

## CANADIAN METHODISM; ITS EPOCHS AND CHARACTERISTICS.

BY THE REV. DR. RYERSON.

Written at the request of the London, Toronto, and Montreal Annual Conferences.

### ESSAY IV.—PHENOMENA AND PHILOSOPHY OF EARLY METHODIST REVIVALS OF RELIGION.

IN my last Essay, on the Supernatural Character of Canadian Methodism, I stood with the reader face to face with that work of God in the soul of man in which he is born into the kingdom of God, and grows up to the stature of the fulness of Christ; I traced that work step by step, from its tears of penitence to its joys of pardon, adoption, regeneration and sanctification, as illustrated in the lives and labours of the early Methodist preachers, as also in the doctrines and ministrations of the early Protestant Reformers. I now propose to consider the peculiar circumstances of that work; or, in other words, the Phenomena and Philosophy of Early Methodist Revivals of Religion in Canada.

The term *revival* simply signifies restoring; recovery from apparent death or drowning, to life; return to activity from a state languor; recovery from a state of neglect and depression, as the revival of literature or learning; quickening, or re-animating with hopes or joys; awakening men to their spiritual interests, and rousing them to more attention and action in regard to religion.\* It is in this last sense that I employ the term *revival* in these Essays.

The term *phenomenon* is defined by Mr. Wesley as "an uncommon circumstance." In nature it is an appearance the cause of

\* Mr. Wesley, in a letter to a friend, dated February 12th, 1779, says: "The remark of Luther, 'that a revival of religion seldom continues above thirty years,' has been verified many times in several countries. But it will not always hold. The present revival in England has already continued fifty years. And, blessed be God, it is at least as likely to continue as it was twenty or thirty years ago. Indeed, it is far more likely; as it not only spreads wider, but sinks deeper, than ever; more and more persons being able to testify that the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin. We have, therefore, reason to hope that this revival of religion will continue, and continually increase till the time when all Israel shall be saved, and the fulness of the Gentiles shall come."—*Works, Am. Edit.*, Vol. VII., p. 180.