

The Record.

TORONTO, APRIL, 1858.

RELIGIOUS REVIVAL.

When, a few months ago, we experienced the first pressure of that commercial crisis, the effects of which have been so widely and so deeply felt, a hope was expressed by many christian ministers and writers, that the public calamity might be over ruled for spiritual good. We believe that already the trial has not been without some good fruit. Many, we trust, have felt the vanity of all worldly supports, and have been led to forsake the broken fountains at which they were seeking to satisfy their thirst, and to repair to Him who is the fountain of living waters, and who is a present help in every time of need. The pressure of circumstances has restrained many from worldly pleasures, and led them to seek at home, in the bosom of their families, in useful and religious reading, and in profitable meditation and reflection, that relief which their worldly business could not yield. The very leisure which many have enjoyed has given them a breathing-time, and afforded them an opportunity of considering their position and prospects with reference to eternity. Individual and family affliction is often blessed for the good of the soul. Often too, in times of general adversity, men are led to consider, and are constrained in their affliction to seek God early. This, we think, has already been the result of the recent fearful crisis.

Most of our readers, we doubt not, have seen notices of the very marked revival of religion, which has been taking place in New York, in Boston, and indeed through most of the New England and Northern States. An Exchange paper presents us with the following account of it:—

It is the opinion of the elders and members of the churches in those parts, that no revival, equal in extent and power to that which the churches are now enjoying, has passed over the country since the 'great awakening in New England in the days of Jonathan Edwards, and the present work far exceeds that in its extent. It is not marked by the intense enthusiasm and excitement that followed the preaching of Whitfield, or the revivals at the beginning of the present century, in which various physical convulsive demonstrations were witnessed among persons under conviction of sin, but on the contrary, it everywhere gives evidence of calmness, and freedom from wild and unregulated excitement. An unusual enthusiasm prevails, but there are no violent or extraordinary demonstrations anywhere. So far as we can judge from the accounts which have come under our observation, these revivals have, in almost every instance, commenced in the churches. The professed people of God have been made to feel the need of a more entire personal consecration to the work and service of their Master; they have felt their dependence upon God for their spiritual blessings, and have had a stronger and more practical faith in the efficacy of prayer. Feeling thus they have been more faithful in prayer—in the social meeting—in the family,

and in the closet, and God, in answer to their prayers, has graciously granted his rich blessing. Men of the world—those whose minds have heretofore been holly engrossed in business and pleasure, and who have given no thought to religious matters—have been made to feel, during the past few months, as they have never felt before, the instability of earthly possessions, and in this way their minds have been prepared to consider more candidly and seriously than ever before, the claims of God, their Heavenly Father, to the supreme homage, and to the best affections of their heart.

The New York papers have during the week given almost daily accounts of the truly wonderful revival which is being enjoyed in that city. It is a significant indication of the hold which the movement has taken upon the public attention that such a paper as the New York Herald should devote several columns to reports of the daily prayer meetings. The Tribune also a few days since had six columns of reports of the meetings in that city and other places, and a day or two after another detailed report indicating the progress of the work. The conductors of the press are generally good judges of what most interests the great mass of the public, and generally try to give their readers the latest information upon the matters which, for the time being, most deeply interest them. In this light the course of the papers alluded to in giving up day after day columns of room to reports of the religious meetings shows to what an extent the community are interested in the matter. The Independent in speaking of the interest in that city, says:

"It is now more than twenty years since New York was the scene of so general a revival of religion as is now in progress. Indeed the present work of grace is already more extensive and more impressive than were the memorable seasons from 1830 to 1835. The glad vision of the prophet is realized, and converts fly as clouds and as doves to their windows. Already the conversions of the past winter may be numbered by tens of thousands.

The most efficient agencies in the present work of grace have been the prayer meeting, and personal conversation with the impenitent by private christians. No grand machinery of effort at revival has been set in motion; no professed revivalists have been employed; no combinations for union have been framed; but christians have come together with one heart for prayer and praise; and those who have heretofore labored for Christ only by proxy, have begun personal effort for the salvation of souls. This new development of Christian activity, and of the resources of the churches in the piety and zeal of their individual members, must be of lasting benefit. Indeed, if these efforts shall continue in the spirit of humility and faith, we see not why the scenes of Jerusalem, of Samaria and of Antioch, should not be renewed in New York. God presses home upon every Christian his personal responsibility for the conversion of souls to Christ. Are you doing your duty?"

The New York Examiner in a leading article of the 4th inst. uses the following language:—

"Among the novel modes of singular efficiency and propriety, that have been developed, may be named a Methodist 'Prayer Meeting Association,' with a devout and influential layman at its head, which goes in a body from church to church, holding meetings, and calling upon the brethren to awaken and 'come up to the help of the Lord.' A number of churches have been awakened by this instrumentality, and powerful revivals are going on in consequence. It is estimated that more than a hundred 'business men's daily prayer-

meetings' have been opened in different parts of the country, since the original Noon Prayer Meeting was started in the North Dutch church. The Noon Prayer Meeting in the John street Methodist church, already crowds the main edifice, and the lecture-room is now thrown open for an additional meeting. The names of two or three well-known city politicians lately converted, are mentioned among the most fervent and zealous exhorters. Perhaps, however, the most wonderful display of Divine power ever seen in this or any other revival within the memory of man, is to be found in the uprising of the abandoned wretches on the Five Points, where hardened and imbruted outcasts of ten, twenty, or more years' standing, have pressed into the chapel of the Methodist Mission, casting away their abominations, and eagerly asking for the temperance pledge, for prayers, and what they must do to be saved. Twenty or more of this class—not children, or youth, but general adults in years and sin, often blotted and disfigured with infamous vices—are believed to have become truly penitent, believing and regenerate.

Such is the account which we have received of the work that is going on in the United States. Although nothing of so marked a character has been witnessed in Canada, we believe there has not been wanting evidence that God has been pouring out the gracious influences of His Spirit in many quarters, and reviving His own work amongst us. Indications of a gracious revival of religion have appeared in not a few of our own congregations. Let us hope and pray that the work may deepen and extend, and that many, who in the days of prosperity were living without God may be led to the discovery of the one thing needful. Let us individually and as congregations humble ourselves before God, and seek the reviving influences of His grace and Spirit, and thus we may find our recent public distress bringing forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to the praise and glory of God.

A RIGHT ESTIMATE OF THE SABBATH.

1st. We should regard the Sabbath as the hallowed property of God. He expressly claims it as his own sacred property—He calls it "my holy day" which is not said of any other day in the week. The all-wise creator gave six days to man for his lawful pursuits and employments, but the seventh portion of Time, He hath reserved for himself—He hath kept it in his own hands, and claims it as his peculiar property. It may emphatically be called His day, because He is Lord of the Sabbath—He hath appointed and set it apart from ordinary and secular purposes for his own worship and service. He hath stamped it with the seal of his divine appointment and example, and appended his blessing to the observance thereof. This ordinance was instituted from the beginning of the world. It was co-eval with the creation of man, for no sooner was man created after the image of God, than the all-wise and beneficent creator instituted the Sabbath for his own glory, and for the benefit of man. There are some writers who (most erroneously) maintain that the Sabbath is merely a Jewish ob-