced that several seafaring men, recent converts from the Baptist Mariners' Church, were present, who were requested to speak. In res-