

—and the corresponding prophecy,—  
 “Awake, awake, put on thy strength,  
 O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments,  
 O Jerusalem,” are thus expressed by the Apostle Paul, in language more pointed and condensed: “Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” No language could more beautifully or strikingly express the true nature of a religious revival.

The reformation from popery, during the sixteenth century, was another distinguished revival; for then the church, awaking from the slumber of ages, started into a new and more glorious life, and went forth, “conquering and to conquer,” over the whole continent of Europe.

Religion was also greatly revived by the preaching of Whitefield, Wesley, and Edwards, in England and this country, at a subsequent period. Then a season of comparative deadness and inactivity was by their means turned into one of life and energy. Hundreds and thousands were converted to God; and Zion was not only greatly enlarged, but greatly purified and blest.

There was probably an extensive revival of religion in this country ten years ago; but the results have not equalled expectation, and many judicious men have intimated, with great probability of its truth, that the church is now suffering a decline. A little work has been just published by Dr. Chaplain, assigning the causes which have produced this condition of things; and amongst others, he notices the following:—“The prevalence of the opinion, that religious principles cannot be expected, in most cases, to be steady and constant.” We have no doubt that genuine revivals have taken place in some particular churches, during the last ten years, some of which have been of a very peculiar and glorious kind; for small and feeble churches,—

churches, too, that were, in a great measure, dead and inactive,—have, by what we cannot more appropriately designate than as a special interposition of divine influence, been rendered large, active, and prosperous bodies. But the doctrine of religious revival has been misunderstood and misapplied. Attempts have been made to substitute occasional and excessive excitement for the regular and systematic operation of Christian principle. Reaction has ensued; false principles have been engendered; the sober, every-day duties of religion have been neglected; churches have been discouraged; and the *plain* preaching of the gospel has been shorn of its power. A large amount of intellectual and moral energy has been wasted, in consequence of misdirection; and hence, as we have already intimated, many churches and private Christians are suffering from exhaustion and paralysis. Many persons, also, have been introduced to the churches, under the influence of temporary excitement, who had not really passed from death to life, and are now, in consequence, diffusing their deadly leaven through the entire mass.

Besides, preachers and others have very generally adopted the sentiment, that churches and individual Christians are responsible, not for the performance of their duty to the unconverted, but for the salvation of the unconverted. It has consequently come to be an article of their creed, that whenever sinners are not converted, the church, or individuals belonging to the church, are to blame for it. They are most assuredly to blame, for not using the means requisite to secure the conversion of sinners; but we are yet to learn, that they are responsible for the results, after having thus used the means. And that this may be done, and yet no conversions ensue at specific times and in specific places is a fact