

abundantly proved by experience. How can we account for the want of such success on the part of the Saviour, when, having preached the gospel to many cities and villages, it is said, "he wondered at their unbelief?". How can we account for the failure of stupendous miracles and divine teaching, in the case of Chorazin and Bethsaida; or for what the Saviour says of them,—“Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they would have repented!” We can account for these things, not by blaming the preacher or the church, but by referring it to the excessive obduracy of those hearts, which could resist such appeals. But the opposite has been very generally taught from our pulpits, and cherished by our churches; and the consequence is, sinners have been hardened in their impenitence, while good and holy men, as well as true gospel churches, have been perplexed, discouraged, and weakened.

But to return from this digression, we remark, that a single church is revived, when, after a season of deadness and declension, Jehovah is pleased to pour out his Spirit.—Christians take a higher stand, in point of faith, love, and obedience,—and sinners are converted from the error of their ways, and added to the church. It is, however, not absolutely essential to a revival, that there should be accessions of converts to the church; although this will be a very frequent result of such a revival. The main thing is, that the church itself, or the individuals composing that church, should be aroused and sanctified; that they should become more holy, more happy, more useful. This will generally produce its appropriate effects upon the unconverted. It will naturally call their attention to the sub-

ject of religion, and may become the means of their eventual salvation.

From these remarks it will be readily perceived, what we understand by a revival of religion. It is not an excitement upon the subject of religion, in which there may be much feeling, much bustle, much talking, much preaching, and many prayer meetings, and during which, we may add, there may be many conversions and additions to the church, but the results of which are not permanently beneficial. In such a scene, there may be much of what is good; the truth may be preached and felt; Christians may be happy; and some sinners may be converted to God; but relaxation, exhaustion, and inactivity are the result; and an observant looker-on may be led to doubt whether the church is permanently benefited.

It is not a state of outward religious prosperity, in which the preaching is good, the hearers numerous and attentive, and the people of God confident as to final success; because success may never come; and amid external prosperity and high hope, piety and virtue may actually decay.

It is not a condition of progressive improvement in the church, during which Christians are growing in grace, and though liable to many fluctuations of personal feeling and experience, “to fears within and fightings without,” are, upon the whole, advancing in faith and hope, in meekness and obedience, and during which there is also a gradual accession of converts from the world. This is not, properly speaking, a revival of religion, but it is a most desirable and delightful state of things. In fact, though this is not a revival, it is by far the best state in which a church can be, and infinitely to be preferred to a periodical and occasional excitement, even of the best kind.

A revival of religion must take