

me. Yet I am not wholly without his notice. He supplies all my wants, and I live under his protection. My enemies see his royal arms over my door, and dare not enter. Were I detached from him for a moment, in that moment they would make an end of me."

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## Religious Intelligencer.

SAINT JOHN, N. B., MARCH 17, 1865.

## REVIVALS.

It is impossible to over-estimate the importance and value of genuine religious revivals. They have existed in every age. In the Old Testament Church they were no less known, and their influence no less felt, than in the New. Religious decisions were frequent and general in the Jewish Church; and some of these were followed by revivals as remarkable in their way as almost any in the Christian Church. Those in the reigns of Asa, Hezekiah, and Josiah, were remarkable exhibitions of spiritual influences accompanying the proper means for the restoration of the spiritual worship of God. The restoration from Babylon, the re-building of the temple and city, was a wonderful religious revival, and the narrative of it, as given by Ezra and Nehemiah, with the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah, afford remarkable evidences of the unseen and secret influences of the Holy Spirit in a variety of ways, and on a variety of minds, in the church and out of it, to bring about the purpose of God in the revival of His people, and the increase of genuine religion. A great revival followed the preaching of John the Baptist. Our Lord's ministry was attended with great and wonderful results, and many believed on Him; still it is remarkable that the numbers reported as the disciples of Jesus at his death were so few! One would suppose that the preaching of Christ himself, in whom all the fulness of God dwelt, and who, knowing the secrets of all hearts, was able to touch every conscience just where it was the tenderest, would have carried all audiences before him, and rendered himself the greatest of all preachers, not only in the purity of his doctrine, the graciousness of his words, the beauty and adaptiveness of his parables and illustrations, but also in the numbers converted under his ministry. But we do not understand that it was so. In one place, at least, where he was best known, where he had been brought up, "he could not do many mighty works, because of their unbelief." Jesus was the great Teacher. To his apostles and their successors he committed the great work of evangelization, under the influence and power of the Holy Ghost, as given to the Church on the day of Pentecost. The gift of the Spirit on that occasion was marked with a wonderful ingathering to the Church from among the very murderers of Jesus. That was the first of a series of revivals reaching from Jerusalem to Samaria, thence to Antioch and Corinth and Ephesus and Rome, permeating all classes, gathering converts from all ranks, sweeping over continents and leaping seas, losing none of its force by the perils it endured. To revival influence and revival power the Church owes, instrumentally, her enlargement and perpetuity. What was the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century but a great revival? And what have been all those seasons of unusual religious interest in which the attention of men hitherto indifferent to the claims of religion have become the ardent and zealous advocates of a christianity, but religious revivals? Such, in a christian manner, was the work in the seventeenth century, by which the dissenting denominations in England were so greatly enlarged and established. Such the wonderful movement in the last century, which gave birth to the extensive Methodist organizations, which are multiplying everywhere and blessing the world. Such the wonderful seasons of religious interest which was felt in America and Great Britain only a few years since, and the fruit of which still lives.

General and extraordinary revivals, spreading over a whole country, and reaching perhaps to other countries, are, however, only of rare occurrence. These seasons require special men, such as every generation does not produce—such as are only found once or twice in a century. But local revivals, revivals limited to a single church or parish, are of equal importance to the localities in which they exist, as the greater ones are to the countries which have been the scene of their influence. Without revivals, churches will sink into formality and decay, and in process of time cease to exist. That it should be so, we are not prepared to say; we only speak of what does actually take place. Hence the importance of ministers and churches looking, and praying, and labouring for revivals.

But by revival we do not mean a mere excitement for a few days or weeks, followed by a declension more deplorable and more general than the one which preceded it. We mean the awakening and reviving of the church, by which formality becomes spiritualized; by which indifference is converted into earnestness; by which estrangements and grievances are removed; by which hatred is turned to love; by which despondency and fear is changed into hope and joy; by which charity will be led out to reclaim and save; and piousness and covetousness will be superseded by liberality and benevolence. When a revival having these features and characteristics takes place in a church, then will "sinners be converted." Many will see it and fear, and be turned in the name of the Lord; and the fruit will be permanent. Such are the revivals which our churches require; such alone can save them.

We subjoin a short narrative of a revival in Scotland, about two centuries ago. May the reader be stimulated by it to desire and pray for revival!

In the 17th century, a most remarkable work was carried on in Scotland, in the united parishes of Irvine and Sturton. The minister of the parish, a godly man named Dixon, was greatly concerned about the low state of religion among his people, and he lifted up his heart much to God while he laboured among them. Shortly afterwards a most remarkable spirit of hearing was poured out upon the people till they were not satisfied with the Sunday service, but besought the minister that they might have an extra service on Monday. Monday was the market-day, and it was arranged to hold the service at such an hour that it should be over before the market began. It turned out that the kirk was as well attended on Monday as on the Sunday, and one day the people were so filled with a desire for God and for salvation that the market was entirely forgotten, and the people followed the pastor to the manse, and there sought in earnest for the salvation of their souls. A remarkable work commenced then and there, and was heard of all over Scotland. Scoffers called it the Sturton sickness, but hundreds who were there to scoff remained to pray. This continued for about five years, and during that time the change which took place in the character of the inhabitants of the whole district was most marvellous. It did not end in sighs and tears, but sinners were converted, many who had been enemies to each other were reconciled, and those who had been living in open profligacy became pure and chaste. Many people who were broken in heart in other parts of Scotland, having of the place where the angel seemed to be

troubling the waters, went there to share in the blessing, while many eminent Christians went to look and learn. The Provost of Glasgow University, a very good as well as a learned man, who visited the place, said he found the people very illiterate, but in Christian conversation they taught him more than he could teach them. The last of the remarkable results in connection with this revival was at the now celebrated communion service about five years after the revival commenced. There had been one Sabbath an unusually impressive service, so much so that though the communion was over the people, who were gathered in large numbers from all parts of the country, wished the service to be resumed on the Monday; and a young minister, John Livingston by name, was asked to preach. He consented, and spent all the Sunday night in prayer, but he was so tempted during the night by the devil, that he started early in the morning to run away. When he got to the last point at which he could see the tower of the church, he turned to look at it, and the thought came into his mind, "Here I ever been a wilderness and a howling desert." "No, Lord," he answered, and at once went back and preached to the people in the open air, from the words, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you." He preached to them for almost an hour very powerfully, but nothing unusual happened, till just as he was about to close, when a few drops of rain fell, and the people sheltered themselves as they best could with their cloaks. When the preacher saw this he observed to the crowd, without any premeditation, "If these few drops of rain so discompose you, O ye unconverted ones! how can ye bear the rain of God's wrath?" In a strange eloquence given him by the Spirit of God, he went on preaching for another hour, and much good was the result. Three young gentlemen, who were passing through the place on their way to Edinburgh, stopped to listen, and among many others, were converted. This might be called one of the Parter revivals in Scotland.

## LOVES OF EASE IN THE CHURCHES.

It requires but casual observation to discover the humiliating fact that a large proportion of the membership composing the Christian churches of our land, are only loiterers in the vineyard of God. In the presence of the truth that christianity is a life, and life inspiring, this is a difficult problem. Indeed, it can never be reconciled with vital godliness. This class of persons mourned, professedly, for sin, were converted after a sort—were baptized, and duly initiated into the visible church. And what next? Nothing, absolutely nothing. They did not enter the "lists" as runners. If they ever obtained the prize, they must be carried to it, or to them. There is a house of worship to be erected? They did not join the church to spend their money for such objects. Is the minister to be supported? They have enough to do to help themselves. Is there a Sunday-school—a prayer meeting—a class meeting to be sustained, others must do it, or it will not be done. They are gratuitous spongers upon the hard earned and dearly bought bounties of the church. They have no idea how the cause of God is supported, neither do they care. With them it is more blessed to receive than it is to give. They love to worship (?) in fine houses, to hear good music and eloquent preaching. They can boast of their connection with the most populous and influential church in the country; but others must labour and pay for all these. They go where "all things are ready"—to their land.

Across the street from the dwellings of some of these "careless ones," a missionary with a few faithful co-laborers is toiling to build Zion and to extend her borders. A temporary shelter is the centre of their operations. They have more harvests than they can gather or accommodate. Souls are perishing all about them. They lift up the Macedonian cry, "come over and help us;" but there is no ear to hear, and no eye to pity. The drones prefer going when the work is done and no questions asked. What do they care about the souls of others? They intend to enjoy themselves—and they do—their capacity for enjoyment being adequately small.

Not a few evils grow out of this state of things. First, such persons impair the vitality of the churches. As dead limbs cripple the living branches of a tree, so do these dead members paralyze the souls and efforts of those who have the cause at heart. Second, it subjects Christ to the reproach of his enemies, on grounds which ought not to exist. These nominal professors are selected by the wicked as the representatives of christianity, and held up to shame and contempt. Third, their example is fearfully infectious. Every year they produce an increasing large brood of their own kind. Fourth, it unjustly casts the burdens of the church upon a few who are in danger of being overworked to their own and the church's peril.

How may this evil be remedied, is a question of no ordinary moment? It will, perhaps, never be wholly removed; but much can be done to reduce the present alarming proportions. Let ministers and leaders put every new convert to work, and ever keep before them the truth that this is the time and place for action, action, action. A month of inactivity in a single church or parish, are of equal importance to the localities in which they exist, as the greater ones are to the countries which have been the scene of their influence. Without revivals, churches will sink into formality and decay, and in process of time cease to exist. That it should be so, we are not prepared to say; we only speak of what does actually take place. Hence the importance of ministers and churches looking, and praying, and labouring for revivals.

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The testimony of Herbert Spencer in his Essays on the "Morals of Trade," and "Railway Morals and Railway Policy," is equally startling. "It is not true," he says, "as many suppose, that only the lower classes of the commercial world are guilty of fraudulent dealings; those above them are, to a great extent, equally so. On the average, men who deal in sales and tons of dirt in morality from men who deal in yards and pounds. Illicit practices, of every form and shade, from venial deception up to all but direct theft, may be brought home to the higher grades of our commercial world. Tricks, ruses, and frauds, in almost all departments of trade and commerce, are prevalent; many of them established as 'customs of trade'; nay, not only established but defended."

These writers, of course, would not be understood as saying, that every man in the walks of trade is dishonest at the present time. In the country, the case must be truly alarming. How long will it be before this immorality in business unchecked will corrupt society generally, pervade all the transactions and relations of men, and sap the foundations of law and government? Why is it that the large class of men who are becoming, or have become rich, by trade, keep beyond the reach of the Gospel? Why do they either spend the Sabbath in pleasure, in eating, drinking and sleeping, or if they occasionally go to church, go only where the nummies of ritualism, robes and church rites occupy the time, and leave little or nothing to be said to the souls of the sinners? Why is it already impossible to execute a law against a villanous traffic, in our large commercial cities? How long can this immorality continue to increase, without sapping all the foundations of society, overthrowing law, order and religion, and working itself out in a series of horrors, as the immorality of slavery has done at the South?

And yet we greatly mistake, if we suppose that men are any more dishonest in principle at the present time, than they were years ago. No man becomes morally corrupt in a day. If instances of fraud increase in temptation multiply, it simply shows that dishonesty was waiting for its opportunity. Times like the present prove that very much of that which is called "commercial integrity," is not that "integrity of the upright," of which the Scriptures speak, but simply the integrity of the police, which the maxims of trade have become. It simply shows that honesty is the best policy, but he who acts from that principle is not an honest man. The man who is honest simply because it pays well, will be dishonest the moment that dishonesty will pay better. If there is a great increase of fraudulence in these times, it simply shows that dishonesty was waiting for its opportunity. 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