

THE

Home and Foreign Record

OF

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF THE LOWER PROVINCES

MARCH, 1869.

REVIVALS.

Tidings come to us of remarkable revivals of religion from a number of Presbyterian congregations in Ontario. The means which God has blest are simply the faithful preaching of the Gospel, together with prayer. The hunger for the Word, the longing for communion with God in the ordinances of his appointment, and the desire for fellowship with brethren in the Lord, combine to make the meetings much more frequent and more prolonged than usual. From many distant sections of the Presbyterian Churches of the United States come good news of refreshing times. The usual means are blest to the conversion of many souls, and large numbers are added to the Redeemer's fold.—About ten years ago, a great Revival visited almost all the Churches of this Continent,—a movement never equalled since the days of Jonathan Edwards. It is well known that much permanent good resulted from that merciful visitation. The American Churches are beginning to expect another outpouring of the same Spirit; but whether their hope may or may not be realized must largely depend, under God, on their perseverance and unanimity in prayer. Ireland, and subsequently Scotland, were visited with a Revival a year or two later than the American Churches, the beneficial effects of which can still be clearly traced.

One of the most noteworthy and fruitful Revivals on record occurred in Scotland about thirty years ago. Here, again, the means used were the prayer of faith and the preaching of the Word. God seems

often to raise up men peculiarly fitted for such occasions. McCheyne, and Burns, and Milne, McDonald, and Kennedy, were some of the honoured instruments on that occasion. But at other times He seems to guard against having His work identified with the labours of any men. The preaching of "weak vessels" is owed and blest in a manner that puts to shame the noblest triumphs of mere oratory.

Dr. Mather, one of the great Puritan fathers of New England, insists on the necessity of prayer for Revivals, and adds: "During the last age scarcely a sermon was preached without some being apparently converted, and sometimes hundreds were converted by one sermon." In those palmy days to which he refers, the spirit of religion was so prevalent in New England that a minister who had traversed the country for seven years was able to testify that during all that time he had never heard a profane oath, or seen a man drunk! This propriety of outward behaviour is a hopeful sign with respect to the religious condition of a people.

After Mather's day the great Revival of the eighteenth century took place. The doctrines preached, Dr. Hodge tells us, were the doctrines of original sin, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, effectual calling, justification by faith on account of Christ's righteousness, repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, the perseverance of the saints, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.—These are the doctrines that have been taught amid the greatest Revivals with which God has ever