

WISDOM and CHILDISH BEHAVIOUR in EVANGELISM

*A Study in the Life and Ministry of
Jedediah Burchard.*

“How can I describe the people of this generation? What are they like? They are like children sitting in the market-place and shouting at each other. For John the Baptist came neither eating nor drinking wine, and you say, ‘He is possessed.’ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drinker, a friend of tax-gatherers and sinners!’ And yet God’s wisdom is proved right by all who are her children.”
(Luke 7: 32-35.)

by
Robert Evans
2016

This book is published by the Author.
The documents quoted in this book are all in the public domain.
It is a project of Research in Evangelical Revivals.
Printed copies may be obtained from the Author, and from co-
operating bookstores.
It can also be downloaded from www.revivals.arkangles.com

Rev. Robert Evans. OAM. MA.
P.O. Box 131.
Hazelbrook. N.S.W. 2779.
Australia.
bobevans@exemail.com.au
Copyright 2016.

I.S.B.N. 978-0-9945203-0-2

TABLE of CONTENTS

PART ONE

	Introduction.	7
1.	Introducing Jedediah Burchard.	11
2.	George Gale's <i>Autobiography</i> .	23
	Finney's Letter.	34

PART TWO

Published Reports about Burchard in New York State.

3.	The 1831 Revival. Jefferson and Oneida Ctys.	37
4.	Later in 1832. Lewis and Broome Counties.	49
5.	Monroe County. Rochester and Brockport.	57
6.	Cortland County – Homer.	72
7.	Monroe County again. Review.	106

PART THREE (1834 – 1835)

Vermont's "Burned – Over District."

8.	Before Burchard.	112
9.	Rev. Dr. Joshua Bates.	114
10.	First Reports about Burchard in Vermont.	121
11.	Positive Reports of His Missions.	130

Windsor	131
Springfield	133
Weathersfield	149
Grafton	159
Woodstock	162
Norwich	173
Montpelier	176
Royalton	181
Shoreham	185
Hinesburgh	192
Williston	195

PART FOUR

Attacks by Eastman and Streeter.

1.	Eastman's copies of Burchard's Sermons.	202
2.	Streeter's Version of Events.	251
	A local editor gives open support to Burchard.	256

PART FIVE

13.	Withington's "Review" of Eastman.	257
14.	Joshua Leavitt's "Reply."	268

PART SIX

The Destruction of Burchard's Evangelism in Vermont.

15	James Marsh and the Local and General Associations.	273
	James Marsh	279
	Documents from Vermont	292
	Documents from Connecticut.	323
	Documents from Massachusetts.	337
	Joshua Leavitt's Criticism.	
	Reply to Leavitt.	
17.	Edward N. Kirk's Attempt at Wisdom.	350
	Some Conclusions.	355
	Bibliography.	367
	Index.	373

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

It is not only the Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees and Lawyers, who were able to behave in a childish manner, as described by the Lord. It has been practiced, and is practiced today, by a great many ordinary Christians, as well as by many members of the clergy, by academics, and by apparent experts in the field of evangelism and missionary work.

This book serves several purposes.

It studies some interesting details in the history and practice of evangelism, such as some of the difficulties which arise when Christian leaders must deal with an evangelist with difficult aspects to his or her personality; the dangers of “party spirit” in Christian work, and sad results which can flow when Christians do not possess the patience and wisdom which they really need to achieve the best results in evangelism.

This book also studies a neglected chapter in the history of American revivals – the life and ministry of Jedediah Burchard; his role in the revivals in upstate New York around the time of the great revival of 1831, and in the “burned-over” period in Vermont.

1. The impact of “strange personalities” upon Christian work is an interesting subject to explore. People with strange personality features in Christian work, or in any other situation, can produce results which are difficult for the rest of us to cope with. Naturally we all think of ourselves as “normal,” and that

everyone else is peculiar, more or less. And this is what prompts the famous old saying that “All the world is queer except me and thee, and even thee is a little queer.”

However, in some notable cases, it is clear that some Christian workers and ministers do have some aspects of their personalities which are widely considered to be “odd,” or difficult.

For example, many years ago I greatly enjoyed reading a biography about a famous Chinese evangelist - Dr. John Sung.¹ There was no doubt that the Lord chose to use him in a most wonderful way, and as a result Dr. Sung saw marvellous movements of the Holy Spirit in his meetings, and as a result of his work. He was a very successful evangelist, and many conversions occurred. At one stage he developed a healing ministry, also, as an aspect of his work, and some astonishing healing miracles occurred in his meetings in answer to prayer. And lest people should think too much of the man, rather than of God who gave the miracles, John Sung developed cancer and died at the early age of 42 years. But there were certain aspects of his character which many people found were difficult to cope with. He could be very abrasive at times, and be unaware of the feelings of those who worked with him. And these factors produced some sad results. It would have been much better if everyone was perfect – but, of course, they are not.

On the other hand, it is also most probably true in many of these cases that the peculiar features we have mentioned as negative also played a powerful positive role in many other aspects of the person’s life and ministry, glorifying God in other ways, which tended not to be recognized or thought of by the

¹ Leslie T. Lyall, *John Sung*. a Biography of Dr John Sung: Flame for God in the Far East. London. China Inland Mission. 1956. Revised edition. About the healing ministry see Bertha Smith. *Go Home and Tell*. A Missionary in China during and after the time of Dr John Sung. Nashville. Broadman Press. 1965

people who suffered in a negative way from that person's personality, and who felt the negative impacts.

2. Almost anyone who is active in the public square will have supporters, and critics, who either disagree largely or entirely with what this person did. Or else they think that distortion or lack of balance is being practiced in some way.

This applies in many ways in missionary and evangelistic work which is being done in the name of Jesus Christ.

However, this kind of "party spirit" is almost always a second best thing. It does not allow the practice of God's wisdom by human leaders. So it is important for Christians to learn a better level of wisdom, in order to achieve what is best for the kingdom of God. There are many aspects to this problem area.

The Lord Himself stated the problem quite directly. "How can I describe the people of this generation? What are they like? They are like children sitting in the market-place and shouting at each other. For John the Baptist came neither eating nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He is possessed.' The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drinker, a friend of tax-gatherers and sinners!' And yet God's wisdom is proved right by all who are her children"²

God's wisdom is proved right by its results. Lack of wisdom is always a point where lessons can be learned.

3. Decisions by leaders in any sphere often may intend well, but the results which follow can damage or destroy the very good thing which the leader was aiming at when the decision was being made.

² Luke 7: 31 – 35. (New English Bible.)

This can happen easily when Christian leaders have to decide how they are going to cope with a new thing which has arisen, and which is different from what they are used to, or from what is normal.

This book is a study of a particular example of an evangelist, talented in certain ways, greatly used by God, but who had personality issues, which created difficulties for himself, and for many people. In the work of God, this kind of thing can have devastating results upon the evangelistic and missionary work of the reviving of the Church, and the spreading of the Gospel around the world.

In the case of Jedediah Burchard, lack of wisdom in the way he himself behaved, and lack of wisdom in other church leaders caused antagonisms which produced long-term destructive effects on the evangelistic work of the churches, and bringing evangelism in many of these churches into a state of decline. It is not correct to blame this evangelist for all of the bad effects, because many other people were also involved, who made bad decisions which affected the future of their churches in a negative way. But his own personality factors were strongly involved, and were the initial trigger of problems. In the end, however, God worked to glorify His name, and part of that glory is seen in how God is able to use imperfect people.

4. In an important sense, the whole of our understanding of the history of evangelism and revivals in New England and upstate New York between 1830 and 1860 needs to be re-written, because American history has been viewed up until today on the basis of a very lop-sided understanding of the life and work of this man. The story of his life which has received the widest circulation, and created the longest impact, is a seriously distorted one, which sprang from two observers who did not have any proper grasp of the life and work of this evangelist. So, our

views of his personal history, and of the history of evangelism and revivals in New England, need to be corrected.

CHAPTER ONE.

Introducing Jedediah Burchard.

Jedediah Burchard was an evangelist in the Eastern States of the U.S.A. in the first half of the Nineteenth Century. He also spent a short time in Canada. His career as a preacher in protracted meetings, and in times of revival, was very interesting for a number of reasons. But since that time, historians have not been kind to him, and, consequently, a further evaluation of his life's work, in so far as we can do this, is well worth the effort. While Burchard was admittedly a peculiar man, his life provides one of the clearest examples of a man whose reputation and ministry were seriously damaged and diminished by the criticisms of other orthodox Christians, apart from what he suffered from the attacks of people who the orthodox might have thought were heretics.

During the time of his ministry in Vermont, he was seriously criticized by the Rev. Dr. James Marsh, who was then the President of the University of Vermont. Marsh spread his criticisms through the Congregational Associations of Vermont and Connecticut, so that all the Associations decided to recommend to all their ministers that they should not use the services of evangelists in those churches where settled ministers were positioned. This view of the work of the ministry depended upon the idea that these ministers had of their own work. Stated ministers in New England at that time were a part of a kind of

“State Church,” and were considered to have certain responsibilities and rights as a result of their position in a community. In the long term, this approach had the result that active evangelism declined in these churches, and ultimately the membership of these churches declined.

A more balanced and Scriptural approach was both advocated and adopted by the Rev. Edward N. Kirk, who was a minister in Albany, New York, and who was also an experienced evangelist. Sadly, this approach was not followed by most of the more evangelical New England ministers.

Another form of criticism of Burchard’s work as an evangelist came from some Congregationalists who belonged to the more liberal arm of those churches. These more liberal branches of Congregationalism in New England included Universalists and Unitarians, and a wide range of others, who were usually viewed as heretics by those who were more orthodox in their theology. These criticisms found expression in two books, one by Russell Streater, whose criticisms of Burchard and his wife were scurrilous. The other book was by Charles Eastman, claiming to contain examples of Burchard’s sermons taken down in shorthand by a reporter, and against Burchard’s express wish that this should not happen. In turn, this book by Eastman was reviewed by the Rev. Leonard Withington. His review was published in the *Literary and Theological Review*, conducted by Prof. Leonard Woods Jr. However, the serious shortcomings of this review were soon exposed by the Editor of the *New York Evangelist*, the Rev. Joshua Leavitt.

Sources of Information.

Sources of information about Jedediah Burchard’s life and work are divided as follows. He did not write anything himself, nor did any of his friends write a sympathetic biography about him. Two books appeared during his lifetime with his name in

the title – that is, the books by Streeter and Eastman, as mentioned above. Neither of these books provides any kind of an adequate view of his life or work, although they contain what are claimed to be a few of his sermons. Our main information comes from several other contemporary books which refer to him briefly, but by far the main sources of information come from newspaper and journal reports about his work.

More About The Two Books.

The two books published during Burchard's lifetime, and which contain his name in their title, are not enormously helpful in this quest, and emphasize one aspect only of what we know about Burchard. The first of these was a little book, published by Charles Eastman, provided what was alleged to be several of Burchard's sermons, recorded in shorthand, transcribed and published. They were claimed to be accurate glimpses of his preaching. All of these examples come from protracted meetings in Burlington, Williston and Hilesburgh, Vermont.³ The recording of the sermons, and their publication as a book, was done not only without Burchard's permission, but against his objections. Burchard took the view that if anyone should profit from the sale of his sermons it should be himself, and not a free loading person who might publish versions of his sermons which were inaccurate and prejudicial. Also, spoken sermons often do not appear well in print. Printed sermons usually need to be re-written for that purpose.

In the appendix to this book, the reporter purports to present dialogues between himself and Burchard, and other of Burchard's supporters, in their efforts to prevent Eastman from transcribing and publishing the sermons.

³ *Jedediah Burchard's Sermons and Addresses, with an Appendix by C. G. Eastman.* Burlington, Vermont. Chauncey Goodrich. 1836.

The five sermons in this book were claimed by the reporter to be fair copies of what Burchard said. This was supported by Withington in his review, claiming that “internal evidence” supported this idea.

Burchard’s reservations and fears about other people publishing his sermons were certainly borne out in the case of the other book about his preaching.

In the second book, the author, Russell Streeeter, was openly hostile towards Burchard.⁴ This book contains Streeeter’s reporting of several of Burchard’s sermons during a later protracted meeting in Woodstock, Vermont. The sermons contain a certain amount of what seems to be direct speech by Burchard, and a lot of Streeeter’s own wording in order to describe these sermons. The text is laced with derisive comments, attacks upon Burchard, and uncomplimentary explanations aimed at discrediting what Burchard said. The book also contains lengthy sections written by Streeeter himself, where he is expressing his own opinions. Streeeter was a Universalist and a Unitarian, and probably a member of one of the Congregationalist churches in the area which supported a theology many evangelicals considered to be heretical. Streeeter naturally protested against the fact that Burchard used the name “errorist” in describing people like Streeeter. And once we understand Burchard’s character a little, we can well believe that, on occasions, men like Streeeter would have been described in much more colourful and derogatory language in some of Burchard’s sermons. We can only say that Streeeter was using his book to attack Burchard with relentless hostility. The conclusion that a conscientious historian should draw is that Streeeter’s book is NOT a reliable, balanced or sympathetic study of Burchard or his preaching, although it is

⁴ Russell Streeeter. *Mirror of Calvinistic Fanatical Revivals: Or Jediah Burchard & Co. During a Protracted Meeting of Twenty-six days in Woodstock, Vermont.* Woodstock, Vt. Nahum Haskell. 1835.

useful in several negative ways in drawing the whole picture. It tells us more about Streeter himself than it does about Burchard.

It is very illuminating to compare what Streeter said about the meetings in Woodstock, alongside a lengthy report included later in this book, and written by the local Minister who worked with Burchard, and who sympathized with him and his work. The minister's account was published in the local newspaper, and was copied by other religious papers. One friend of mine said that, after reading the Report of the Woodstock meetings written by the local minister, and then comparing it with what Streeter had said, the differences are so great that it is difficult to see how the two writers were describing the same events. But it was so.

As mentioned, a comparison of these testimonies reveals the one-sided nature of Streeter's assessment of Burchard, his wife, and their work, and his hostility towards everything that Burchard stood for.

Books which Include Small Sections or Details on Burchard.

Several books in this class are vitally important in our understanding of Jedediah Burchard's life and ministry.

The most important of these is Fowler's *Historical Sketch of Presbyterianism within the Bounds of the Synod of Central New York*, already mentioned. In the space of about one page, Fowler provides our best brief summary of Burchard's life. The content of his remarks about Burchard will be presented a little later.

Another book of vital importance is the Rev. George W. Gale's *Autobiography* (up to 1834.). This book remained in manuscript form for over one hundred years, and was finally published privately by a descendent in the middle of the Twentieth Century. Gale believed he was responsible for introducing Burchard to training for the ministry. This claim is perhaps debatable, but Gale played a key role through the years

starting in 1821, and for the next few years, and is Burchard described in Gale's manuscript in some detail.⁵

There are passing references to Burchard in Charles G. Finney's *Memoirs*. While this source is not so important or extensive, it provides an additional insight into the period in Burchard's life which has been described in Gale's book.⁶

Another important book which does not even mention Burchard's name, but which does refer to him quite strongly, is Joseph Torrey's biographical work on the life of the Rev. James Marsh, President of the University of Vermont. James Marsh led an attack against Burchard's style of preaching and his evangelism, especially amongst his students, in the press, and amongst the Congregational ministers of Vermont and Connecticut, and which had such a serious impact upon what Burchard could continue to do. Marsh's attack in particular led to Burchard being closed out of a great many New England Congregational pulpits, and hampered thought by parish ministers of using evangelists of outreach work in many New England pulpits for years after.⁷

Newspapers.

These provide the best information which is able to be assembled about Jedediah Burchard and his work. So far, much of this has come from the *Religious Intelligencer*, a weekly religious newspaper devoted to intelligence about the foreign and home missionary outreach of the Gospel, and accounts of mainly American revivals. Some other material about Burchard was

⁵ Gale. George W. *Autobiography (to 1834) of George Washington Gale. (1789-1861)*. New York. (privately) 1964.

⁶ Finney. Charles G. *Memoirs*. Complete Restored Text Edition. Ed. Rosell and Dupuis. Grand Rapids. Academie Books. 1989.

⁷ Joseph Torrey, *Remains of the Rev. James Marsh, with a biography of his life*. Publishing details.

obtained through the newspaper, the *Vermont Chronicle*, and in the *New York Evangelist*,

Some other information about Burchard appears in the *New York Evangelist*, and microfilm copies of these papers have also been obtained from commercial sources.

There were many other newspapers published at the time, both secular and religious, which could possibly provide more information about Burchard, but actually being able to discover their names, and to examine them, in hard copy, or in microform, can render this option extremely difficult unless a researcher lives near the Library of Congress, or in another suitable part of the U.S.A., with access to a very large Research Library, or unless the researcher has substantial funding available.

His Vital Statistics.

Jedediah Burchard was born in Norwich, Connecticut, in 1790. His parents were pious Christians, as were many of his other forebears. The family moved to Utica, New York, when Jedediah was eight years old. He started working at a store owned by Mr. Lynot Bloodgood, who was much impressed with his new protégé, taking him to Albany where another business was opened. This effort collapsed in the economic crash after the end of the War of 1812. Burchard had been proud and ambitious beforehand, but his experience in this economic crash humbled him, and caused him to turn to Christ. He immediately began witnessing to his salvation. Soon he began preparing for the ministry. He did not have sufficient education to allow him to prepare for the Presbyterian ministry in the normal way, so he spent several years studying as best he could, and working in soul-saving activities.

After this period he joined his mother and brothers who were living in Sacketts Harbor, while he continued his studies

and worked as an evangelist in small congregations around the district. It was in this period that Burchard met the Rev. George Gale, who was then the young Presbyterian minister in the town of Adams, Jefferson County, New York, and the events occurred which Gale describes in his *Autobiography*. Gale describes how Burchard was at last licensed to preach, and ordained by the Black River Association (Congregational), probably ordained as an evangelist more than a pastor. As Plan of Union ministers were able to do, Burchard then was able to join the local Presbytery of Watertown in 1825.

Through the next few years he worked as an evangelist in Jefferson County and Saint Lawrence County churches in special efforts and protracted meetings, wherever he could. In some of these areas he became a very popular preacher, because of his personal charisma. There was a break of two years from 1828, however, when he organized the Fayette Street Church in Utica, and served as pastor for a short time.

The 1831 Revival spread to many parts of upstate New York, and affected many churches in Jefferson County, where Burchard was then working. Indeed, the degree of success he enjoyed in village churches at that time helped to launch him into larger fields. By 1832 he was preaching in larger towns in other parts of New York State, such as Binghamton and Rochester

In 1834 and 1835, he traveled through many parts of Vermont, preaching at protracted meetings in some of the larger centres. The success he achieved in Vermont became part of what some historians have called the “burned-over period in Vermont,” similar to a “burned-over period” which had occurred in New York State through the previous decade, and in the 1830s also. In this way, the revivals in Vermont afford a special and most interesting chapter in the whole history of revivals in Eastern United States of America. As a result of this success in

Vermont, and in view of some of his personal peculiarities, he ran into strong opposition on two fronts.

The Rev. James Marsh, President of the University of Vermont, mounted a prolonged attack against every effort to use special agents or evangelists in any Congregational churches in Vermont and Connecticut where settled ministers were working. This not only had the effect of closing many pulpits and areas of New England to Burchard personally, and to other evangelists, but it had a longer-term effect of reducing substantially the amount of evangelistic work which was done in those churches. This kind of criticism by other Christians had the potential to be very damaging to the cause of Christ for many years to come, as we will see.

Other criticisms came from outside of the evangelical churches – from such people as Russell Streeter and Charles Eastman.

I have not been able to discover much about Burchard's later ministry. After his time in Vermont, he spent some few years preaching in Canada, but returned eventually to central New York where he joined the generation of evangelists following Finney's original years in that State. According to Fowler, Burchard also became more involved in financial matters.

The one-page entry about Burchard which appears in Philemon Fowler's substantial history is as follows-

Fowler's Account of Burchard.

“Born at Norwich, Ct., in 1790, of pious parents and a godly ancestry, and kin to a large circle of the excellent of the earth, he was removed at eight years of age, with his parents' family, to Utica, N.Y. Entering the store of Mr. Lynot Bloodgood, he so commended himself to that eminent merchant and business man that he took him to Albany, and there Mr.

Burchard, in particular with another, opened a trade which went down in the general crash after the war of 1812. Proud and ambitious before, he was now brought to the foot of the Cross and began at once to make known the salvation he had found. Soon after he commenced preparation for the ministry, spending two or three years in it at Albany, actively labouring for souls in the meanwhile. He afterwards joined his mother and brothers and sisters, then living at Sacketts Harbor, and continued his work and studies there, and commenced in small neighbourhoods the part of an Evangelist, to which his subsequent ministry was largely devoted. Licensed and ordained by the Black River Association, he joined the Presbytery of Watertown in 1825, and was actively employed in revivals of religion in Jefferson and Saint Lawrence counties and occasionally elsewhere. In 1828, he organized the Fayette Street Church, Utica, and served it for a time. But his mission was that of an Evangelist, and though afterwards a pastor or stated supply, for short periods of the Chatham Street Chapel, New York city, and at Adams, N.Y., his professional life was mainly spent in special meetings in Central and Western New York, in Canada and in New England.

Many of the most important churches in these districts were opened to him, and wherever he went large congregations came out and great interest was awakened. He cannot be judged by ordinary rules. Constitutionally eccentric, he was irresistibly erratic. A thorough Presbyterian and a hyper-Calvinist, he was of a mercurial disposition and a brilliant genius. His power of description has been seldom surpassed, and his fund of anecdote and fountain of humor were so overflowing that he could not seal them. Without culture and often crude and coarse, his picturing was always vivid and occasionally beautiful, and his delivery, though too obviously acting, well befitted it. His preaching would have drawn crowds irrespective of its spiritual impression, but this did not by any means altogether fail in it, though

disproportioned to the mere excitement it produced and not distinguished by him from that. Among the principal accusations made against him was the indiscriminate zeal with which he pressed admissions to the church.

Mrs. Burchard was a “help meet” for her husband, - a woman of great dignity of character and bearing, feminine but unshrinking. She conducted services for women and children, and precluding criticism of them by her management of them, she achieved memorable good.

Mr. Burchard’s nervous temperament and power of fancy and superabundant facetiousness and temptation to the histrionic were unfavourable to charitable judgments of him, but underneath all, and predominant over them was a Christian sentiment that came out clearer in private confidences than in public performances. Unhappily for him he was somewhat secularized in his later years by financial affairs and the interest he took in them; but at his death in Adams, September, 1864, he reposed unwavering confidence in the Redeemer, and with mind calm and clear, was ready to depart.

Mr. Burchard’s devotion to his wife was passionate to the last, with a dash of knightliness and knighterrantry. During a winter’s residence by her in one of the sanitary institutions of Utica, where it was deemed important to isolate her, for the time, from her kindred and friends, he was a familiar visitor at my house, and his accounts as he returned from them, of adventures on the grounds of the institution for the purpose of exchanging signals with his wife, were as romantic and side-splitting as Don Quixote’s, while the plight in which he was sometimes put by them and in which he appeared, added to the picturesqueness and drollery of his tales.⁸

⁸ Philemon Fowler. *Historical Sketch of Presbyterianism within the Bounds of the Synod of Central New York*. Utica, New York. Curtiss and Childs. 1877. pages 278 – 281.

In another part of Fowler's book, where he is discussing a few problematic evangelists who had operated in parts of Central New York, he includes the following report published by the Presbytery of Tioga, following meetings which Burchard led in the towns of Binghamton and Union in 1833.

The Presbytery report said that Binghamton (Presbyterian Church) had an increase of 195 members, Union had an increase of 145. First Congregational Church, Union increased by 66. In a footnote to this, Fowler includes also the following statement by Rev. D.D. Gregory, who was the Presbyterian minister in those churches.

“In 1833, Jedediah Burchard preached at Binghamton and Union. His trumpet tones, his fire of love, his masterly power of description and riches of spiritual love, claiming also the highest Calvinism, drew multitudes to hear him. Hundreds suddenly embraced Christ – probably half a thousand in six weeks. His fault was not in the preaching and praying, but possibly taking the converts into the church before they were proved. Ministers and laymen distrusted the soundness of their conversion; the converts were in some cases neglected, and thus his faithful labours were brought into disrepute. Twenty years of agitation followed, while the long-suffering Saviour blessed ordinary and extraordinary means. Rev. D. D. Gregory.”⁹

⁹ Fowler. page 236.

CHAPTER TWO

GEORGE GALE'S *Autobiography*.

George Gale's *Autobiography* must be understood against the background of the "Plan of Union" Church arrangement which existed between the Congregational Associations of Connecticut and the Presbyterian General Assembly between the years 1800 and 1837. In upstate New York, the two denominations agreed to work together in such a way that Congregational and Presbyterian churches could be served by either Congregational or Presbyterian ministers equally. All ministers serving these churches could belong to district Associations or Presbyteries, or both, and all problems could be dealt with by the body to which the minister belonged. Congregations could also decide whether they wanted to belong to, and send delegates to, either the Congregational Association, or to the Presbytery. Gale was a Presbyterian minister who had recently become pastor in the Plan of Union church at Adams, Jefferson Co, New York, and had been theologically educated at Princeton. After being installed as Pastor, he had then taken some time off to get married, but his wife became seriously ill, and he had to nurse her more or less full time.

"About this time, June, 1821, I received information that my sister, Rhoda Curtis, was very low with the consumption, and could not long survive, and was very desirous of seeing me once more. I felt no less desirous of seeing this dear sister before she died. She had been more than a sister, a mother to me, after the death of my parents. The journey too I thought would be of

essential service to my wife, who had not fully recovered her strength. My niece went to stay with a friend, and shutting up my house we set off for Rensselaer Co. (sic) in my buggy. When we arrived at Troy I found my beloved and excellent niece, Mrs. Rice, was no more. She had died suddenly some ten days before. I had heard of her being in poor health, but she was not thought dangerous until a few days before her death. She died at her mother's, where she was always taken when ill if possible to be nursed by her mother. This was afflicting intelligence. I left my wife at Troy and hastened to Shaticoke to see my sick sister. I found her low, but cheerful and resigned, and very glad to see me. She would talk very cheerfully about her visit the winter before, while she was out of health, among her friends in Vermont. I could not but mark the difference in her mind, from what I had seen many years before, when she durst not be left alone for fear she would die (she was out of health at the time) now she could smile in view of death. I stayed much of the time with her, saw her die, attended her funeral, and soon afterward returned. We stopped to bait our horse at a public house, some six or eight miles below the Little Falls on the Mohawk River. My wife complained of feeling quite ill. She lay down to rest. I was in deep distress, although I kept my feelings concealed from her. If she should be sick among strangers, and we should be obliged to employ some strange physician I could hardly hope for her life, with her delicate constitution. My only refuge at such times was in the Rock that is higher than we. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. My anxiety passed away soon, and when I was ready to go she rose refreshed and relieved.

On my return home I found the state of religion had not retrograded, but rather advanced. Before I left I got a young man, accustomed to take the lead of meetings, to read sermons from a book. I gave him, telling him I did not wish him to preach as he

was not licensed, but he might exhort the people after he had read, and in the other parts of the service he might call upon some leader in the church, or perform the duty himself. This young man was Jedediah Burchard, the noted revivalist as he afterward proved to be. It may be well to give some little account of this young man as I was instrumental in introducing him into the ministry about this time. Whether I erred, as some think, or did good to the cause of God, as many others would think, I was at a loss to decide, but, on the whole, I believe the good vastly preponderated, although from his eccentricity some evil did undoubtedly follow. Many souls through his instrumentality will rejoice forever in heaven, I doubt not.

Mr. Burchard, I have been told, was a merchant for a time in Albany, a young man of great vivacity, fond of society, great power of conversation and anecdote, capable and fond of imitating and action whoever he chose to personate. Had he devoted himself to the stage he would probably have excelled. He was not dissipated, nor addicted to low vices, his self-respect would have kept him from that, but I suppose from his report, that his fondness for society, strong impulses, and power of fascinating those with whom he associated, that he was in great danger of making shipwreck of character, as he did of his fortune, whatever he may have had. He failed in business, and being thus checked in his career, became more sober, and was hopefully converted.

Although I was very intimate with him, he never, except by allusion, or a remark, told me anything of his early history, nor did I ever inquire particularly. After his conversion he was as active and impulsive in promoting the cause of religion, by prayer, exhorting in meetings, as he had been in other things.

He had united with one of the churches in Albany, and was subsequently taken under the care of Presbytery, with a view to the ministry. On account of some indiscreet things the

Presbytery did not think proper to encourage him, and he left, and came to Sacketts Harbor, where he had some friends, and where he spent a good deal of his time in reading the Bible with commentaries, especially Scott's, and from his habits when I first knew him, in prayer, I presume.

He also attended meetings, and exhorted and prayed with a good deal of impression. I heard of him from people in the north part of Adams first. They spoke with a great deal of interest of attending meetings where Mr. Burchard preached. I inquired of what denomination he was, but could find out nothing definite by them. I afterwards ascertained something more definitely, and that our ministers, some of whom knew him, had reproved him for taking too much liberty, as he was not authorized to preach. Being at Smithville, about four miles from Sackett's Harbor, where I had labored some while I was a missionary, and where I was often urged to preach, I was informed, after I had entered the house that Mr. Burchard was there.

Without having any introduction to him I called upon him to make the closing prayer, which he did. I observed that he was a young man of unusual power of language and apparent piety, but who needed some counsel and training. I went to him after meeting and introduced myself, inviting him kindly to come and see me at my house. Not long after he did so, and, after consultation with some members of my church, I engaged him to conduct our worship on the Sabbath as I have related. To prevent him assuming duties which did not belong to him, and which also might give offence, I charged him to read sermons on the Sabbath, but not to do anything that properly and exclusively belonged to a minister.

On my return he remained with me several weeks, visited with me, and attended prayer meetings, and my meetings on the outskirts of the congregation, where I invited him to give a word

of exhortation, which he did with great propriety and effect. After some weeks, finding that I did not need his services, I advised him to labor in other places, to help the Baptist church in our Township, and to assist in holding meetings in the adjoining towns, which he did with good results. Observing that he was possessed with talents to render him useful, and that he had very correct views of the doctrines of the Gospel, and an uncommon tact at reaching the conscience of sinners, I thought it one of those extraordinary cases which our Book of Discipline provides. He was too impulsive, as well as too far advanced, to hope he would ever get a thorough education, and perhaps, with his temperament, be more useful if he did. I encouraged him, in the spring, to apply for a license to preach. Knowing that in the Presbytery it would be difficult to get him licensed, on account of our rules, and the firmness with which some adhered to them, I advised him to apply to the Association, a part of the members of the Presbytery still kept their organization as an Association on account of churches that had not united with Presbytery. He was unacquainted with the members of the [Congregational] Association and wished me to go to the meeting and introduce him. I took him into my buggy and went to the eastern part of the county, where the Association met. It was at Champion, the summer succeeding that in which I had become acquainted with him, in 1822. On the way he wanted to know on what his examination would be. I informed him. He wished me to tell him a little about church history, to which he said he had not attended, although he had read civil history considerably. Accordingly, as we rode I gave him an extempore lecture on church history. At his examination, which was on the English Language, of that of experimental religion, and his motives for seeking the ministry, he was found very deficient in his knowledge of the rules of English Grammar. I was surprised at this, as I had observed, in his exhortations and prayers, he was

more correct in his use of language than many educated men. They questioned him on Theology and Church History. On the latter they remarked he passed a very good examination, but all the knowledge he had of it was what he got from me on the way. The truth was, with regard to Mr. Burchard, he was very observing, and had a memory remarkably retentive. He could describe with great accuracy, and in the most graphic manner, whatever he saw, and repeat whatever he heard. They inquired of him if he had any sermon that he could read to the Association. He said he had not but would try to preach if they would assign him a text. They told him if there was any text in his mind, from which he would be willing to preach, they would hear him. He named a text, and preached before the Association. All this was quite different from what New England men were accustomed to. On the next day there was a good deal of debate as to what they should do with this application. They were aware of his great popularity with many in the country, and the blessing which had attended his labours. Some were opposed to license him at all, or give him encouragement on account of what they considered his eccentricities. Others thought they might take him under their care, and direct his studies, with the view of licensing him at some future time, if it should seem best. As I had been invited to sit as a corresponding member, and had introduced Mr. Burchard (although he was known to some of the members, and to all by report) they wished to know my opinion in regard to the matter. I told them he had not passed as good an examination as I had expected, and in the circumstances they could not properly license him, but they could assign to him certain parts of trial which would make it necessary that he should study under the direction of some pastor for six months in a year, and allow him to take charge of religious meetings, as his labours were greatly called for, and in that way he could improve his gifts and do good, and if in that time he pursued the course prescribed, they

could, if they chose, give him a regular license. He was a man of some peculiarities but I thought a good man, a man that prayed a good deal, of unusual natural powers as a speaker, and whose labours God had owned. In every age of the church men had been raised up, out of the regular course, to whose labours God had set his seal of approbation, by the success that crowned. In fitting men for the work to which they were called, the power, the glory, he would show, by qualifications he gave them, were his own. He was licensed for one year, and required to write on subjects of theology and read them under direction of a minister. This duty of directing his reading and assigning him topics to write upon to be examined, they wished me to undertake. I consented to do so. I gave him subjects and lent him books. He supplied vacant churches and labored successfully, prepared some dissertations and read them to me, but they were few and far between; he was too much absorbed in the work of preaching to sit down and study. His habits and inclinations were ill adapted to study, and investigation of subjects. Practice, not theory, or theory learned in practice, was better suited to his genius. For this, as I have remarked, he had a peculiar mind. At the end of the year he met with the Association to obtain a regular license. The Association met in the intervals of the session of the Presbytery as they were all members of the latter body. They were in a quandary what to do. One of them came to me. He said that Mr. Burchard was very popular as a preacher, but he had not complied with directions and they did not know what to do. I replied that was a matter for them to decide. If Mr. Burchard had not fulfilled the conditions on which he had encouragement from them they were under no obligation to license him. I did not feel that the responsibility devolved on me, and I gave no opinion on the subject. They gave him a license for two years. He then labored in that region, raised up, through the blessing of God, a flourishing church in an adjoining town, by the side of a Baptist

church, planted some other churches, and aided others, went to Attica and aided the pastor in a revival, supplied other churches, and was the means of many conversions. He returned to Jefferson Co. and was received and ordained as an Evangelist by the Presbytery. After I had left Adams, I went up to aid Brother Boardman in a protracted meeting. Mr. Burchard was there, had been invited by Mr. Lew Bertie, a wealthy manufacturer, to commence, through his efforts, a second Presbyterian church. I preached in the afternoon, and Burchard in the evening. A good number of souls were hopefully converted. On my way home I stopped among my old friends at Adams. They were importunate for me to stop and aid them in a protracted effort, but neither my time nor health would allow of my remaining. They could have Mr. Burchard, but were afraid to trust the management of a revival to him, but they had no other resort. They besought the Lord to guide them, and Mr. Burchard was invited to labor with the pastor. A great work of God was the result. Two lawyers who were Universalist in sentiment, were converted, and both left their professions of law and entered the ministry. The name of one was Chittenden, who died lately, the other Parker, now the Rev. Orson Parker, who has labored for more than twenty years as an Evangelist, very successfully. Mr. Burchard said he would no longer go on leading strings. He would labor, with the help of God, on his own hook. He commenced now as an Evangelist. He labored in many parts of the state of New York, in New York City and in Vermont. A great work at Vergennes, at Middleburg, at Burlington, and in other towns, was the result. His wife's labours were very much blessed among children. She was a beautiful and interesting woman, whom he married at Sacketts Harbor soon after he was licensed. They had lost their only child, a little daughter, and Mrs. Burchard was ever after deeply interested in children.

Mr. Burchard had faults in his character, and often in his management of revivals, but he was a man of remarkable power, and has been the means of the salvation of many. He would have perfect command of an audience, and could, for the time, do with them anything he chose. His knowledge of human nature, his power of imitation, and his painting with words, as if the pictures were there on canvas, and presented to the eye, rendered him very interesting. His voice, although sometimes not well managed, was naturally musical, and could be made to touch any key he wished, and convey any emotion that moved his heart. His figures and illustrations were often well chosen and happy. At one time, when he first attended with me, he wanted to convey to their minds the effect of faith. He cited the case of Peter's attempt to go to Christ upon the water. The moment, said he, he put his foot on the side of the vessel and placed it upon the water it was like adamant; it was only when his faith failed that he began to sink. This was a miracle, but illustrates the moral effect when we trust in God, the promises of God. This was what David meant when he said, "Thou hast placed my feet upon a rock." He was at one time showing how impotent were the efforts of men to produce a revival, and how easy for God. Yonder, said he, upon the lake, is a vessel becalmed, no ripples to be seen upon the waters, the sails hang loosely and the vessel lies like a log upon the bosom of the lake. The Captain becomes impatient, he calls all the hands to the rear of his vessel and sets them to blowing with their mouths against the sails of the ship. No movement is felt. The canvas itself shows no sign of feeling the effect. He begins to laugh at his own folly, and looking in the distance he sees a dark spot upon the waters resembling the shade of a passing cloud. All hands are ordered to their post, and no sooner is the vessel trimmed, and the steersman has laid his hand upon the helm, than the breeze fills the sails and the vessel moves onward, like a bird upon the wing. So when the wind of the

spirit, in answer to the prayers of the people of God, blows upon the church, every heart feels its power and the work goes forward.

His illustration of the stupidity and ruin of a careless sinner, by the destruction of a heedless boatman on the Niagara River, I never heard, but it is said to have been startling beyond description. He is represented as lying upon his oars, floating carelessly along, unconscious of danger, and indifferent to the cries of those on shore, who see him every moment going with accelerated motion toward the cataract. They redouble their cries, as his danger increases; still he pays no regard to their warning, but mutters to himself, "I wonder if he thinks I cannot take care of myself, or if I don't know when I am in danger." But he looks toward the shore, and sees what he did not see before, the quick motion of his boat, by the apparent rapid movement the other way of the objects he passes. Alarmed, he seizes his oars, and directing the bow toward the shore he plies his oars with all the power he can summon. For a little while he is able, when pulling all his power, to counterpoise the current and hold his own, but the moment the blades of his oar is lifted from the water, the force of the current pushes him further on, 'till the increasing power of the current, and his exhausted strength, leaves him no hope of self deliverance. He shouts for help, with the sharp cry of a despairing man, to those upon the shore, who, in agony, behold his peril, with no power to give him succour. Onward he is bound, by the resistless and maddening current, toward the fatal precipice. He turns his eye, which had been averted, and looking in vain for help, and seeing his boat, with him, about to make the fatal plunge, rises from his feet, and uttering one wild, despairing cry, is seen no more.

Thus it is with the heedless sinner – the cry of alarm which the gospel utters in his ears, the prayers and tears, and warning of friends, anxious for his safety, he heeds not, the still voice of the spirit whispering in his ear, and saying, in the

tenderest accents, “Why will you die”, he has long since ceased to regard, and yet he intends not to perish; he means at the convenient season, to secure his salvation, but time bears him on its resistless current, and ere he is aware he is forced to utter his last despairing wail, as death hurries him down the precipice of damnation. It is difficult, impossible to remember his precise phraseology, much more his peculiar manner of voice and action, all of which were peculiar to him, and deeply impressive. I have dwelt longer than I contemplated on the history of this remarkable man, who still, as I see from the papers, at the age of three score is in the gospel harvest, bringing with him his sheaves of converted sinners.”¹⁰

The description of events which followed the above quotation gives an account of the slowly developing revival in Adams and the surrounding district, leading up to the conversion of Charles G. Finney, in which George Gale played a role, the events associated with that, and flowing from it.

Before long, George Gale had to leave Adams because of failing health, and he taught a school for several years in the Oneida area. Fowler tells us that Burchard was soon ordained as an evangelist by the Congregational Black River Association. Later in 1828, he formed a church in Utica, of which he became the pastor for about two years,

He then returned to live in the Watertown area, where he had lived before, seeking to specialize in evangelistic work.

¹⁰ Gale. Autobiography. pages 162 – 173.

Finney's Letter.

An autograph letter, written by Charles G. Finney, and addressed to Burchard, came up for auction in New York, in November, 1997. While it is not known what happened to the letter as a result of the auction, a photocopy became available to the Oberlin College Library, where it was posted on the internet.

Postmark – Auburn, N.Y. July, 28. 1826.

Letter dated 28 July, 1826.

Address: Rev. Jedediah Burchard,
Sackets Harbor,
Jeff. Co. N. York.

My dear Burchard.

Your letter came to hand last night & 12 o'clock. I think I can in some measure enter into your feelings & will try to pray for you. The State of things here was horrid when I came. But God seems to have taken hold in his great strength. Opposition is dreadful.

Something like 36 had obtained hopes previous to this evening. At our meeting of inquiry last night the blessed Spirit came like a "mighty rushing wind." The people were thrown into awful consternation. They Strewed the floor & rolled & writhed in dreadful agony. It was wonderful to see them come in to the Kingdom one after another & begin to pray in dreadful distress for others that lay around them. How many got into the liberty I can not say, as the confusion & distress were so great. Mr. Lansing says he can count 12 that he remembers. How many more there may be that came into the kingdom there I don't know. To give you a description of this meeting were impossible (sic). Almost all the conversions here as yet have occurred at, or immediately after a meeting of inquiry. I have

seen the same – in other places. Almost all are converted on the spot, in direct answer to prayer, to all appearances. Church here not awake. Some even of them oppose most bitterly. But O Dear Burchard, God is here!! How it will eventuate God only knows. They came out against me here, as usual, in the newspapers. God have mercy on them.

All their [difficulty] seems to be with my manner of exhibiting truth – for they confess that it is the truth. Now Burchard I am more and more convinced every day that much, very much, & infinitely more than has been supposed, is depending on the plain pointed, cutting, severe manner of applying truth to the conscience and heart. I believe that this was the character of Christ’s preaching. This made them say “he hath a devil, and is mad, why hear ye him.” If our ministers preach the same gospel that he preached, why do so many sinners love and speak well of them? Not because they are better, nor because they preach in a better manner, nor because human nature is altered, nor has the true gospel become more palatable to wicked men. I most solemnly believe that the defect lies in the manner so far as human instrumentality goes. Our ministers soften down the tone of their preaching & this takes off the edge for fear of giving offence. O may God lead us all in the right way. “Be not afraid,” says God, “lest I confound thee before them.” If a man fears to force home truth with all his strength upon his congregation, I believe that his unbelief will provoke the Spirit, that no blessing will follow, “whatever is not of faith is sin,” unless we absolutely trust in God to give effect, & believe that he will give effect to his word, we sin. O that Ministers would take the sword of the Spirit out of its scabbard & take [off] the garland of flowers from its blazing edges, they would find that it would cut, & “pierce to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit.”

This place & region is getting into a tremendous uproar. A Revival has commenced in Cayuga. I have been there twice.

Several there, were converted many more convicted. People that come here from a distance are smitten [here] & I hope they will scatter the fire.

Lydia says give my love to Mr. and Mrs. Burchard.

Yours in haste,
C.G. Finney.

PART TWO.

The Published Reports in New York State.

The first published reports of protracted meetings led by Jedediah Burchard began to appear just after the peak of the Great Revival of 1831. It seems almost as if the great revival created the sphere where Burchard could use his talents on a wider basis as an evangelist, and where he could get a better scope for him to follow his calling from God than had happened up to that point.

CHAPTER THREE

THE GREAT REVIVAL OF 1831, Jefferson County, then Oneida County, New York.

Most of the great revivals down through history have produced as one of their results the rise of many active evangelists. In some cases these evangelists have enjoyed outstanding careers with great success in soul winning, as well as the achievement of many other activities which have greatly blessed the Christian Church, and the world. This happened also with the Great Revival of 1831.

The revival in 1830 and 1831 began in many places throughout upstate New York. Most noticeably, however, this occurred through the ministry of Charles G. Finney, in the township of Rochester, and in other nearby places where he

preached, while acting as locum in the Second Presbyterian Church.

The effects of this revival spread widely, and affected Jefferson County, where Burchard was living. As a result, Burchard was involved in a number of campaigns in Jefferson County which were notably successful, and which therefore boosted his reputation as an evangelist. These campaigns took the form of “protracted meetings,” which might last for several days. The revival movement in that county seems clearly to have started before Burchard was directly involved in it, but his activities boosted the impact of the revival.

The first published reports about Burchard’s part in this movement appeared at the end of 1831, in the issue of the *Boston Recorder* for 1 November. The editor of the *Religious Intelligencer* reproduced its main contents.

Jefferson County, New York.

“Mr. Editor, - In addressing you, and through the medium of your excellent journal the Christian community at large, it is my object to give a plain and simple history, so far as a knowledge of the facts will enable me, of the displays of divine power and goodness with which our country has of late been so highly favored. Detached and imperfect accounts of this work *of the Lord* in particular churches have already gone abroad; but viewing as I do the unusual attention to eternal things which has been manifested in several of our churches as produced by one general outpouring of God’s Spirit, I deem it proper that this account should be a general one of the revival in *Jefferson County* – and that hereby the riches of God’s grace may be magnified – his name honoured – the hearts of the Lord’s people encouraged, is my most humble and most earnest prayer.

For some time previous to any remarkable excitement there was evidence in some of our churches an increased attention

to holy things: a deeper and more ruling spirit of piety seemed to pervade the bosoms of Christ's professed followers, and a marked reverence for the ordinances of the sanctuary was observed. Many had presentiments of great things about to be performed. The devout Christian especially exercised strong faith in *Him* who is not slack concerning his promises.

At a period so propitious – when circumstances seemed to warrant and even demand extraordinary effort, a protracted meeting was commenced in the village of Adams. Deep interest for the result was felt by all who sincerely loved the Redeemer's cause and desired its advancement. Many were the prayers which were put up we trust in faith, in different parts of the country, to the Great Head of the Church, that he would crown the meeting with the presence of his Spirit. This was in the month of March last. Public exercises commenced on Tuesday and were closed on the Sabbath following. During the first three days, the course was such as is commonly adopted in meetings of a similar nature; but on the morning of Friday so deep and powerful were the feelings of the assembly that it was deemed expedient to deviate somewhat from the usual method. God had indeed met with his people, and so sensibly was his presence realized, so awfully momentous appeared the responsibilities of the hour, that it was with the greatest difficulty they could refrain from giving vent aloud to the emotions that swayed their bosoms. Every head was bowed, and every pious heart flowed out to God in deep and fervent supplication. The ear of the Almighty was not deaf to their prayers. The waters of life flowed freely. Inquiry meetings were continued for several days after the public meetings were suspended. It is impossible to state precisely the number of those who were hopefully converted. Many who came in from a distance went away rejoicing in the hope of a glorious immortality. Probably more than a hundred were here the subjects of renewing grace.

Immediately after the meeting at Adams, another commenced at [Rodman], five miles distant, which continued thirteen days without intermission. Public exercises were had three times a day, and the usual course was pursued. At this place it is supposed that nearly two hundred gave evidence of a saving change. During the three first days but little was effected, and the aspect of things was dull and cheerless – but on Thursday the prospect was brightened. The cloud of mercy burst suddenly upon the people, and in the short space of twenty-four hours rising of thirty souls expressed a hope of having passed from death unto life. From this time the work progressed steadily forward until the close of the meeting. The population of this village is small; but so general was the work that of the few scarcely an adult was left unconverted.

On the day following the close of this meeting (the 25th of April,) a meeting of the converts was held in the village of Adams, which was addressed by the Rev. J. Burchard. Of more than four hundred who had obtained hope since the work commenced in this latter place, three hundred were present. This was a scene of exceeding interest: and when all arose and sung a favourite hymn, we seemed in imagination to catch the faint echoings of the song in the upper sanctuary. This, I trust, was a day of happiness to many, which will never be forgotten. It was a blessed antepast of that bliss which is reserved for the redeemed alone.

On the 21st of May a meeting commenced at Evan's Mills, about ten miles distant from Watertown, of which Mr. Burchard, who had conducted the two already noticed, was requested to take the direction. Public exercises were continued uninterruptedly for nine days, during which time, through the blessing of God, about a hundred and twenty-five persons were hopefully converted. On the 17th of the same month a meeting was commenced at Brownville, which continued ten days, and

resulted in the hopeful conversion of more than a hundred and fifty souls.

Immediately upon leaving Brownville, Mr. Burchard returned to his own people at Bellville, to conduct a union meeting between the Baptist and Presbyterian brethren of that place. In this meeting sectional and party feeling was wholly laid aside, and those of different names met and labored upon the common footing of Christians and servants of the Most High. All were determined to prove God as he had commanded them, and "bring all their tithes into the store house." They asked for a large portion of the Spirit, and measured their desires rather by the power and goodness of God, than by their own weakness and ill-desert. Their supplications were heard and answered. The moving of the Spirit was like the sweep of an overflowing flood, bearing away with resistless energy every obstacle that opposed its progress. The mouth of the gainsayer was stopped, and the enemies of the cross, confounded and abashed, looked on in mute astonishment. The powers of darkness seemed to have loosened their grasp upon their victims, and haughty and rebellious men bowed in submission before the offended Majesty of Heaven. For two or three days, rising of a hundred each day expressed hope of having been born again. To give an idea of the power of the work, it is sufficient to state, that at one time, during a season of prayer in the inquiry room, which lasted about fifteen minutes, thirty-seven persons expressed a hope of having passed from death unto life, all of whom, so far as I have been able to learn, still exhibit in their lives evidence of the reality of the change.

The village of Bellville itself is small, there being not more than fifty houses; but the people in great numbers, came in from the surrounding country. It is impossible to ascertain the exact number of those who obtained hope during the meeting. Individuals who were enabled from actual observation to form tolerably correct estimates, suppose the number to be not less

than six or seven hundred. The lowest estimate that I have heard would place it between five and six hundred. This meeting when continued twelve days, closed on the Sabbath, and on the Tuesday following another commenced at Champion, which lasted seven days, during which about 150 persons obtained hope of eternal life.

From this place Mr. Burchard went to Woodville, a small settlement about three miles from Bellville, of about 30 families. The meeting commenced on Friday and continued till Tuesday of the next week. The inquiry room was open until Thursday, when about 70 gave evidence of a saving change. The subjects of this work were, with few exceptions, persons of adult age. Many in the middle age of life, and several who had numbered their threescore and ten.

The general characteristics of this work have been deep conviction of sin followed by an early surrender of the heart to God. Among its subjects were persons of every class and every age. Men of the highest standing have not been ashamed to profess themselves disciples of the cross; and of the many who since the commencement of these meetings have obtained hope in Christ, there are but *very* few who do not stand fast in the faith and give satisfactory evidence of the change of heart.

The means made use of have been the prayer of faith, and the preaching of the word in a plain and practical manner, pressing home upon the sinner's conscience his guilt before God and the duty of immediate repentance.

With but few exceptions there was nothing in the meetings to offend the most fastidious taste. That the enemy of truth should assail the measures used for his defeat is perfectly coincident with divine truth and universal experience. But a Christian professor should not think it incredible that God should convert a hundred in a day; for I am convinced, from what I have seen and heard, that the same amount of moral power which was

brought to bear upon the audience at Bellville and which under God resulted in the conversion of a hundred in a day, if exerted upon a number proportionately large might be the means of bringing thousands of souls into the kingdom in a space of time equally short. The church of God must cease to measure themselves by themselves, and take the word of God as rule of duty and ground of expectation, before we shall see these great displays of divine grace in the conversion of sinners which the Bible teaches us to expect.

W.”¹¹

ROME, Oneida County. N.Y.

‘The following interesting account of the late dedication and protracted meeting in the Second Church in Rome, has been communicated for publication in the *Western Recorder*. Rome, February 3, 1832.

Before giving an account of the protracted meeting here, an account of the organization of the church, and a brief statement of what the Lord has done during the past year, it is presumed will be proper.

The church was organized on the 12th January, 1831, consisting of eighty-six members, having colonized from the First Church. Rev. Erastus N. Nichols, labored with us until May last when he received a call at Vernon Centre. During his labours, about thirty souls, it is believed, were hopefully converted. The lamented father Nash, and Rev. Mr. Waters, supplied the pulpit for a few weeks, until the arrival of our present pastor, Rev. Jacob Helffenstien. Since the commencement of Mr. Helffenstien’s labours in June last, from eighty to a hundred souls have been, it is hoped, born of God, and scarcely a week has elapsed, without

¹¹ *Religious Intelligencer*. Volume 16. 17 December, 1831. pages 462 - 463.

more or less conversions. A meeting of two days, held in a district about three miles from the village, resulted in the hopeful conversion of a number of souls. Much labor, during the past season, has been performed in the outer parts of the town, where heretofore but little has been done; and God has owned and blessed these exertions in the salvation of many immortal souls. Previous to the first of January, there had been received into the church sixty-three members; forty-seven on profession, and sixteen by letter. The meetings for public worship were held in the court-house, and the church have great reason to bless God that he has been pleased so often to manifest himself to his people.

During the past season a very neat and commodious house of worship has been erected; and on the 18th day of January, the same was solemnly dedicated to the worship of God. Rev. M. Burchard (sic), of Watertown, preached the sermon. The prayer of the church had long been that God would by his special presence manifest himself at the dedication of his house, and we trust their prayer was answered.

A protracted meeting commenced, after the dedication, under the care of the Rev. Mr. Burchard, in connection with our pastor, and continued fifteen days. Mr. Burchard labored with great acceptance, and his labours were owned and blessed in the salvation of many souls. God's presence was most manifestly in the midst of us.

It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to ascertain the exact number of hopeful conversions, because a great number from adjacent towns, who were converted, left before the close of the meeting. The day of judgment will reveal how many were truly converted to God, and will sing the song of the redeemed in the world of glory. Those best qualified to judge, estimate the number at three hundred.

The most remarkable answers to prayer were witnessed during the meeting. Many interesting particulars might be given. Christians were desired to present their requests every evening, and prayers were desired for individuals. The conversions from towns around us were very numerous. One person brought from Clinton, 10 or 12 miles distant, twelve individuals, all adults; and all of them were hopefully converted during the meeting. Two individuals, from the same town, who arrived here the last day of the meeting, obtained hopes before they left the village the next morning. – Many similar cases occurred from other towns; and in almost every instance, where Christians brought their children and friends from a distance, they returned rejoicing in Christ. Almost every night during the meeting, a prayer meeting, conducted by some young gentlemen from the Oneida Institute and Hamilton College was held all night, commencing after the close of the other meeting: and at these prayer meetings about forty souls were hopefully converted. Among the subjects of the work are several who had embraced universalist and infidel sentiments. Several, also, who had passed through the great revival here under Br. Finney, and who seemed almost beyond the reach of mercy, were brought to bow at the foot of the cross.

The prayer of Christians during the meeting, was for the county of Oneida; and it is hoped that the great number of conversions in six or seven towns, will scatter the sacred fire, and God be honoured in the conversion of a great number of immortal souls. We would request the prayers of God's people, that this good work may continue, until Rome shall be brought entirely to the feet of Jesus, and the region around be converted to God. To the ministers and brethren of all denominations, who united with us, we would desire to return our most grateful thanks for their labours in the midst of this people.

To the Lord would we ascribe all the praise and glory of this work, and we pray that he will be pleased to continue in the

midst of this people, and to magnify the riches of his grace, in the salvation of the great remnant that remain.

S. B. Roberts, Clerk.¹²

CAMDEN, Oneida County.

To the Editor of the Western Recorder.

We send you a brief account of the work of the Holy Spirit in the churches and congregations in the region of country of which Camden is a common centre; embracing Camden, Williamstown, Redfield, Florence, Annsville, Vienna and Black Creek.

During the summer of 1831, the church in Camden had become much divided; which circumstance, for a long time, disturbed its peace and prosperity, and weakened the influence it might have exerted on the more feeble and destitute churches around it. Some of its members, after much prayer, resolved to make a resolute effort for its deliverance. Accordingly, a protracted meeting was appointed, and Rev. J. Burchard, of Watertown, Jefferson County, was invited to take the charge of the meeting, and co-operate with the ministers and churches within the conference district. The meeting commenced on the 9th day of August last, and continued eleven days. It resulted in the hopeful conversion of about two hundred souls, of various characters and ages from the Sabbath school scholar to the man of grey hairs. The influence of the meeting was felt in other churches, especially in those at Florence and Annsville; in both of which places, meetings were soon after attended with no less happy results than those realised in Camden, bearing down all opposition, and turning many from sin to righteousness. Probably not less than one hundred and fifty were the fruits of the work of those two places. The conferences were continued as

¹² *Religious Intelligencer*. Volume 16. 18 February, 1832. page 606.

usual throughout the district, until the cloud which had gathered had shed its richest blessings on almost every neighbourhood within its limits.

Some other particulars will here be mentioned for the encouragement of those who may be placed in similar circumstances. Previous to the meeting in August, it had been the practice in our weekly prayer meetings, and especially during that meeting, for believing wives who had unbelieving husbands, to request the prayers of the church for their conversion; and not less than twenty of them were hopefully converted during that meeting. The Sabbath school was another object of solicitude. It had numbered but few conversions since the revival of 1828, when about a hundred teachers and scholars were brought into the church. But the time had come, when those who had gone forth weeping, bearing precious seed, were about to return home rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them. About one hundred more were converted at the meeting in August.

Another interesting fact ought not to pass unnoticed. In a new settlement in part of the towns of Florence and Annsville, formed by inhabitants from some of the lower counties of this state, where the family altar had seldom if ever been erected, morning and evening incense now ascended from almost every house. – Notwithstanding the Lord had thus showered his blessings upon us, still Christians felt and believed that his mercy knew no bounds; that his arm was not shortened, and that his command, “Lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left,” was still binding upon his children. Consequently the church resolved to hold another protracted meeting; and again invited Rev. Mr. Burchard to come and preside. The meeting commenced on the 9th of February, six months after the one above mentioned, and continued fourteen days. Although the notice of the meeting was short, a general and constant attendance was given to it.

The result, unfavourable circumstances considered, was in some respects more glorious than that of the first meeting, for the division which had before existed, was, during the second meeting, almost wholly forgotten. Harmony and brotherly love again began to prevail, and many sinners who had withstood all former efforts were constrained to yield to the influence of truth. The fruits of the meeting were estimated at something more than 100 souls; among them were a goodly number from the Sabbath school, and ten or twelve more husbands of believing wives. The course pursued in the meetings, was the plain, pungent preaching of the Gospel, the obligations of the sinner to submit immediately to God, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, together with private conversation, and inducing them to take the anxious seats in the house of God and in the anxious room, with a resolution to there give their hearts to God while the church were engaged in fervent prayer for the converting energies of the Holy Spirit. Those Christians who cordially co-operated in the use of these means evidently made rapid advances in knowledge and grace, the Great Head of the Church seemed to give his sealing approbation.

The whole number of hopeful conversions within the district, is supposed to be not less than 600. How many of them will finally stand on Mount Zion with golden harps in their hands, the judgment alone will disclose. Suffice it to say, that this region, which before was in many places a moral wilderness, has now become almost universally like a well-watered garden.

ERASTUS UPSON.

Clerk of the Church in Camden.¹³

¹³ *Religious Intelligencer*. Volume 16. 19 May, 1832. page 813.

CHAPTER FOUR

Lewis County and Broome County, New York.

Later in 1832, Burchard spent some time north of the Oneida County line, in Lewis County. We have accounts of two of these campaigns, in the towns of Stow's Square, and in Leyden.

In both of these instances, the *Western Recorder* was the ultimate source of the information, in August and September of that year.

Stow's Square.

Mr. Editor – This place has been blessed by the special visitation of Divine grace for many years. It may truly be said of this people, that they have had line upon line, and precept upon precept, with here a little and there a little. Among those whom God has blessed as his instruments, the lamented Rev. Daniel Nash may be mentioned. The labors of that minister of God were abundant; and many in eternity will have occasion to rise up and call him blessed. There is no place that I can visit with more solemn feeling than the tomb of that man, whom God has so abundantly blessed. While there, I bow at the close of the day, and with Elisha pray, "Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me."

In the year 1831, there were two protracted meetings held in this church, which were blessed of heaven. Yet many of the converts having been neglected, wandered far into the world, and may be said to have wounded the Saviour in the house of his professed friends. Perhaps I differ from many other persons; but it is my honest opinion, that if ever a child of grace needs

maternal care, it is when it is *first born*; and as the church is the bride, the Lamb's wife, I do not see why her maternal affection and care should not be exercised for the *babes* in Christ.

When I first came to labor with this people, in May, 1832, I found the church in a broken condition, and discouraged. Some felt that all must be lost. But in the midst of the dark cloud a small light spot appeared. It was God's merciful visitation. The church began to feel, in some measure, that there was a great work for them to do. Prayer meetings and conferences were well attended; and in proportion as the church were faithful, the impenitent began to feel. Many were solemnly inquiring, "What must we do to be saved;" and some began to say, "Lord, *I* will follow thee."

A protracted meeting was appointed, to commence on the first of August; but owing to the ill health of the clergyman who was to preside, it was postponed to the 15th. In the mean time the church were in a measure awake to the importance of the work, and did not wait for the meeting to commence, before they began the work in their own hearts. A fast was appointed by the church for this object, on Tuesday, the 14th. The Lord was truly in the midst of us; and there seemed to be a consecration to God of all we had. The meeting commenced on Wednesday the 15th. A deep solemnity seemed to fill every heart.- The Baptists joined in the work, and shared in the blessing. A spirit of love and unity existed between the two denominations. As notice was extensively given, that Mr. Burchard would take the lead of the meeting, many came from a distance to attend it.- Owing to the ill-health of Mr. B., he did not arrive till the close of the fourth day; yet God owned and blessed other means to the hopeful conversion of many souls. After he came, the whole charge of the meeting was committed to him. Though weak in body, he preached three times a day; and God owned and blessed his labors. Christians were shown their responsible station, as the

Zion out of whom salvation must come; and sinners the necessity of a changed heart, and the danger of procrastinating the day of repentance. The appeals to the wicked were plain, simple, scriptural, and forcible. Meetings of inquiry were held; and at the same time there was preaching conducted by Rev. I Monroe. The intervals of public worship were spent in prayer by Christians. Those who came from other churches and joined in the work, shared largely in the blessings. A careless spectator could scarcely be found; for each seemed to feel that on him individually depended the cause of Christ. There was no violent opposition manifested during the meeting, which lasted ten days. The last evening of the meeting there were rising of an hundred that took the anxious seats; and several, we believe, gave their hearts to Christ. Almost everyone felt it would not be right to close the meeting at such a time. The exact number of hopeful conversion can be known only in eternity. But so far as I can judge, a very low estimate would be to say two hundred and fifty. The atmosphere seemed to be filled with prayer at the going down of the sun; parents praying for children, children for parent, brothers for sisters, sisters for brothers, and friends for neighbors. If ever the mountains and hills broke forth into singing, or the trees of the fields clapped their hands for joy, it was at the close of this day. The petition was, "Not for our righteousness, but for thy great name's sake, grant these blessings."

Now, Mr. Editor, whether all this is what will be *called* new measures, I cannot say. But it is my opinion, it has more resemblance to *old measures* – measures not only as old as the days of the apostles, when the people cried, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" but as old as the days of Joshua, when the people declared, "Nay, but we will serve the Lord." May the Lord reward those brethren who devoted their time and labor to this glorious work. And may the work extend to the nations under the whole heaven, "Till all nations, kindred, and tongues"

shall join in one song, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, that hath cleansed us by his blood.”

Yours, &c, L. A. Wickes.¹⁴

LEYDEN. Lewis County, New York.

Letter to the editor of the *Western Recorder*, dated Leyden, Sept. 20, 1832:-

Mr. Editor – The Lord has granted us a refreshing from his presence. A protracted meeting commenced in the first Presbyterian church in this place, under my care, on the 6th inst. and was continued eight days, under the particular superintendence of Bro. J. Burchard. For some time previous religion seemed to be in a very low state in the church and society, with the exception of a few individuals, who were earnest in their supplications for the blessings of salvation, and were confidently expecting that God would fulfil his promises, and revive his work.

During two or three of the first days, there was apparently but little progress to the work; although the assemblies were solemn and attentive, and the word of God was exhibited in a clear and powerful manner (by Mr. B. who did most of the preaching during the meeting.) The sermons and expostulations presented plain, pungent, affectionate exhibitions of the sinner’s guilty and lost condition, and of his obligations immediately to repent and love God.

On the 3rd or the 4th day of the meeting the obligations and responsibilities of the church were spread before them. Christians were exhorted to raise the standard of piety, and consecrate themselves with one accord to God. Numbers of professing Christians, from the different denominations, came out

¹⁴ *Religious Intelligencer*. Volume 17. 29 September, 1832. pages 286 – 287.

into the aisles of the church, and knelt down, while a consecrating prayer was made, and each professed to give themselves away to the Lord in an everlasting covenant. From this time the work seemed to progress most powerfully. Many flocked to the anxious rooms, earnestly inquiring “what they should do to be saved?” They were exhorted and urged to take a decided stand, and express their purpose to become Christians at once. It has been the object of the ministers to urge sinners to instant submission to God, and to insist upon it after apostolic example, that they repent on the spot. God evidently and abundantly blest this course; for the result was most glorious; scores were brought to rejoice in God their Saviour, and the meeting closed, leaving many sinners with the arrows of the Almighty sticking fast in their hearts. The church is much humbled and revived. The work continues to go on. There have been a number of hopeful conversions since.

We feel grateful to Bros. Monroe and Wickes, and other ministers, elders and brethren of sister churches, for their services. May the Lord reward them for their labor of love; and to God be all the glory.

Yours, etc., Isaac Foster. ¹⁵

BINGHAMTON, Broome County.

Mr. Joshua Leavitt was the founder and first editor of another newspaper which strongly supported this kind of evangelistic work. It was the *New York Evangelist*. This paper carried accounts of Burchard’s work in Binghamton, in Broome County, N.Y., and in the neighbouring village of Union.

¹⁵ *Religious Intelligencer*. Volume 17. 13 October, 1832. page 319.

“Mr. Leavitt – I have recently received a letter from Binghamton, Broome Co. N.Y. dates Dec. 6th, giving an account of a revival in that place, of which the following is an epitome.

A protracted meeting was held in the Presbyterian Church under the care of the Rev. Peter Lockwood which commenced on Saturday morning the 20th, and continued, without interruption, until the evening of Nov. 13th, and was then discontinued in consequence of the loud call for Mr. Burchard, (who was assisting Mr. L.) from the congregation in Union. The letter goes on to say, “The church in Union is situated about eight or nine miles from ours; about 40 or 50 from that congregation had obtained a hope during the progress of the meeting with us, and the excitement in that town was such that it was thought Br. Burchard’s duty to go down and hold a protracted meeting there. The work had in fact begun before he arrived. The appointment for the protracted meeting had been given out the Sabbath previous and on Wednesday evening, the very next evening after ours was suspended, that meeting was commenced.”

The meeting at Union was continued through that week, and until Friday the next week. On the next Sabbath, the sacrament of the Lord’s supper was administered at Mr. L’s church in Binghamton, and 116 were received on profession of their faith; and on the following Sabbath five more, four of whom had been examined previous to the communion, but had been prevented from making their public profession with the 116, making in all 121. On the Sabbath last mentioned, the sacrament was administered in Union, and 114 were received into that church.

“This week,” says the writer, “we are holding what we call a neighborhood protracted meeting in a private dwelling about six miles from our village. It is a neighborhood in which several families of our church reside, and where the Spirit of the

Lord seems to have prepared the way. We have but one service a day commencing at 10 1-2 o'clock, A.M. and consisting of preaching and an anxious meeting. There have been already as many as 15 or 20 hopeful conversions since yesterday morning. – The people hold prayer meetings in different places through the neighborhood in the evening.” * * * * * “This is a general historical account of the work up to the present time. It is one work though in two churches.” The writer goes on to remark, “You must not judge of the number of hopeful conversions by the number already added to the two churches. Probably as many as 30 or 40 of the converts will unite with the church in Nanticoke. A number of others will unite with other denominations.” He estimates the number of conversions at 470, and believes they rather exceed that number.”

The work is still in progress, though the scene of the operations of the Holy Spirit is changed, and is constantly changing, from neighborhood to neighborhood, and from place to place.

He says in a postscript dated Dec. 10th from 40 to 50 souls were hopefully converted during the three days neighborhood protracted meeting last week. Next week on Tuesday we open another in another district within the bounds of the congregation. Last week, it was in the house of a Methodist; next week it is to be in the house of a Baptist deacon.”

And now, Bro. Leavitt, before I lay down my pen allow me to make one single appeal to the Christians in New York. My dear brethren, What are we? – What are we doing? And what is our hope? Are we immortal beings: sinners ransomed by the blood of Christ, and expectants of eternal glory! Do we hope to escape hell and gain heaven? If heaven and hell are not a fable: if Sinai and Calvary, the judgment day, and the retributions of eternity, are not the veriest fantasies that ever were conjured up

by a disordered imagination, then is our coldness and sloth, the extreme of folly, inconsistency, and wickedness.

We are going as fast as the wing of time can carry us to the judgment seat of Christ. Do we go alone? Oh no. Each has his little circle of friends around him, on whom he is exerting an influence that will be felt in eternity. – Have we impenitent friends, or acquaintances, and do we believe that unless they are converted they will soon be separated from us *for a long eternity!* And yet we do forbear to pray in their behalf, and forbear to warn them, and expostulate with them! O my brethren, let us awake! Souls are precious. Those whom we may benefit now, will soon be beyond our reach; and our day, too, may be almost past, our opportunities of usefulness may be nearly ended.

B.¹⁶

The Rev. D. D. Gregory provided another insight into the meetings in Union, which appeared eventually as a footnote in Fowler's *History of Presbyterianism in Central New York*, already referred to.

“In 1833, Jedediah Burchard preached at Binghamton and Union. His trumpet tones, his fire of love, his masterly power of description and riches of spiritual love, claiming almost the highest Calvinism, drew multitudes to hear him. Hundreds suddenly embraced Christ – probably half a thousand in six weeks. His fault was not in the preaching and praying, but possibly taking the converts into the church before they were proved. Ministers and laymen distrusted the soundness of their conversion; the converts were in some cases neglected, and thus his faithful labours were brought into disrepute. Twenty years of

¹⁶ *Religious Intelligencer*. Volume 17. 5 January, 1833. pages 509 – 510. (Page 510 is wrongly numbered as 507.)

agitation followed, while the long-suffering Saviour blessed ordinary and extraordinary means.”¹⁷

CHAPTER FIVE.

Rochester and Brockport, Monroe County, 1833.

As already mentioned, the township of Rochester, in Monroe County, New York, was the scene of a powerful revival in 1830 – 1831, influenced strongly by the preaching of Charles G. Finney in the Second Presbyterian Church (which was a Plan of Union church at that time.) At that time the population was about 10,000.

This revival has been described in some detail in an earlier book of mine.¹⁸ Finney’s preaching was not limited to this church, but he also preached in some of the surrounding towns and villages.

Finney arrived in Rochester in September, 1830, to supply the pulpit of the Second Church ‘for some months.’ Although there were signs of revival in many places, this date roughly marked the beginning of the revival.

The Rev. Dr William Wisner arrived to be installed as Pastor of the Second Church about May, 1831. He witnessed continuous signs of revival, and made strong efforts at evangelism in his own church, as well as in the surrounding

¹⁷ Fowler. *Presbyterianism within the Synod of Central New York*. page 236.

¹⁸ Robert Evans. *Fire From Heaven*. A Description and Analysis of the Revivals of the ‘Burned-Over District’ of New York. 1800 – 1840. Hazelbrook. Published by the Author. 2004. see Chap. 14.

churches in the town. Wisner's report (see below) says that between his arrival in May, 1831, and January, 1833, over two hundred and fifty new members were received into the church. Although other protracted meetings had been arranged, the Second Church arranged a protracted meeting to start in March, 1833, with Jedediah Burchard as the main preacher, and with Mrs Burchard working with the children. Here is his report:-

“The Rev. Wm. Wisner has published in a pamphlet form a narrative of the Revival of Religion in Rochester, N. Y. Those who would cavil with Mr. Wisner's orthodoxy, or find fault with his new measures, would have joined the cry against Peter and his associates at the day of Pentecost.

The writer of the following pages commenced his labors with the Second Church, at the close of a powerful revival of religion under the preaching of Rev. Charles G. Finney, which pervaded, in a greater or less degree, all the congregations in the place.

From the time of his coming to Rochester to the month of January last, there has been a manifest work of the HOLY SPIRIT in his congregation, and constant additions have been making to the church, of such as, there is reason to hope, will be saved. From the first Sabbath in May, 1831, till the first Sabbath in January, 1833, above two hundred and fifty members were added to our communion, the most of them from the world.

In January, the work assumed a deeper and more encouraging aspect. The people of God began to take a stronger hold upon the promises, and to agonize more in prayer for the salvation of the thousands who were perishing around them.

A protracted meeting in the Free Church, and a union meeting in the Third, were productive of great good, and many souls were brought to Jesus Christ. These efforts were followed in February by a protracted meeting in the Baptist Church, which

was conducted with a catholic spirit, and was blessed to the salvation of a goodly number of souls.

The first week in March was spent by the Second Church, and by some dear brethren from other churches, as an entire week of prayer for the salvation of Rochester. The Monday following was kept as a day of fasting and humiliation and prayer before God. Tuesday and Wednesday were spent in religious exercises, and a few were hopefully converted to Christ, under the preaching of several of the members of the Rochester Presbytery, which was then in session in this place.

On Thursday, the 14th of March, the Rev. Jedediah Burchard, who had kindly accepted an invitation to assist us, commenced his labors, and the Spirit of God seemed to accompany them. In the course of a few days, an aspect of seriousness had spread itself very extensively over our village. By the 28th of March the work had become general; the meetings of inquiry were crowded, and hundreds were already rejoicing in hope. On the first day of April, the work was less powerful, and though there were, some days, eight or ten hopeful conversions to God, still the revival has from that period continued to decline.

There have been, since the 14th of March, about six hundred persons, who in the judgment of charity, were converted to God within the walls of the Second Church, exclusive of the children of Sabbath schools, of whom between two and three hundred are indulging hopes.

The converts are of all classes, and are by no means confined to the village. The substantial yeomanry of the surrounding country came in to see what the Lord was doing for Rochester, and many of them, when they heard, gladly received the word of life, and returned home to serve and glorify God. Numbers who were journeying through the place, stopped long enough to become experimentally acquainted with that blessed

Personage who is yet to “sprinkle many nations,” and like the eunuch of old, went on their way rejoicing.

The Instruction.

The instruction given both to saints and sinners, has been substantially the same that the Second Church has been in the habit of receiving for the last two years. Christians have been taught, that *the salvation of God must come out of Zion*; that revivals did not depend upon the eloquence of the preacher, nor upon any system of measures, but upon the truth of God set home to the heart of the sinner by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; and that this descent of the heavenly Comforter was not to be expected but in answer to the agonizing and believing prayers of God’s people. The encouraging promise that “when Zion travails she will bring forth children,” has been kept prominently before the people; and the necessity of the church of God rising from its low attainments and treading upon the ground which was trodden by the Enochs and Elijahs of the old dispensation, and by the apostles and primitive martyrs of the new, has been insisted upon as indispensably necessary to the bringing in of millennial glory. Sinners have been taught that they are God’s enemies; that they had rebelled against Him, and lay under his wrath and curse; that God had provided a Saviour for lost man, and was, through the Gospel ministry, *reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them*; - that the conditions of reconciliation were *submission to God, repentance for sin, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ*; - that though these were all graces of the Spirit, yet they were exercises of the creature, which he was free to put forth, and that he was not only able, but was under infinite obligation to comply with these conditions NOW; and if he neglected to do so he did it at the risk of God’s eternal displeasure.

These have been the prominent topics of discussion through this interesting work. CHRIST *crucified* has been the FOCAL point, where all the harmonious rays of BIBLE *truth* come together, and from whence they again divulge to fill the universe with his glory.

In these respects, brother Burchard's views, as he has expressed them, have so entirely agreed with those of the writer, that he has been a beloved fellow-laborer and helper in the Lord, and will leave us with the undissembled love of the whole church, and with the blessings of many hundreds, who, previous to his coming among us, were ready to perish.

Measures

The measures adopted in the progress of this work, have been such as the exigencies of the day seemed to require. There has been for the most of the time, a prayer meeting and meetings for inquiry in the forenoon, and preaching in the afternoon and evening. In the meetings of inquiry sinners have been taught that God was waiting to be gracious, and have been urged to an immediate compliance with the terms of salvation.

The young converts have been assembled, as far as possible every morning, in a room by themselves, to receive instruction and be examined in regard to their hope; and those who have given, in this way an opportunity for us to become acquainted with them, appear to have obtained a good hope through grace. One hundred and eighty have already united with the Second Church, and many gone to other churches; while numbers have so much reverence for the *good old way* that they prefer testing the genuineness of their hope by living a few months in disobedience to God, before they venture on their public profession.

An opportunity has usually been given, at the commencement of the public service, for Christians to ask

prayers for their friends, provided they are assured such friends would not take it unkindly, and sinners to ask prayers for themselves. This part of the service has been peculiarly interesting, and these prayers have been wonderfully answered in the salvation of those prayed for. We have seen our brethren and sisters come forward one day with special subjects, and the next day returning public thanks for the salvation of such subjects. We have seen sinners too requesting prayers that if Christianity were true they might be brought to embrace it, and the next day, or a day or two after, we have seen these same persons with tears of penitential sorrow, asking prayers that their faith in Christ might be strengthened. Never has the writer witnessed more manifest answers to prayer, than in the present revival.

Difficulties.

The greatest difficulty we have found in leading the sinner to Christ has been the almost indelible impression that he could do nothing towards complying with the terms of salvation, until he becomes sensible of the operations of the Holy Ghost upon his heart. He was willing to use what he had been taught were the means of grace, but verily believed that he must wait for the Spirit of God, as the benighted pagan would wait to feel the talismanic charm. This has indeed been one of the greatest difficulties the writer has had to encounter, through the whole course of his ministry, and it has often led him to inquire, whether a laudable fondness for feeling a dependence upon the Holy Spirit, had not led the Christian world to throw a cloud over the obligation and ability of the sinner, to comply with the terms of salvation as soon as they are announced to him. There is no one who believes more firmly than the writer, that no man will come to Christ except he be "born again," or made willing by the Holy Ghost, - but he believes to less firmly, that the Spirit operates so entirely in conformity with the laws of mind, that "whosoever

will, may take of the waters of life freely.” There is no truth more clearly taught in the Bible, or more fully confirmed by Christian experience, than that every time the Gospel is faithfully preached, eternal life is offered to those who hear it, and they have just as much ability to embrace as to reject the blessed Redeemer.

The Children.

Upon this subject the writer is aware he must go abreast the unbelief of the church. There are comparatively but few Christians who have faith enough, either to pray for the conversion of little children, or to feel much gratitude to God when these neglected ones profess to hope in Christ. But notwithstanding all the infidelity which is abroad upon this subject, the Bible looks forward to a period when Christians *“shall be called the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.”* Of these predicted blessings, the churches in Rochester have received a joyful earnest, in the hopeful conversions of hundreds of children. In this work, Mrs. Burchard, who had her attention called to the subject by the early death of an only child, has been a distinguished instrument. She with the aid of a number of the “mothers in Israel,” had these tender lambs committed to their care; and the result has been as before stated in the narrative.

The Sabbath school in the Second Church at present assumes a most interesting appearance. It has long been sowing the precious seed of the divine word in the infantile mind with tears, and its indefatigable Superintendent and Teachers are now rejoicing with joy, bringing their golden sheaves with them.

The school, as a Sabbath school always should be, is a place where the thoughtless are brought to consider their lost and perishing condition, the young inquirer pointed to a blessed Saviour and the infant convert taught how to glorify God in his

body and in his spirit which are the Lord's. The superintendent, we believe, feels that he must answer to God for the souls committed to his care, while each teacher is taught the necessity of carrying the souls of his class upon his heart, and laboring for them as one who must give an account. Out of one hundred and ninety-five belonging to this school, more than one hundred are indulging a hope in Christ, and the work of salvation is constantly going on.

Conclusion.

In closing the narrative of this precious work, the writer would take the liberty of affectionately calling upon his brethren to inquire, if something more than is doing may not be done, by the ministry of reconciliation, to bring a deeper work of grace into the hearts of Christians, and to let the gospel have free course, that it may be glorified in the salvation of millions, instead of thousands of the human family. At the rate at which salvation is now flowing, it only requires the arithmetic of a common school boy, to determine that the millennium can never come in. With all our revivals, and with all the exertions which are making, even in our own favored land, the moral desolations are thickening around us.

The increase of our population is so far outstripping the increase of an evangelical ministry, that four thousand souls at least are added every week to the millions who are already destitute of the means of grace among us. Nor is this all; where the gospel is enjoyed, it is, from some cause or other, preached with so little success, that to take our supplied congregations as an aggregate, there are far more born after the flesh than there are born of the Spirit; so that from our favored congregations we are sending out a surplus of the unrenewed enemies of God.

Look at these things, my brethren, and then say, if there is any reasonable hope that the world can ever be converted,

without a radical reformation in the house of God. Must not the church at large have more of that faith which is “the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen?” Must she not have more of an agonizing desire for the salvation of souls, and know better how to plead and rely upon the promises of God than she does at present, before the millennial morning can be ushered in? If these questions must be answered in the affirmative, it is our appropriate duty to effect the reformation? If the salvation of God must come out of Zion, those who bear the vessels of the Lord should take a conspicuous part in bringing about the result.

Instead of speculating about new and old measures, or criticizing the work of God’s Spirit, because it does not square itself with some preconceived notions of our own, let us go to our Heavenly Father and inquire of Him why it is that when we preach the gospel, the results are so painfully different from what they used when the same glad tidings were proclaimed by the primitive heralds of the cross. The controversy between God and his fallen creatures is the same now as it was then; the terms of reconciliation are also the same. Why is it, then, that the word which under their ministry was quick and powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword, falls so powerless from our lips? Why is it that instead of thousands gladly receiving the word while we are preaching it, hundreds and thousands of the impenitent grow grey under our ministry, and go down to hell in their old age, after having waited all their life in the expectation that a preached gospel would be made efficacious to the saving of their souls? If the Lord’s arm is not shortened that it cannot save, nor his ear heavy that it cannot hear, then there must be some radical defect in the present manner of exhibiting the truth, and the measures adopted for the salvation of men, which must be sought out and corrected before the righteousness of Zion can go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a fire that burneth.

Rochester, May 6, 1833.”¹⁹

Brockport, Monroe County.

No sooner had Burchard finished his strenuous effort in Rochester than he opened his commission in the Plan of Union church in Brockport, which was a village about twenty miles west of Rochester. His evangelistic work often included a struggle with his health, and with the strenuous physical impact of his work. The Rev. Joel Byington was the Pastor of the church for a short time through this period.

“NARRATIVE of God’s dealings with the First Congregational Church of Christ in Brockport, Monroe Co. N. Y. since its organization; but more especially for eleven months past. By Joel Byington, Pastor of said Church.

The writer presents this brief narrative to the public, purely with a view of stimulating Christians to holy fervency of spirit; unfurling the banners of the cross of Christ, - the salvation of sinners and the glory of God.

Brockport is a beautiful, healthy, business village, on the Erie canal, twenty miles west of Rochester, the centre of a wide and luxuriant country – for its size, equalled by few. The streets, splendid buildings, and numerous well-fitted stores, would compare in many respects with our large cities and seaports. It has risen up in the space of ten years, and is settled with enterprising young men, almost without an exception from the fairest portions of our country, of wealth and intelligence. The population of the incorporated village, is about one thousand three hundred, and is daily increasing. The three towering

¹⁹ *Religious Intelligencer*. Volume 18. 1 June, 1833. pages 13 – 15.

steeple rising from its centre, with the church-going bells, tell its inhabitants, and also the passing stranger, that God is here.

The Congregational Presbyterian Church was the last organized of the three, which was in 1828, but five years last March, and consisted of eight members. In the autumn of the same year, the Rev. Joseph Myers accepted the invitation from the church and society to become their Pastor. His connection with them was dissolved in the spring of 1832. During the ministry of Mr. Myers he admitted into the church rising of one hundred members by letter and confession. They had been blessed with the Holy Spirit in the salvation of souls, which brought an accession to the church of about fifty subjects. The Sabbath school, the Temperance cause, and many of the benevolent operations of the day were in good repute.

On the morning of the 5th of July, 1832, Mr. Myers bid them farewell, and took his departure. The writer of this narrative arrived at Brockport the afternoon of the same day, without a knowledge of the fact, and a total stranger to the inhabitants. Within one hour after his arrival, he received an invitation to preach to them the next Sabbath, and from that to continue their pastor of stated supplies. Vital religion was at that time in general low. Few at first attended public worship on the Sabbath, and much fewer still the weekly meetings. When the Lord's day arrived, the incessant rumbling of carriages, the flight of steeds, and the walks of multitudes for amusement and pleasure, sickened the heart of piety, and filled the heart with pain, that had not been accustomed to see the commands of God thus wantonly abused. Christians were in a great measure strangers to each other, and in many instances perfectly unknown, although communicants at the same table. But from Sabbath to Sabbath the congregation increased with attentive hearers. The weekly, and particularly the female prayer meetings, revived in devotion, spirituality, and numbers. The inhabitants in general,

and especially the youth, seemed to respect and treat with becoming propriety their new pastor, and their hospitality, attention and kindness, have drawn forth gratitude from his heart.

A scene of deep interest occurred the forepart of last February, the death of a young lady, Adaline Benedict, of a few days sickness and a member of this church, which roused Christians to self-examination and intensity of feeling. Early on the day of her death, it was announced by the physician, that she must die. This intelligence she met in the calm and quiet possession of her reason – lamenting her past remissness in religion – spoke freely of her departure. A number of the members of the church being present she urged them to greater faithfulness – expressed her ardent desire for a revival of religion, and especially the conversion of the youth – and bid them a final adieu. She told us, that by faith she saw the Saviour; that he was present with her – that she had done with mortal things, and was going to dwell with Jesus. This was one of the most calm, rational, peaceful, and triumphant deaths I ever witnessed.

From this period it was believed, by a few of God's dear children, that the Lord was at hand, to pour out a blessing, and gather souls into his vineyard. They saw by faith the cloud rising, and felt that salvation was coming out of Zion. A spirit of fervent prayer was in many instances extremely apparent.

Protracted religious meetings were proposed again and again. Some were reluctant – others urged the necessity. The meeting was on the whole agreed upon, but put off from week to week for further preparations of the church, and for the descent of the Holy Ghost. Days of fasting and prayer, and visiting from house to house were repeatedly observed. Christians became more and more absorbed in the salvation of souls – sinners began to think and talk of the necessity of their having an interest in the Saviour, and the congregation on the Lord's day, evinced that God in a special manner was among us; although hard to make

some believe it. Eternal mercy seemed to hover about us, portentous of a shower of grace.

April 25th. Tuesday morning came, and agreeably to appointment the people of God assembled at the sanctuary and commenced their unremitted protracted religious efforts, in fervent prayer and supplications for the descent of the Holy Spirit, upon this place of dry bones, that he would breathe upon them that they might live. Christians humbled themselves before God from day to day with confessions and tears of penitence. On Friday the church made a confession of her past transgressions, and renewed her covenant engagement with each other and with God, to go forward in the great work of saving souls.

Saturday morning, the church came out and bowed herself around the altar, with all their children then present; and there with strong cries and tears, consecrated them to the living God. All those children, I believe without exception, are now in the church, or else indulging a hope of salvation.

Sabbath and Monday told the interest of the occasion, by a crowded house – the solemn attention to the word of God preached. Five were already entertaining a hope of eternal life, and many were serious. Neighboring clergymen came to our assistance; a sermon had been preached on each afternoon and evening, while a number were visiting and praying from house to house through the village.

On Monday evening, 29th, the Rev. Jedediah Burchard arrived, pursuant to a pressing invitation, and notwithstanding his enfeebled health, impaired by excessive duties at Rochester, where about eight hundred souls, it was said, were converted to God in a few weeks. – and entered upon his indefatigable labors. The same arrangements were observed, as had been heretofore mentioned – the anxious room was crowded every forenoon; at the same time Christians were pouring out their souls to God, that

the Holy Ghost might do his office work. The field was truly white for the harvest, and the reaper's sickle gathered the fruit.

The instructions given to the sinner, were, so far as I could judge, truly evangelic and apostolic. The heart of the sinner was presented in living characters before him – his condemnation and the justice of God were pressed with cogency. Salvation by Jesus Christ, and the instant surrendry and submission of the sinner, as clay in the hand of the potter, without making any reserve, were urged with pathos and held up with such perspicuity, after each sinner had been conversed with privately, that infidels, and those who had grown old and hardened in sin fell prostrate at the feet of Jesus; relinquished their refuge of lies, and submitted themselves into the hands of a just and holy God. Many confirmed infidels, as they afterwards confessed, were disarmed, yielded the controversy; and are changed from the lion to the lamb. Every anxious room, on each day announced many new trophies of the cross of Immanuel.

Saturday of the same week, Mrs. Burchard commenced her course of religious instruction with the children – with the assistance of a few mothers. These religious efforts were remarkably blessed; and on examination mothers obtained comfortable evidence for more than sixty of these children, that they are borne of the Spirit of God, most of whom were members of the Sabbath school. We fix our seal of approbation to Mrs. Burchard's course of moral and religious instruction as salutary.

People of all ages and grades in society, flocked here from the adjoining country, and placed themselves under the cloud of eternal mercy, and many returned home rejoicing in the Saviour, and the neighboring churches have received accessions to their members and strength.

The village rocked day and night from centre to circumference, because the hand of the Almighty was laid upon it.

The meetings were remarkably silent, and the utmost decorum and propriety were observed, which presented the religion of Jesus to the understanding and heart of the wise and unprejudiced. Many, however, stiffened their necks and hardened their hearts, against the strivings of the Holy Ghost.

Sabbath the 12th, fifty two adults publicly avouched the Lord Jehovah to be their God, and sat down at the communion table, twenty-two of whom received baptism. The work of the Lord still progressed with unabated interest nearly through the week.

The following Sabbath, May 19th, the Lord's supper was again administered, when forty two more were admitted on confession of their faith, to the communion; thirty four of whom received the ordinance of baptism. This was a glorious day to this church, never to be forgotten. The number admitted is ninety-four – and thirteen are propounded for communion, and we hope many more will still come into the city of our God, of which glorious things are spoken. The number that have obtained a hope of eternal life, is between three and four hundred, and we trust the work shall not cease, till all Brockport is converted to the Saviour.

Among those brought into the church, are a number of men of business, merchants, and men of intellect, ranked among the first in society. An equal proportion already received into the church, are males, and many of them blooming young men, who promise much for this place and the world, who will front the battles of Christ, when the hand which pens this shall be silent in death.

The meeting after having been in progress twenty-five days, closed Sabbath evening; an overwhelming assembly present, with an appropriate and affectionate address, by the Rev. Mr. Burchard, which will not soon be erased from the memory and the hearts of many. He then took his leave of the

congregation, followed by the united prayers and blessings of, perhaps five hundred professed Christians.

I have admitted since last July, to this church, one hundred and nine persons, and baptized sixty adults. The whole number of communicants is now rising of two hundred. That all these may stand on the Mount Zion of God, and be received to the general assembly of heaven, and church triumphant, is the desire and fervent prayer of their brother and friend,

JOEL BYINGTON.

Brockport, May 25, 1833.”²⁰

CHAPTER SIX.

Homer, Cortland County, New York.

History of the Church in Homer.

The Rev. John Keep has published in a pamphlet a Narrative of the origin and progress of the Congregational Church in Homer, from which we make some interesting extracts.
21

The Congregational Church in Homer was organized in Oct. 1801, consisting of 14 members, nine years after the first family commenced a settlement in the town, and as the fruit of *missionary* labor. The first sermon was preached by the Rev. A. Hillyer now of New Jersey. In Jan., 1803, Rev. N. B. Darrow

²⁰ *Religious Intelligencer*. Volume 18. 20 July, 1833. pages 125 – 127.

²¹ Edited reports on the Homer Church, and on the meetings led in that church by the Rev. Jedediah Burchard, were reproduced in the *Religious Intelligencer* in THREE sections, followed by a Reply by the Rev. John Keep to his critics.

was ordained pastor, and continued his labors till Dec. 1808. In Oct. 1809, Rev. E. Walker became the pastor and was a beloved and successful laborer till his decease in June, 1820. Nov. 1821, the present pastor was installed. Thus for a period of 32 years this church has, with the exception of four years, enjoyed the labors of a settled pastor. In 1793 the whole number of families in town was six, and they all convened on the Sabbath, and commenced public religious worship. From that period to the present there has been but a single Sabbath in Homer, on which the people of God have not convened for public religious worship, and but a few Sabbaths have they been unsupplied with the gospel *preached* – conscious that a “living Preacher” is the medium through which they could look for promised blessings.

This church has been specially favored with those visitations of the Holy Spirit, which constitute a revival of religion. The first revival was in 1802, under the labors of the Rev. Seth Williston; and the number of converts who expressed hope was 15. The second revival was under Mr. Darrow’s ministry; the 3rd in 1812, the 4th in 1816, the 5th in 1820, the 6th in 1826, the 7th in 1830, the 8th in 1831, the 9th in 1832, and the 10th and last in 1833, the precious work now in progress. Some have been added to the church every year. The smallest number is 2, in 1809; the largest is 169, in 1818; in 1820, 65; in 1826, 57; in 1831, 92; in 1832, 99; and already in 1833, 96. The whole number received is 1016, making an average of a fraction less than 33 annually.

Till 1831, the measures employed were such as had been the common usage of the churches. In February of that year, the church held a four days’ meeting, which was specially blessed. In the succeeding May they held another, and God granted his blessing. On the week preceding the communion in July, a meeting of five days’ preparatory was holden, and with happy results. In Jan. 1832, another holy convocation was called,

which closed on the eleventh day, and was signally blessed. In December of the same year, another meeting of six days resulted in the hopeful conversion of thirty. Thus in the period of two years, this church had attended five protracted meetings, all of which were blessed, some of them signally, carrying into other churches, as well as this, souls spiritually enlightened. These results, so happily experienced by this church, testify impressively in favor of protracted meetings, and proclaim the fact that whenever, and to the same extent in which the church will bestow special labor for the conversion of sinners, God will bless. In all these holy convocations, the church has been increased in numbers, the bonds of love have been strengthened, and the members have been excited to a more faithful discharge of duty. Let Christians engage in this labor, with a proper reliance on Divine aid, and the blessing, is certain. God will glorify himself in rendering their efforts signally efficacious in the conversion of sinners.

Protracted Meetings.

It is questionable, with some, whether protracted meetings promote genuine religion. I have the most entire confidence in their salutary influence. The expectation of good from them is based upon the fact, that when Christians bestow special labor, under the guidance of divine truth, for the revival of religion, God does bless them in this labor. This is, and has been pre-eminently the fact in respect to individuals in every age, and this fact explains why some souls, like Paul, and Brainerd, and Payson, in their spiritual attainments, stand so much alone, and above their brethren. The same is true of any number of Christians who associate in special labor for the conversion of sinners. "God helps those who help themselves." When Christians throw themselves upon God in confidence, and expect from him great things, and ask of him great things, his own honor is pledged to

bestow them; and he does specially reward such confidence. Most clearly, then, let churches hold frequent seasons of protracted worship; depend upon and follow the “leadings of the Holy Spirit; and they will be blessed in their own souls, and sinners will be converted to God, and that too in multitudes. The ground of fear, in respect to such meetings, that ministers will be overmuch wise in *regulating them*, and then expecting the blessing because *they* are so wise and skilled in *their manner* of operation. When this is the case, God withholds the blessing to abase the pride of man. Rather let the church set apart a season for special labor for souls; then let divine truth be properly presented, with prayer, and let the attendant movements grow out of the circumstances as they shall exist at the time, and, beyond a doubt, sinners will be converted. And the less solicitude about the *particular way* in which the blessing shall come, the more honest and entire shall be your reliance upon God, and the more richly will he bless you. If protracted meetings fail in their good results, the failure will be occasioned by the unhallowed pride of men who deem themselves qualified to regulate what they do not understand, and what no agent but the Holy Spirit will regulate, and what the Holy Spirit will regulate in the best manner, if Christians do but rely upon his aid and seek it. You cannot give *rules to regulate a protracted meeting*, other than the general principles so clearly defined in the Gospel, which principles should never be violated in any case. Let the churches hail protracted meetings as the harbingers of incalculable good to a lost world, and always confidently expect a blessing from them, when they worship and labor *scripturally*, and in penitent reliance upon God.

The Present Revival.

The sixth protracted meeting in this church began June 12th, 1833, which was observed as a day of fasting, humiliation

and prayer. On the afternoon of the 13th, the Rev. J. Burchard commenced his labors in a sermon on Psalm 51:13 – 14, in which Christians were instructed in their duty to themselves and to others, and in what they might expect as the fruit of their labors for the impenitent. With two exceptions Mr. B. preached in the afternoon and evening of each day, till the evening of the 7th of July, when the convocation closed – a period of twenty-six days. The pressure of business at this season of the year, rendered it impractical for many, whose hearts were in the meeting, to be present. Still the meeting was well sustained by an attentive congregation in the day time, and a crowded house in the evening, during the whole period. The interest increased – the difficulties subsided – the confidence of the public in the meetings increased – and at its close, the impression was deepening and widening, that another meeting, with the same brother, as a co-worker with the pastor and church, would be accompanied by a still greater blessing.

Persons have come to this meeting from every denomination, and from all classes; many from other towns and distant places, who have never before attended meeting with us, and when we do not expect again to meet till the last days. They have been with us a few hours, or a few days, have hopefully submitted to God, and gone to other religious teachers and churches, with our fervent and humble prayers that they may be found at last with the ransomed of the Lord.

The names of those who, after they had received as much instruction as could, under the circumstances, be given them, *professed* to have given their hearts to God, were taken down at the time for my future use, and not as a proof that we pronounced them Christians. Of these, we have of adults, more than 350; and of children, more than 50: - an aggregate of 400 souls, who in careful and judicious conversation with them, *professed* submission to God.

I do not give instances of extraordinary experiences. Twenty-five and thirty years since, such instances were eagerly called for, and as eagerly furnished. I say nothing here on the evils of such statements – of the uselessness and the danger, when Christians compare themselves with such a standard. It is enough to say, that the interest of true piety are not now subserved by such accounts. The present exigency of the church, and of the world, demand other employments for Christians than to stop, and rejoice over one another, by reason of their own notable experiences; and that we judge of a man’s religion from what he achieves for Christ rather than from what he *feels*.

God has in truth visited this people in mercy, and wrought a good work among us. At no previous season have I seen this church so extensively, and so richly, refreshed. There has been more, by far, of what I deem the real spirit of prayer – a deeper sense of guilt before God; and a determination to labor for his honor in the conversion of sinners, that I have seen in any previous revival in this church. The influence of this meeting so far as I can judge, has been to unite, rather than divide us.²²

(To be continued.)

(Second installment.)

Admission to the Church.

The season of the stated communion of the church occurred on the 19th day of the meeting. A portion of the hopeful converts desired the privilege of communing with Christ at his table on that day. They now believed that they had obeyed God in his first command, by giving their hearts to him, and they felt constrained to obey the plain and positive command of Christ to his disciples – “This do in remembrance of me.” As a pastor, I had no authority to refuse them this privilege. The church had no

²² *Religious Intelligencer*. Volume 18. 24 August, 1833. pages 205 – 206.

authority to encourage, much less to compel them to live any longer in disobedience. We could do no less than to tell them to go on in their obedience, and honor their divine Lord, by commemorating his love in the holy supper, and thus make public their purpose to be his disciples. For the want of time, the examination was limited to a portion of the hopeful converts. Seventy-two were received as members of the church – others have been since examined, and now stand as candidates, and we hope soon to gather the residue. A considerable portion of the hopeful converts who, will as a matter of course, become connected with other churches.

This early admission to the church is deprecated by many, and not a few raise the warning voice against it. Good will result from this note of alarm. After all, go either way in this concern, and every step you take is in the midst of danger. You cannot know the heart. Many and deplorable are the cases of disorderly walk, even when those who are received to the church, have delayed this duty months and years from the date of their hope. And those who are received soon after their hopeful conversion, may also fall away. But it is my deliberate opinion that proportionally, there are fewer cases of defection among those who come forward promptly and take their place in the church, than among those who delay. I can see but one course of duty in this case. *Begin right, by giving your heart to God; then continue right, by keeping all his commandments.* This will lead the sinner to the footstool of mercy in submission; to his closet in secret prayer; to the house [of] the prayer meeting, and conference room as a devout worshipper; to the *communion table* and thus onward in every good word and work. And tell me if you can, at what point you shall stop. Show your authority for keeping him back from one of these steps or acts of obedience from *prudential* considerations. In all this process the *Church* is the Mother. Through her is the birth of the young convert – Isa.

66:8. Then she is to nurse the child. In every view of it, the design of a church is to form a nursery for spiritual children or converts. The ordinances of the church are her *breasts*. Clearly, then, as soon as the child is born, bring him to the breast of nourishment. No, says the timid – the man who would amend the divine arrangement – delay this; do not bring the new to the ordinances – or to the mother’s bosom, until “six months,” and this too, to ascertain if the child is *really born!* In every other case, the mother who would do this would be called a monster. Is the child born? – it looks like a child. But before I nurse him, I will lay him away among vermin and devouring foes, or out in the cold by the side of the house, and if he lives through the night, or a few months, *without* the proper aliment, or nursing, then I shall have some hopes that I can raise him! No, timid man, no. The Bible teaches no such thing – common sense revolts at it – humanity shudders at it – a parent’s heart will not consent to it. *No, never expect that a young convert will LIVE, where an old Christian would DIE.* So use with sinners the appointed means, that the Holy Spirit shall convert them; and when they *appear* to be converted, nurse them immediately, by receiving them into the bosom of the church; labor much to “bring them up” as the sons and daughters of God; do all you can to make them living, growing, active Christians, and they will most probably prove *real converts*; and God will be honored, and the world blessed by the faithful labors of the church, as a mother, and a skilled nurse. And if any fall away and will not be reclaimed, weep over them, and remove them, as the Lord has directed. I am amazed, as well as grieved at the stupidity and error in practice, of the church on this subject. Yes, be cautious; guard the church against hypocrites; receive none but upon good evidence of piety; but act scripturally; according to reason and common sense, and never expect a child to live and grow without the proper aliment. I have yet to learn that the way of a young convert to please Christ,

is to violate one of his most plain commands. “The Devil is as much pleased by keeping a Christian out of the church, as by getting a hypocrite into the church.”

Doctrines.

The doctrines inculcated in this revival, and with great plainness, variety and richness of illustration, are the doctrines of grace, as they are received by the great mass of the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches in our land. There has been no expectation of success expressed or indulged, but what arises from the divine efficiency of the Holy Spirit, who renews the heart and converts the soul. The sinner has been taught that he is able to do all that God requires him to do: that delay is at the risk of the soul. The perfections of God, and his government, have been presented, and the sinner urged to submit in view of them; and to surrender his whole soul to God, with a solemn purpose to take the Bible as the rule of his faith and practice, in a penitent reliance upon the divine promise. When the sinner has *professed* his submission, then he has been instructed, as faithfully and as extensively as the time would allow, into the nature of the Christian religion; what is expected of him as a disciple of Christ; and what he can and ought to do.

Spurious Conversions.

That all whose names were taken, are real converts, I have not believed; that many of them will prove faithful, I have no doubt: - and that numbers who may seem to fall away, would have “run well,” I do as much believe were the church faithful to watch over them. How criminal the error which leads a church to neglect a young convert, from the impression, that, if he is really converted by the Holy Spirit, you cannot kill him.

We have done what we could to prevent deception. Instruction before, at the time, and after their hopeful conversion,

has been plain and pointed; - as much so as I have ever heard, or myself imparted in any revival that I have witnessed either in New England or in this state. Our prayer has been, and still is, that they may *continue in obedience*. They have been taught, that they have commenced a warfare, and that they will be vanquished in the struggle unless they follow where the Spirit leads, and fight the good fight of faith.

Measures.

In all our protracted meetings we have had the “anxious seat,” and the meeting for inquiry, and have desired those who had submitted to God to manifest it. The same measures have been adopted at this meeting, and only one *new measure* has been added, viz: giving liberty in the public assembly to ask prayers. And very numerous requests have been preferred, and many gracious answers have been obtained, and the influence of this measure, both upon saint and sinner, has been happy. Our measures have been these, viz: In the forenoon, meetings for prayer in different parts of the congregation, and a meeting for inquirers in the anxious room. At 2 o’clock P.M. and in the evening, public preaching. At the close of the evening sermon, the impenitent were invited to present themselves on the front seats as subjects of prayer. Then they were sometimes addressed in a few words of instruction, and at the close, they were affectionately urged to be present, the next day, at the inquiry room. This same course was pursued during the whole meeting. The inquiry room was the place for the most heavy and successful labor, because here the attention could be fixed. We did not invite into this room visitors, lest the attention might be diverted. Here the character and the claims of God were presented, and each one singly conversed with, and urged to an immediate, and honest submission to God. After this interview with individuals, the whole were instructed by presenting divine

truth under a variety of illustrations. These measures, whether new or old is immaterial, have been signally blessed. They are pre-eminently calculated to lead sinners into the kingdom of Christ; and to fit and to prepare souls for heaven. Any church with a minister who loves and who faithfully preaches divine truth, with a believing reliance upon the Holy Spirit, which will adopt and pursue these, or *similar* measures, may expect certain and blessed success.

Evangelists.

In all our *previous* meetings, I was assisted by my brethren in the vicinity. Mr. Burchard is the only *Evangelist*, whose aid I have enjoyed in my pastoral duties; and if other Evangelists are like him, as he was while in Homer at this meeting, the churches may well greet them as happy coadjutors, and ministers may expect to be strengthened in their Pastoral relations, rather than weakened by their influence. I deem it an act of justice to this brother, and a duty to the cause of truth to say, that I consider him as uncommonly skilful in directing sinners to Christ, and in instructing young converts; and that when a church will follow divine truth, and engage in duty in the manner he advises, and will hold up his hands in the proper *co-operation*, the conversion of sinners may be expected with *entire certainty, and in vast numbers*. And this is not from any dependence upon man or *machinery*. *Such dependence* is not a part of the new measures. But from the proper reliance upon the Holy Spirit to do his office work, while the church goes forward, in scriptural efforts, to convince and to persuade sinners to become reconciled to God.

Evangelists may be injudicious. Some may have occasioned divisions, and yet the fault belongs rather to the people than to them. With great pertinency and effect, Mr. B. inculcated upon such as had experienced a change, through his

instrumentality, the duty of sustaining the pastor of the church, by a respectful attachment, and an efficient co-operation.

Opposition to New Measures.

Much of this opposition arises from false statements, and from an entire misapprehension of the bearing of them. Some of it must be imputed to envy: some of it to an unconquerable aversion to innovation: no small share of it, to an obstinate unbelief. How well soever it is intended, I consider most of it unjustifiable – much that is exceedingly cruel and disastrous. My brethren in the ministry must know, that unless new measures, or new *deeds*, be witnessed, the world can never be converted. In the benevolent operations of the age, we have things both wondrous and new, in which all Christians feel bound to rejoice. And we should expect things new in other departments of Christian labor. The present is the era of revivals, and of great achievements for Zion. And that man is inexpressibly behind and below the spirit of the age, who does not expect new things, and pray for them, and joyfully welcome them when they come, provided they are scriptural. By new things I do not mean any new doctrines. The doctrines and the principles of the Bible are the same unchangeably, and must be sustained and taught as they are. But the manner of presenting these truths and of adapting them to the mind, and the method of bringing them to bear, with greater moral power, upon the heart, may and should change. We are to expect that men will arise in the church, of special skill in adapting truth to the mind, and directing the thoughts and the affections of men. We should pray that God would give to the church such men: and when they appear, let them be cherished and encouraged, and not opposed. And even if they have eccentricities and faults, let not these faults be *magnified* to the exclusion of their good qualities, and thus the church be robbed of the gifts for marked usefulness which those men possess. We

have some such men now on the stage, and they should be sustained by ministers, and employed by churches, and all their appropriate gifts turned to the best possible results. And let unceasing prayer be offered, that others may be brought forward, who shall be far more skilled and successful in winning souls to Christ, than any now before the public.

There is a class of men, some settled Pastors, some Evangelists, and some laboring with the churches as stated supply, who are denominated new measure men, against whom a systematic, as well as a skirmishing opposition, is perpetually directed. I do look upon this opposition as uncalled for, and in some of its bearings as entire hostility to the kingdom of holiness; and upon the men who are engaged in it, how honest soever their motives, as making work for repentance. Every where, infidels, errorists, and the profane, are hiding behind them. The good achieved by the new measure men, or by their measures when adopted by others, seems to be overlooked, while their foibles, and mistakes, and failures, are eagerly picked up and published, making sport for infidels, and food for errorists of every description; while a scoffing world cannot but say, see how these Christians bite and devour one another. I am now among the older ministers. But *I will learn* from my younger brethren, and rejoice when they stretch forward beyond me in winning souls for Christ – the farther, the better. Many of these men are achieving great things for the church. Rather than oppose them, instead of picking up their foibles, and crying them through the land, let us go into the work ourselves, and labor to the utmost to rescue the impenitent from ruin. If men who are so sensitive on the subject, and who complain so loudly, and so mournfully, would but *acquaint themselves with new measures*, and become alive in the work of an Evangelist, and in fact lead sinners to Christ, they would find it much more pleasant and profitable employment; and to their astonishment they would soon find that their *alarm*

had subsided, and that what they had pronounced fanaticism, is indeed the fruit of a holy and divine influence.

Opinions of Men.

A revival of religion is the same in its essence in all men, and in all places. But its aspects, and the measures, are various. In these respects probably no two revivals are alike. Every revival that I have witnessed, has had some aspect peculiar to itself and I never deem it safe to say, that the revival of this year must assume the same shape as that of the last year. With these views, I cannot but express my regret that men, little if at all conversant with revivals, should so gratuitously press their advice upon the public respecting the particular course which Christians should pursue in such seasons. Their knowledge on the subject must of necessity be limited. In other things they may be skilled, but respecting the particular measures in a revival are they qualified to prescribe? To be prepared to write a *treatise* upon revivals, a man must have been long trained in them, and seen many souls under the operations of the Spirit, in the process of conviction, conversion, and in progress in grace. There is a *meddling* on this subject which I deplore. Some, I think, have written and published on the subject who should have been silent. A masterly theologian, or a President of a College, or a Theological Professor, is not of *course* qualified to instruct a pastor in his measures in a revival. The unlettered Christian, who reads his Bible, and prays and works much for Christ, is by far the safer guide to the anxious sinner than the learned Christian *without this experience*. I am pained at some communications on this subject, and marvel that men should attempt to instruct the public, on a concern of such inexpressible interest, where their *experience* has seldom, if ever, led them. I mean not to be disrespectful or unkind. But the work of converting sinners should not be retarded by wrong counsels. I cannot hesitate and

suppress deep emotions, or shift my course, when the Holy Spirit is moving the assembly because some great man will cry fanaticism, or some erring professor retires in disgust. I consider it presumptuous to *insist* that a revival is spurious, because its features and progress differ from what was seen in other Revivals: - and that conversions are spurious, because the manner of leading the sinner to Christ differs from some *precedents*.

There are men now connected with public seminaries who were pastors of churches, and then were eminently skilful in revivals, and entire confidence was deservedly placed in them. But since they have left the pastoral life, they have been chiefly occupied in other duties. In the mean time great progress has been made by the church. Revivals have become frequent and general. In several respects their features have changed. The method of presenting the same doctrines they so successfully preached when pastors, is somewhat varied, and the most happy results follow, and converts are multiplied from ten to one hundred fold. Lay members are far more active and efficient co-workers in the cause than formerly; and the members generally are coming up to their proper place in prayer, and stirring up themselves to take hold on God. – Isa. 64:7. There are vastly increased facilities for their co-operation with ministers. In all these respects, very great and happy changes have taken place; and we have truly fallen upon a *new* era. The features of society, and the aspects of the political, literary, and mechanical world are shifting. Now, will any man say that, amidst all this, there shall be precisely the same manner and aspect upon revivals of religion as there were ten, fifteen, or twenty-five years ago? And that conversions are spurious because they occur quicker, and in a way different from what was common in 1799 – and 1800? General principles are the same. Now, as always, the sinner must be directed to repent and to believe. No man can be justified in giving anything but Bible doctrines – or in connecting with his

manner what shall offend a correct taste. But let not these men, pre-eminent in their former sphere of labors, deserving and receiving the confidence of the public in their present sphere of operations, become needlessly alarmed; withdraw their confidence from ministers in active and successful operation on the field of warfare, and obviously endowed with large measures of the Spirit; and oppose revivals in the shape they now appear; and this, too, under the impression that they can show a more excellent way. They cannot, if they would, make the revivals of the present age, the same as the revivals of the past age, in their peculiar type. Nor need they be distressed because now, more are converted in a day than formerly were converted in a year; and tremble for the purity of the church *merely because* converts are received so soon after their hopeful spiritual birth. Congress gives laws for the army but the general in the field must guide the movements in battle. I venerate the piety, and respect the motives of these men, and fully accord with their general views upon doctrines and revivals. But in regard to the details of this holy and momentous concern; in regard to particular measures, and preachers which are obnoxious, I sincerely believe that such of them as have been pastors would change their views, and their language of monition and complaint, would they change their sphere of labor, go among the praying working men and women in the churches, and familiarly confer with sinners, under the constraining operations of the Holy Spirit. We greatly need their help at present, as it was so efficiently in former revivals. Beyond all question we should have their aid, and from a *full soul*, did they now mingle with the churches, as once, in Pastoral labors.

I may err, but it is my opinion that genuine revivals of religion are not to be regulated by any set of men – especially by men not in them, and men secluded in seminaries – that lectures upon revivals, are not the chief thing the church needs; and that

wisdom dictates that we should not make books on this subject. Not that discussion is useless, or that controversy does not elicit truth. You cannot, but at a frightful risk; lay down *rules* for revivals of religion. No rules will apply in all cases. This is a subject about which we cannot legislate. And I think no set of good and wise men were ever more unhappily employed than the dear brethren who composed, a few years since, the New Lebanon Convention.

Measures in a revival must always suit the circumstances of the case, at the time. A. and B. are convicted. You may find it necessary to deal with them very differently. To-day, in this neighborhood, you must say and do things which to-morrow, in another neighborhood, be injudicious. A revival of religion does not, in any case, depend upon a given mode of procedure, aside from a clear exhibition of truth, and believing penitent prayer. Divine truth and prayer, in every case, are indispensable. These two measures are indispensable: always new – always old. All else should be left to contingency, with the caution not to offend good sense, nor violate Bible principles.²³

(To be concluded.)

(Third installment.)

There is in our churches a class of men, called new measures men, and belonging to different denominations, in whom I have confidence, and from whom I have great expectations, as men by whom God will accomplish great things for our country and the world. I heartily wish I were qualified to stand side by side with them. I verily believe the Holy Spirit is with them, and that their number will rapidly increase. Nor can any man, or set of men, write, or preach, or frown them down.

²³ *Religious Intelligencer*. Volume 18. 31 August, 1833. pages 219 – 222.

They are far from being perfect men, and God will often find it necessary to lay some of them aside. The indiscretions of some of them may diminish their usefulness. But, *as a class*, they will have great power over the human mind; and Zion will flourish through their instrumentality. And unless they too advance, *they* will soon become old measure men, and others will press on beyond them.

I envy not the man, or the editor, who is occupied in publishing the foibles of these men, and with feeding infidels with what few things in their measures are exceptionable; much less the man who charges the errors of a few, as the allowed sins of the whole class. No individual could stand, if his occasional defects were blazoned, and made the index to his whole character. No class of men could sustain such a test.

By consent of all, the world is on the eve of great revolutions. The Christian believes that this promise, that the earth shall be full of the glory of the Lord, is hastening to its accomplishment. Of course immense changes must be near us, moral and religious, as well as political. What we have already witnessed of new measures can be but the dawn of forthcoming results. What these changes shall be, in the manner, we are not informed. Beyond question they will astonish, and in view of them many will “wonder, despise and perish.” One thing, however, is certain, that, in these moral changes, the ministry of reconciliation will have paramount influence. Ministers, in vastly increased numbers, of endowments extraordinary, and specially suited to the exigency, will be brought forward, and given to the churches. But where are these men to be found? From what source will they be forthcoming? Teachers and patrons of our theological seminaries, what answers do you give? Can you fail to *feel*, that to meet such a demand, you too must **adopt new measures?**

I will advocate no radicalism but what is in the Bible. But I am constrained to say, and I do it reverently towards our public seminaries, to which the world is already much indebted, that unless they do keep up with the “signs of the times,” the churches will leave them and look to other sources for help. All these seminaries should be deeply imbued with the “spirit of the age” in which we live. We rejoice that they have so much of it, and will pray that they may still more excel. Most of the young men who shall hereafter enter them, will have become converts to Christ in revivals which were the modern type, and they will not consent to be trammelled by measures that will keep them in the background. And when they come out from the seminary, the church will not employ them, unless by the breath of the Lord they have become living souls.

The Churches in Advance of Ministers.

Practical men – men of aptitude and energy, as well as unquestioned piety, are, now, more than at any former period, called for by the churches. Such men God is now furnishing. If our Theological Seminaries will send them out, well, and the churches will bless them for it. But if not – if these Seminaries, laced and stayed by rule, repel all innovation from the fear of new measures; if they inflexibly maintain that their present arrangement needs no amendment, and thus assume the office of binding public opinion to their own standard, then, for one I believe, and will honestly express it, the churches will *leave them*, and take for their spiritual guides, men educated for the ministry under *different auspices*. *New measure men can educate new measure men*. And if they furnish preachers who have skill in directing sinners to Christ, and whose labors do present the *most desirable practical results* in the conversion of souls, the churches, beyond all doubt, will employ such men. Nor can any resolves of ecclesiastical bodies prevent this. In

most of our churches there are members of deep Christian feeling, of much prayer, and who are becoming well acquainted with the Bible. I am often favored with an interview with them. And I find them uniformly the friends of *new measures* – not the friends of extravagance or fanaticism, but of measures which shall result in the more speedy and numerous conversion of sinners: measures by which Christians shall, in fact, make certain inroads upon the territory of infidelity, and *hasten on* the subjugation of the world to Christ. Those numbers, men and women, and belonging to different denominations, are sighing for an improvement among ministers; and pleasing with God for men who shall skillfully lead on the churches from conquest to conquest. Members of this stamp are rapidly increasing in the churches. Their prayers will avail. I consider this as one of the blessed omens of better things and better days, and as evidence that God will bring deliverance in a manner which will abase human pride. And so long as I find the churches ready to come up as fast as ministers lead them; and not a few of the members weeping over the spiritual lethargy of ministers, I am constrained to believe that, in fact, the churches are in advance of the ministry. So far as this is the fact, let ministers be encouraged and admonished. While the spiritual, praying, working portion of the church weep, that ministers are not more devoted and more skilful in directing sinners to Christ, let ministers be excited to new purposes, and a more efficient labor. The priests were in the background in the reformation under King Hezekiah: 2 Chron. 29. The leading men (verse 34) in the church were not prepared for such a revival. But the Levites and the people were prepared, and the work prospered.

Noticeable Facts.

The class of new measures men is engaged with ardor, and energy, and confidence, in the course which they

conscientiously believe the best for the enlargement of Zion. They are *working men*, both in the ministry and out of it. They are successful laborers. They go right forward in the harvest and *reap*. Their names, achievements, and their influence, are obviously *prominent* in all the benevolent operations of the day. I have been struck with the fact that the greater portion of *speakers* on anniversary occasions, are, unless I see through a false medium, new measures men. In all the denominations they are the working men in Christian enterprise: pioneers in every department; waiting and watching, yea, if you choose, with a little lack of discretion in some cases, for new fields of labor; new impulses to effort; a fresh struggle in higher spiritual attainments, and a more skilful mode of operation. They are inclined to expect success in their labors, by a reliance upon the plain word of God. This expectation of success upon a divine warrant, gives them boldness in prayer, a boldness to beg of God to do just what he has said he will do, and which some deem presumption. And when they labor in a protracted meeting, they are of course partial to measures which they believe will be the most successful. In this state of feeling, they regret that Christians should oppose them, are deeply grieved by this opposition, and are constrained to inquire “what meaneth this?” Why do those who love the cause of Christ, oppose their brethren who labor successfully to advance it? This is one fact.

The other fact is, that brethren, who do not come into the operations, called new measures, consider much that is connected with them to be wrong; a species of fanaticism, leading souls to ruin; and a course calculated to prejudice the public mind against the Christian religion. Hence they cannot sustain these men, and feel it to be their duty to warn the public against them, and the evil consequences which they anticipate from these measures. Brethren thus agitated are beyond question honest in their opinions, and sincere in the alarm they sound. Here then we have

the painful fact, and one which is unaccountable to such as have not studied the human character, and are not familiar with history, of Christian against Christian.

Christians are to be Tried.

Not a few of the pious are inclined to despond, in view of the preceding facts, and to inquire, what shall we do, and which way shall we turn? Dearly beloved, in patience possess ye your souls. This very trial is what we all need. You often pray, "Search me O God and know my heart; try me and know my heart: and see if there be *any wicked* way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Psa. 139:23.- 24. You have the answer to this very prayer, in the divisions among Christians; which now so deeply distress you. You now see how brethren of the same name and church will act, when arranged under the banners of old and new measures. While we see in this scene enough to cause angels to weep, we discover also much that is profitable. You learn more of yourself, and you are compelled to cease from man and look to God alone, where your dependence always should have been, for help. And unless you wish to pour oil upon the flame, you will also learn to bear much from a brother, and speak tenderly of him who breaks away from you into another course. If you really love the cause, you will be the more careful not to wound it, by a too confident reliance on your own opinions and views.

Pray remember, brethren, that, uniformly the gift of signal blessings from God, has been attended with *special cost*. The redemption of the soul was at the price of effort and suffering on the part of Christ, which no language describes. Among the troubles of the last days, those which Christians will make for each other in their contest about measures are not the least; and severe because they come from a friend. In proportion as individuals arise, and upon scripture ground make innovations

upon the habits of the church and, under the guidance of truth, invade fearlessly the territories of sin, will the common enemy complain, and some good men will be timid, and revolt, and honestly urge that ruin to the cause will result from such a course. This is neither strange nor new, altogether *distressing*. The Bible appeases us of it. Onward then, but steady. "Judge not that ye be not judged." Onward. Christ calls upon every disciple to do his duty. It is safe to follow such a leader.

God Will have the Honor.

Old and new measures men are [inclined] to feel and to say, WE must steady the Ark. But wait a little. Neither of you shall have this honor – it belongeth to GOD ALONE. The instrumentality which robs him of his glory he will abase. How impressively are the wicked taught this truth by the present division among Christians about the measures of advancing the cause will fail. If religion were what its friends say it is, Christians would not oppose one another. But ere the echo of their abortive shout dies away on the hills, the waters of salvation flow in an acknowledge *revival* of religion, recent enemies of the cross bow in submission under it, and friend and foe confess, God is in our midst. He is honored to the confusion of his foes, and to the deep abasement of his erring friends.

Christians you have not the gift of prophesy. God assures us that all nations shall love and fear him. But the *manner* of accomplishing this glorious and sublime purpose he has not revealed, farther than what is comprised in the commission of Christ to his disciples. Deliverance will come from sources little thought of. I hail, with thrilling interest, that strength of faith and enlargement of soul so happily increasing among the private members of the church. Once God saved his people by a shepherd boy, with his sling and stone. The moral power of our seminaries may, if *properly used*, sweep down legions before it.

But it may be necessary for God to give deliverance from *another* quarter. “Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.” When I see *old* measures men, less agitated about the shell, so long as the kernel is sure; and when I see *new* men bringing in the golden sheaves of the harvest, even though it be amongst dust and smoke, I shall expect to see the columns of our public journals less hardened with the *defects* of the brotherhood; the prayer meeting better sustained; a holier ministry, and a purer church; infidelity retreating; and piety in her strength and loveliness, the glory of our land.²⁴

Final Part of the Homer Report.

Mr. Keep’s Narrative, - Reply to Critics.

We published a few weeks since a Narrative of the state of religion in the church at Homer, N.Y., by the Rev. John Keep. We published it at length, because we thought it contained some of the best strictures and remarks on revivals of religion and protracted meetings that we had seen.

It seems, however, that the *Albany Journal and Telegraph*, which seems to be opposed to all revival measures, has endeavored to destroy the effects of the Narrative, and has made, as Mr. Keep asserts and maintains, many misstatements respecting his pamphlet. This has called forth a reply from Mr. Keep, which exhibits so much of the Christian character of the man, and so well sustains the views given in the pamphlet, that we are induced to make the following extracts.

²⁴ *Religious Intelligencer*. Volume 18. 7 September, 1833. pages 237 – 239.

REPLY

Gentlemen: I am gratified and pained at the notice you have taken of my Narrative in your number of Sept. 7; gratified because it invites me to a reply, in which I can very properly present to the public some further views, and especially some *facts*, which should no longer be withheld; facts which, when known, will, I think, give quite a different view of some material points, and set your strictures upon me in their true light: - and pained, that you could be willing to put upon your pages, remarks so utterly removed from verity, and evincing a spirit so much the reverse of what the *Christian* loves to cherish.

I am, gentlemen, not only willing that you should attempt to make me ashamed, but ready to feel ashamed of everything in my pamphlet which is wrong. Show me the wrong, and I will retract it. Convict the pamphlet of breathing an unchristian spirit, and I will acknowledge I am *ashamed*: - but do not expect that I shall blush merely because some brother *predicts* that I shall do so three months hence, or that I am capable of any regret at your own foreboding, that in 1840 the worms may feed upon such copies as shall remain. Nor shall I, in my reply at all meet such remarks, or allow myself to be moved by the inspiration that will lead me to the severe retort, or the sly insinuation, or the reproachful sarcasm. I will not, knowingly, make you, gentlemen, and myself the sport of infidels, and the cause we profess to love, a bye-word among the wicked. But the latter is done when any Christian or religious paper rakes the sewers of the land to find the foibles of the Brotherhood, and then give them to the public.

I wrote my Narrative from the conviction of duty; and for the same reason added the remarks. Something of the kind was wanted. I had long wished that someone else might furnish it. You are dissatisfied. Others approve. And if you wish to counteract the views I have expressed, surely it needs but little

discernment to perceive, that it will not be done by a notice of the kind you have. You hold me responsible for my narrative because I have given my name. Very well. And if those who have given statements which affect the character of individuals, and the cause of revivals, were obliged to sign their own names to what they have written, we should have had much less of what is now newspaper slander, and Christians character been saved from many cruel wounds under which it has bled. When you give statements in your paper which affect individual character, clearly the name responsible should be given also. I have now just ground of complaint against you for abuse, in giving to the public, without the name of the informant, a statement which reflects injuriously upon me personally, and which I believe to be false, as I will show in the sequel. Others I know have made a similar complaint. I enter my protest, gentlemen, against such a course as incalculably pernicious.

I do not intend to enter into a defense of my pamphlet. I wrote it for home use: not at all expecting that it would circulate as it has. I regret, not that it has circulated, but that it should be misunderstood and misapplied. Some who have complained to me of it, have altered their tone upon a careful perusal of the parts objected against. It is impossible, I think, that you could have understood my remarks when you wrote your strictures upon them, as a re-perusal, and I beg you to read them *once* more, as meanly as you consider them, will show you. If the pamphlet was before you, its content could not have been on your mind when you wrote, for you state things as contained in it which I am unable to find. – Will you believe it when I tell you, that you have, in your notice of my pamphlet, no less than eighteen mis-statements. Of their moral turpitude you may judge when I have given the full catalogue of them.

Here follow the 18 misrepresentations which are clearly refuted by Mr. Keep. But as most of our readers may not see them we will pass over the reply. [Editor of R.I.]

Such, gentlemen, is the catalogue of misstatements in your notice of my pamphlet. Let your readers judge whether I have any just ground for complaint. I now soberly ask you why you thus treat me, or my remarks? You say, indeed, that you feel yourselves “called upon to expose its inconsistencies.” Why not then do it – why not speak of what is in the pamphlet – and not introduce things which are no where attached to it, and hold up the writer to the public as responsible for what he has not said? I ask, gentlemen, why you treat yourselves in this manner – and why you trifle with religious character, and the dear cause of revivals? To me it appears that were you thus conversant with the awful solemnities of directing souls to Christ, you would have suppressed things, and not a few which have appeared in your pages.

I am not insensible that my pamphlet has its defects. The comparison of the young convert to the infant child, P.6. is not in *all* its bearings accurate and just. It would have been better not to have said exactly what I have of the brother who aided me, because we are always inclined to think much of the instrument. But I cannot see, as you say it is, that my pamphlet is pervaded by an air of defiance and attack. I should indeed be ashamed and deeply grieved, if that were so.

I am grieved at the manner in which you use the term working women. Why play upon this term? Do the pious, praying women in our churches deserve the contempt you thus cast upon them? No. They are precious jewels in our churches. What would be the ministry without their prayers? – what the state of the world? They are powerful coadjutors in the great work of converting the world. I think you must have been

annoyed by a set of women in the church of whom I know nothing, or you would have spared yourself the imputation which such a notice of pious women cannot fail to bring upon you.

I cherish unfeigned respect for our Theological Seminaries, and have strong hopes of great good from them. I regret exceedingly that my mode of expression has led any to imagine that I undervalue them or their officers. In the just sense of the word, these Seminaries are among the new measures of the age. They should be well sustained. But they may need caution. And when there is occasion for it ought not to be withheld. I am not an advocate for an uneducated ministry. I have said nothing in my remarks which looks like it. I appeal to all who have knowledge of my labors for the refutation of what you impute to me on this subject.

You seem to be apprehensive of frightful results from the spirit and effects of new measures. I cannot reply to this, for I know not what image is in your mind. If you mean extravagance or fanaticism, or the encouragement of disorder in new measures, I will join you in the prayer, "good Lord, deliver us" from them. I am not responsible for these irregularities. Nor are they new things in the church. Christians in every age have wept over them, in deep and pungent sorrow. I have no doubt but that some men, in the ministry and out of it, ardently engaged to do good, have indulged in what is especially reprehensible. But the attempts so to fasten these irregularities upon new measures as to prevent the active, praying portion of our churches for special labor for the honor of God, in the conversion of sinners, will I think unquestionably fail. And I submit it for your prayerful consideration, whether the course you pursue respecting the revivals in Western New York, is a safe one. I have one proof that it is not a course which subserves the interests of religion, and the proof is this: the opposers of revivals which catch at what you publish on this subject and consider it as subscribing their

interests. A brother publishing the foibles of another brother? Surely the conductors of our religious papers should be careful to *know* that what they publish is true. In 1831, the *Boston Telegraph* – I now have the paper before me, on the credit of some *informer*, stated that the following sentence “fell from the lips of a four-days preacher, and not a thousand miles from Cortland, Co, N.Y., viz: you impenitent sinners, possess such an unhallowed, ungodly, bull-dog bravery, you would run up a streak of lightning to catch God by the throat.” The preacher referred to, it is believed, is a beloved brother who was then preaching in my pulpit – and I was present at every sermon that he preached. I cannot recollect any such expression, nor do I believe that he used the language imputed to him, or that it can be proper for a religious newspaper to publish reports of such phrases when they are not used.

I confess my solicitude on this subject, and I entreat you, gentlemen, and all the editors of our religious papers, not to publish anything to the discredit of a brother, or of a religious meeting, unless you know it to be a fact, and not even then, only in such cases as duty clearly dictates. I have just requested a dismissal from my pastoral charge, and I am expecting that my removal will be put down to the discredit of new measures, and proclaimed for further warning against protracted meetings, as leading to the dismissal of ministers; that it will be said and believed, that our late meeting has occasioned my removal. But it is not the fact, and for the honor of revivals, and for the just credit of my church, I thus publicly state, that I am not led to the relinquishment of my present pastoral charge, by any influence of new measures. The vote of the church previously mentioned in Sept. 7, 1833, clearly shows that the churches are able and willing to support me.

Many fears are entertained of Western revivals, and of new measure men of the West. Now I say to my Eastern

brethren, hold still till you can know the *facts* in the case. Pray do not kindle into the ardor of high commendation, or into the indignation of a final rejection, merely at flying report. – There are busybodies in this concern, and they tattle grievously.

We have men at the West, who are ardently engaged in labors for Christ, and whose labors are mercifully blessed to the conversion of souls. They are sometimes called revival men, a bad term, however, and are often employed in protracted meetings. Some of them are prudent, safe men, in all respects sound in the faith, and inflexible in their love of order – the order of the churches, and the order of the ministry. And they are to the full *new measures men*. Surely then you need not be afraid of them. The praying portion of all the Eastern churches would, I have no doubt, gladly see them in their pulpits, and to their comfort follow them in their measures. Such are the men from whom, and from whose measures, our Western revivals *should* receive their character.

But among the men who labor successfully in revivals are some who in *all respects* are not prudent and discreet. In some things which they allow I do not consider them as safe guides. Still God uses them to convert souls. Christians of deep piety are attached to them, and we are not prepared to thrust them aside, because of some exceptionable things in them. We rather admonish them to lay aside their objectionable peculiarities, and pray that God would correct them. – Now it has come to pass that, from the *exceptionable* things in these men, things which, with scarce an exception, ministers deplore and condemn, and the great mass of Christians are grieved at, our Western Revivals have received their character. The misjudgings of these men, or their eccentricities, have been looked upon as a fair *specimen* of the revival, and the whole concern put down as suspicious. In this way our Western revivals have been greatly misrepresented, and the blessed cause much injured.

It has been reported to me that some men have preached and otherwise been very active in these revivals, who deny the essential doctrines. It may be so. No such man has labored with me, unless he has deceived me by preaching what he does not believe. Most of these men, if not all, are connected with Presbyteries or Associations reputedly orthodox, and surely the brethren who know them should expose them if they deny the faith. Divine truth must not be sacrificed. But I do not very highly estimate that orthodoxy which contends that *truth* is *error*, unless it be presented in precisely the same form or manner.

Gentlemen, by your strictures, you have called on me to speak out on these subjects. In the spirit of kindness, and from a heart that aches at the wounds Christians inflict upon one another, I respectfully inquire, is not the *Journal and Telegraph* too much given to the retail of idle reports? I do not object to the publishing of what you *know* to be facts. Please to review some of your statements to ascertain if you may not, in other cases, have fallen into the same mistake than you have in your strictures upon my pamphlet. You are obviously much alarmed at new measures, and seem to have set yourselves in earnest in exposing to the world the state of our Western Revivals, and of setting things right among us. I allow that as conductors of a religious journal you are bound to expose errors, and beyond question there are connected with our revivals things that should not be; by this I mean that some would say and do what should not be said and done or encouraged. Yet in these revivals the power and grace and glory of God are manifest. Very many souls are converted. Not a few of the people of God “attempt great things and expect great things” for his honor. I pray you to be careful not to cast a reproach upon this great work of the Lord. I beg of you, not to hold up this hallowed concern to the world as the work of man. True, we need instruction. And when the “Wise men of the East” speak to us we will hear. But we desire them to

do us the justice to believe that we are not the friends of fanaticism – or extravagance – or misrule – or the abettors of false doctrine – or that Christian discretion is wholly a stranger to the “Great West.” Come among, and see the fruit, and then judge. We are far below and behind what we should be, and the churches here do need from their brethren the aid of another kind of influence from that which they feel when their foibles are emblazoned. When your paper comes into our parishes, and presents “hearsay” accounts of what occurred, and of detached sayings of this or that minister at some religious meeting, Christians are not benefited – the pious are grieved, and the profane gratified. In this way the church is kept in a state of agitation, the attention is diverted from the appropriate work of Christians, the breath of prayer is suppressed, and the Holy Spirit is grieved, and the revival of course stops. And who is the guilty cause of this? Let us all put the question - “Lord, is it I?” You say of my pamphlet, “we are called upon to use it to as good a purpose as we honestly can, in sustaining the bleeding cause of gospel truth and order.” Surely your sympathies should be strongly excited at the sight of gospel truth and order mangled and bleeding. Your best efforts should be made to stop the flow of blood and heal the wound? Now is this work done by you, by collecting the imprudent and extravagant expressions of ministers, and of private Christians, and occasional improprieties which have occurred at some religious meeting, and publishing them to the world? Will this stop the blood, or heal the wound?

A religious meeting, when Christians feel strongly, and sinners deeply impressed, may be in *most* respects judiciously conducted, and yet some things occur which both wisdom and piety condemn. Now let some *visiting* brother take down “at the time with his pencil”, these bad things, send them on in your paper and you publish them, with some spirited remarks of disapprobation, and with the opinion that it is extremely doubtful

whether such a meeting can result in any good: will this heal the wound? And when your *printed* account of what took place in this meeting comes back to the people who attended the meeting, and know that much of it is misrepresentation – will the blood stop, and the cause of the gospel be honored?

You seem to look upon new measures in the gross as wounding the cause of truth. But are you correct? If you mean that fanaticism and error and extravagance, wound the cause, then say so, and proceed to tell the public what things are fanaticism, and *where* they are, and by *whom* they are allowed. You consider my pamphlet as inflicting a wound upon the cause of truth, &c. True, my remarks go to sustain new measures. But I *definitely state* what these new measures are. You might have seen this if you did not – if you did see it, p.7, on what ground can you think that I am opposed to the same dear cause of gospel truth and order which you wish to sustain? Mark the fact. The new measures which my pamphlet sustains are given, in plain language, on page 7. You cannot hold me responsible for any others. And when you attempt to hold me responsible for more, I ask who inflicts the wound? And by whose hands does the cause bleed?

It is lamentable, gentlemen, that you or I, or any one, should make the creature of the imagination an object to shoot at – or that we should lay to the charge of any Christian, or minister, or Church, or Presbytery, what they disapprove of as much as their censors do or can. The term new measures is, in the public mind, inseparably connected with our western revivals. Now if, by the term, you mean extravagance, fanaticism and false doctrine, you slander these revivals by putting them down as the fruits of new measures. “Men’s work – men-made Christians – machinery – turning off converts as you would run spoons,” is what some men from the East have told me they considered as new measures.

From the tenor of some of your remarks, I supposed that you, gentlemen, have the same view – and that the readers of your paper would get the same views. But *we* who live on the ground have no *such* views of new measures, and when we learn that our eastern brethren adopt the new measures, we do not consider *them* as making Christians by any process of mechanism. Not at all. Rather we suppose then to feel and to act as we do at the west, which is, though I do admit to a very limited extent, to unite us Christians in seasons of special labor for the conversion of sinners; presenting divine truth – and relying upon the renewing and sanctifying operations of the Holy Spirit to render truth effectual to the conversion of the soul – not indulging the least expectation of success in the effort, unless “God gives the increase.” This is *our new measures* in my own congregation, and in all the churches where I have aided in ministerial labor at protracted meetings.²⁵

²⁵ *Religious Intelligencer*. Volume 18. 26 October, 1833. pages 346 – 348.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Monroe County Again, and Review.

Bergen Center, Monroe County.

This report was sent to the editor of the *New York Evangelist*, and was reproduced in the *Religious Intelligencer*.

“Brother Leavitt. – Believing that God would hear prayer and bless the efforts of his children, we resolved to set apart a season, in which, to make an extraordinary use of the ordinary means of his appointment for the salvation of souls. We commenced by holding prayer meetings in the afternoon and evening, for several days in succession; the burden of prayer being, that God would send down the Holy Spirit to quicken his children and convert sinners; and before our daily preaching commenced, which was on the 13th ult., it was found that God had heard and answered prayer, and opened the mouth of the young convert to speak of his goodness. The preaching was sustained for the first two days by brethren Stratton and Elliott, and after that time mostly by brother J. Burchard, who arrived the second day at evening. We were also assisted in the inquiry room by brethren Childs and Walker. Our meeting continued for ten days, when it was found, that from eighty to ninety professed to have had a former hope revived, or to have passed from death unto life. Many of these belonged to neighboring societies, and some at a distance, who had only taken up a short residence in the place. As the result of the meeting twenty-six have already united with the Presbyterian Church in this place. Others probably will unite, and some will go to other denominations.

In additions to the number of hopeful conversions mentioned above, there is a large number of children at and under the age of twelve years, who profess to have been born again by the Holy Ghost. During the meeting, the children, the most of whom belonged to Sabbath schools, in this and neighboring societies, were collected together in a room by themselves, and received the instructions of Mrs. Burchard. Many of the mothers and Sabbath school teachers attended from time to time, and this meeting, for the benefit of the rising race, was sustained, it is believed, by the prayers of all. God as we believe, heard and answered, and sent down the Holy Ghost, to seal many unto the day of redemption. None of these have as yet been admitted to the communion table, neither have they been cast out to wither in the storm. They meet in the session room during the morning exercises on the Sabbath, where they receive instruction adapted to their understanding from the superintendent of the Sabbath school, the measure being intended as a preparatory step to their being received, especially such as shall continue to give evidence of love to Christ, and to the special ordinances of his house.

The doctrines chiefly insisted on were these – The extent and purity of God’s law – the total depravity of man – the eternal purpose of God to save through the death of his Son – the necessity of being born again by the Holy Ghost – the freeness of salvation – and the immediate duty of all to comply with God’s terms of reconciliation.

In conclusion, we would ascribe all the glory to that God who works salvation in the midst of the earth.

JOSIAH PIERSON.²⁶

²⁶ *Religious Intelligencer*. Volume 19. 12 July, 1834. page 111.

Review of Parts One and Two.

This stage of the story provides a good place to review what we know, and to discuss the main questions and features which will appear later. Many of the documents which reveal the subsequent parts of the story are very long. They do not fit well into any flowing account of what was going on in Jedediah Burchard's experience.

We have seen basic aspects of his early years, including some circumstances in which his conversion to Jesus Christ took place, and his beginnings at preaching the Gospel. We saw that he had only elementary education, and for various reasons he was not able to undertake the kind of study which might have led to his ordination as a Presbyterian minister. He worked as a lay pastor and evangelist in smaller country churches in Saint Lawrence and Jefferson counties, in New York State. He was also trying to improve his education whilst doing this, but he found it difficult to make progress in this area. However, he lived in a part of the country in which the "Plan of Union" operated, and he was able to progress in such a way as to be ordained by a local Congregational Association, and this gave him access to ministerial ranks.

He had certain qualities as a preacher. He was a great story-teller. He had personal charisma as a preacher, so that he could hold the attention of a congregation, and could impress the people as he chose. His theology was Calvinist, and so was generally acceptable to the congregations that he served. He did not create objections on the basis of alleged false teaching. His evangelistic efforts enjoyed good success, under the blessing of God.

Burchard was a dramatic and charismatic preacher, and could also be an entertaining preacher, with a strong sense of

humour. Sometimes, the humour was not well controlled, and it could spoil the sermon. Some of his other talents at times did not always seem to be properly under his intelligent control.

It was the custom in most of the evangelical denominations that new converts were normally required to undergo a trial period before they were welcomed into the churches as full church members. However, there were a small number of preachers who did not follow this practice, and who were more willing to accept into membership a new believer, after a much briefer test, and while the protracted meetings were still in progress. Burchard was one of these. Another evangelist of that time who took a similar view was the Baptist evangelist, Elder Jacob Knapp.

As a result, there was conflict at times about how evangelistic meetings should be run. Some thought that new converts were not made welcome enough by the church members, and not taught sufficiently about the Christian life, and this was the reason why some professed converts did not survive well after their initial conversion experience. The new converts were too easily left out in the cold, and not encouraged or taught sufficiently.

It was also very evident that many ministers whose churches benefited from Burchard's work were very willing to provide interesting accounts about the evangelism, and the value they saw in what was done. Burchard used these accounts as testimonials in support of his work, when talking to other ministers when visiting another location.

This practice of using the names of other ministers as people who agreed with Burchard's efforts, had both negative and positive aspects. A good many of these ministers might have agreed with some of the things Burchard did, but not other things he did. But their names would be quoted by Burchard as giving support to everything that happened in Burchard's meetings.

An evolution was also taking place in evangelistic work. Before 1830, the revivals often began as a normal result of the prayers of local people, and of normal church activities. After 1830, the normal situation was that protracted meetings would be organized to provide a basis within which it was hoped that the Holy Spirit would work and produce a revival situation, in answer to prayer. In some cases, the meetings would be organized and held, but there was little or no revival at all. These protracted meetings were a feature of the so-called “new measures,” about which there was so much argument.

Although long quotations have been made from John Keep’s report showing what he thought about the mission which had been held in Homer, we need to note a section of another document which we will encounter later on, but which summarizes the problems that John Keep had with Burchard’s manner and conduct of meetings.

“I consider Mr. B. as possessing *some* prominent qualifications for usefulness as a Preacher, and for conducting a special effort of the Church for the salvation of men. At the same time *he has prominent defects, and defects which have exceedingly distressed me, which his friends have urged him to abandon, and for the retaining of which, I deem him to be very much in the fault; for these defects are of that kind which he might easily avoid.*

My mind is so much affected by them, that, unless he would give me his assurance that he would lay them aside, I WOULD NOT AGAIN REQUEST HIM TO AID ME IN A SERIES OF RELIGIOUS MEETINGS. I include in these defects, the levity which he produces in a congregation – his want of punctuality in commencing his meetings at the time appointed – his reproachful remarks upon those who oppose him – his too hastily pronouncing those to be converts who have merely

professed to have given their hearts to God, and then, in the inquiry room and elsewhere speaking of them positively as converts – and his continuing his meetings often to a very late and unseasonable hour in the night.

While he is bold in declaring the truth and inflexible in duty, he should always tenderly regard the feelings of the minister with whom he labours, and respect the feelings of the church which employs him. Would he but take this course, he might have the confidence of the ministers, and the affectionate support of the churches, and his labours, I believe, be much more extensively effectual, *and the reaction, which is now often so dreadful*, might be avoided.”²⁷

In the next section of our book, we will see that, when Burchard went to Vermont to conduct protracted meetings, a number of strongly POSITIVE reports about his meetings were published. Also, we will see that the best results seemed to have flowed when a revival had already begun before he arrived in the town. Wonderful positive reports were published after many of these meetings.

The negative reactions will be noted in another section later in the book

²⁷ *Vermont Chronicle*. 17 March, 1836. pages 42 – 43.

PART THREE

VERMONT'S "BURNED – OVER DISTRICT"

CHAPTER EIGHT

Vermont – Before Burchard's arrival.

In his thesis, Donal Ward describes some of the events leading up to the time Burchard arrived in Vermont.

Flowing from the effects of the great revival of 1831, “the spiritual contagion became so diffuse that over half of Vermont’s Congregational churches reported themselves in full revival with a total number of conversions in excess of 5,500. The Baptists for their part claimed to have baptized 2,720, while the Methodists likewise received new members in excess of 2,000. The revival movement in Vermont was at its apogee and the results were often staggering. In Bennington the Congregational church, being again as during the revival of 1803, without a pastor, invited a former pastor, Absalom Peters, to conduct a service in which he alone baptized 76 persons. That same day 131 persons were admitted to the Lord’s Supper for the first time. ‘A wakeful, earnest attention and a tearful interest pervaded the assembly and, indicated a divine presence above and around us.’”

The normally conservative Congregational churches in Vermont began to use protracted meetings in 1831 in Addison

County. So, protracted meetings began to be organized which might last three or four days. Dr Joshua Bates, president of Middlebury College, knew of the problems which might arise from these new measures, but he decided to take the best advantage that he could from the new enthusiasm, and win as many people for Christ as he could, whilst avoiding problems. He was ably supported by the pastor of the Middlebury church, Dr. Thomas A. Merrill, who was an equally successful and keen evangelist.

Joshua Bates wrote articles to be published in the *Vermont Chronicle*, using his pseudonym "Presbuteros", in which he set out the basic rules under which these meetings would be held, and these ideas seemed to be generally accepted amongst the orthodox churches. These articles by Joshua Bates appear below.

The Addison county protracted meetings were held in the towns of Addison, and New Haven, and then in Weybridge, Middlebury and Cornwall, and several other places.

During his ministry, Merrill saw revivals of more or less power and effectiveness in his church at Middlebury in 1805, 1809, 1811, 1812, 1814, 1816, 1819, 1821, 1822, 1825, 1830, 1831, 1834 and 1835. In a few of these revivals, the converts numbered several hundred.²⁸ Bates had seen almost as many revivals amongst the students in his college.

²⁸ Sprague. *Annals of the American Pulpit*. Volume two. page 482.

CHAPTER NINE

PRESBUTEROS. [1831]

Alias the Rev. Joshua Bates, President of Middlebury College.

THREE DAY'S MEETINGS

Mr. Tracy, - You have probably seen many incidental notices, and some brief accounts of religious meetings, continued, with little interruption from morning till evening and from day to day, for the space of *three, four*, and, in some instances, even *ten* days. - These accounts are exciting attention among the good people of this state; and it is time that something on the subject of these protracted meetings should appear in the *Chronicle*. Two distinct questions, on the subject, have presented themselves to my mind, viz; -

1. Are such meetings expedient?
2. If expedient, how ought they to be conducted?

Both these questions, it seems to me, demand an immediate and full discussion. Or rather, if the first be decided in the affirmative, the second should be discussed with great freedom and care, as being of immense practical importance. It is my intention to throw out a few general thoughts on the subject; ad to leave you, or some of your correspondents, to continue the discussion. In advocating the affirmative of the *first* question, I must, however, assume as the ground of my reasoning, the answer, by and by to be given to the *second*. For if such meetings are called at improper times, held in improper places, or conducted in an improper manner, as some public meetings in

this state have been, the happy anticipated results must be diminished, or entirely fail; and the whole argument, by which I shall endeavor to establish their expediency, must fall to the ground. With this preliminary remark in mind, let me ask your attention, and that of the readers of the Chronicle, to the following considerations.

1. *The preaching of the Gospel* is the principle agency, by which “the Holy Spirit applies the redemption purchased by Christ.” It is by “the incorruptible seed of the *word*” that men are *born again*; and it is through the *truth* that they are *sanctified*. After that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God; it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” Now during one of these protracted meetings properly conducted, more pungent truth is presented to the minds of the community, where it is held, than is exhibited by the ordinary course of preaching for months; and, as it respects a large portion of that community, more than ordinarily reaches their minds for years.

2. The minds of the people, among whom such a meeting is held, after proper notice and due preparation, are in a peculiarly favorable state to receive deep impressions. The pious can hardly fail to look forward, as the time of the meeting approaches, with mingled emotions of fear and hope, concerning its results; and this solicitude will carry them often to the throne of grace, and thus serve to prepare them for the duties and privileges of the new and interesting scene. Even the stupid and careless will have their curiosity roused; and thus all will be likely to come together, and to come with wakeful attention and anxious expectation.

3. The ministers who are called to sustain the exercise of these meetings, will go to them with strong desires and confident expectations of accomplishing something by their labors. If any

who are invited have no such desires and expectations, they will, of course, remain at home. Those who meet, therefore, can scarcely fail to be prepared to preach under the influence of peculiar emotions – with unwonted zeal and tenderness. For, if they ever pray over their preparations for the pulpit, they will, on such an occasion, pray more and with more faith, than usual. They will be led, too, to select the most interesting and heart searching subjects of discourse; and be prepared to present the truth in the most direct, and yet tender and affectionate manner. Meeting together under such circumstances of interest and hope, - seeing each others' faces shine, as did Moses' on the mount of God – stirring up each others' minds by mutual counsel and exhortation – being together with one accord, praying with united hearts the effectual fervent prayer, agreeing as touching, which they so exclusively and earnestly and perseveringly ask, they will preach from day to day and from night to night, in the great congregation, in the separate districts and from house to house, with peculiar directness and force; and we should be led to the conclusion, (even without the evidence of experience) that a peculiar blessing would attend their labors – that their preaching would be with the power and demonstration of the Spirit – that the word at their mouth would have free course and be glorified – that many would be pricked in their hearts and led to repentance.

But we are not altogether without the evidence of facts, to fortify the conclusion to which our argument has conducted us. For although these protracted meetings are of recent date; yet there has been sufficient time, since their introduction, and they have been sufficiently numerous, to show their utility, and encourage a more general resort to these extraordinary means of grace, or, rather, these ordinary means, used, to an extraordinary degree and in an extraordinary manner. – I say, *ordinary means*; for after all, no other means are employed in these meetings. Their whole operation consists, or *may* consist, and certainly

should consist, in the exhibition of divine truth, and the offering up of ardent prayers for the influences of the Holy Spirit, to give efficacy to this truth. Such, indeed, as far as I have been able to learn, has been the character of these meetings. Nor have these special efforts been made in vain. But everywhere, a blessing, and generally a rich blessing, seems to have attended them. (to be concluded.)²⁹

SECOND QUESTION. *How ought these meetings to be conducted?* or, in other words, how *may* they be conducted, so as to secure the greatest benefit, and with the least liability to abuse?

A very full and definite answer to this question will not now be attempted; because different modes may be best adapted to the circumstances of different communities; and because the best mode, even under given circumstances, cannot be ascertained without experience more enlarged and observations more extensive, than have yet fallen within my province. Although, therefore, this part of the subject requires, and will, I presume ultimately receive the most ample discussion; yet, for the reasons just stated I will not enlarge upon it at present; but simply add two or three general observations, which have a bearing on the point.

1. These protracted meetings should not be held in any place, till the state of religious feeling in that place is such, as will almost ensure general attendance on the multiplied means of grace. For it is obvious, that if these means be generally abused and neglected, the formality and display will serve only to dampen the ardor of piety, and strengthen the hands of wickedness – to cause the enemies of righteousness to triumph and blaspheme – to increase the stupidity and guilt of impenitent

²⁹ *Vermont Chronicle*. 18 March, 1831. page 45.

sinners – and, like all abused privileges, become a “savor of death unto death to them that perish.” The minister or ministers of the place, and a portion, at least, of the church, should be so well persuaded of the utility of such a meeting, and feel so strong a desire for it, as to make it the subject of their daily conversation and prayers; and thus to awaken the attention and prepare the minds of the whole community for the occasion.

2. These meetings should, as far as practicable, be each confined to the inhabitants of a limited district – (a village, a parish, a town, or at most a city,) For, if visitors, in great numbers and from a great distance, come in upon a small community, at such a season, there is great danger, that the attention of a large portion of that community will be diverted from the momentous concerns of their souls; and thus the object of the meetings be defeated. One of the benefits of such a meeting is their tendency to keep the great truths of the Gospel steadily before the mind, till they take hold of the affections – to preserve and deepen serious impressions, till they constitute a habit of mind, a fixed principle of soul – to hold and press conviction upon the conscience of the convinced sinner, till his heart breaks, and his will submits to the authority of God. Now attention to visitors and the care of providing for their entertainment must powerfully counteract this salutary tendency of a continued religious meeting; and may, as is often the case, render deep convictions and the most serious impressions transient, as the morning cloud and early dew, which soon pass away. I am persuaded that invitations to attend these meetings from abroad should not be extensively given. Let those, who wish to enjoy the benefit of such a meeting, prepare to procure one for their own vicinity; and let every person who attends such a meeting (except the ministers of the altar and perhaps a few experienced helpers) sleep every night in his own house.

3. Let not these protracted meetings (except in cities, where even the preachers and mutual helpers are at home) include a Sabbath. If in the country ministers, who are called to labor on these occasions, are detained over the Sabbath, their own flocks will be scattered – all the evils of visiting will be increased in tenfold proportion, with the aggravating circumstances of leading to a violation of the Sabbath.

4. Something like the following arrangement seems to me best adapted to the circumstances of the people in this state. When a three or four days' meeting is evidently called for, in any town, let a sufficient number of ministers to supply at least every school district, be invited to attend. Let notice be seasonably given, that there will be preaching in each of these districts, every evening during the time allotted to the general meeting. In the mean time let every active member of the church be engaged in preparing the minds of the people, old and young, for the approaching solemnities.

At the appointed time, (early in the week, say, Monday or Tuesday evening) let the invited ministers enter the place, and commence their labors, by preaching a lecture, each one in the district previously assigned him; and let them severally preach with a special reference to the object of the general meeting, so as most effectually to secure the attendance of all to the more public exercises of the next day.

In the morning, let the ministers, at least an hour before the public exercises, come from their closets and the family altars, around which they have been kneeling; and meet together at the house of the resident pastor. There let them bow together before the throne of grace; and by united prayer and mutual exhortation, let them endeavor to warm each others' hearts, before they go into the great congregation. The public exercises should consist of prayers, sermons, and exhortations, perhaps for two hours in the forenoon, and three in the afternoon, with a half

hour's intermission. Something like this should occupy the attention, day after day, and evening after evening, during the allotted period of the meeting. Special prayer meetings early in the morning every day and between the public meetings may be profitably held by all, who can by a holy industry redeem time for the purpose.

The circumstances of the occasion may likewise suggest to a judicious and devoted pastor many particular expedients, which cannot be prescribed till the circumstances, which call for them, arise.

And now, in conclusion, I ask my brethren – Christians, and Christian ministers, are not these meetings expedient? Do we not, in this state, greatly need their salutary influence? And will we not, in our appropriate spheres, endeavor to promote them – at least, present our prayers to the Father of mercies, that wherever they are held, the Holy Spirit may come down in power, and give efficacy to the word of his grace; and thus men be saved and God glorified?³⁰

[Please note, that these suggestions describe meetings being led by local ministers, or ministers who were a part of the local Association, and there is no reference to, or suggestion about, itinerant evangelists, or visiting preachers from afar. The meetings conducted by Burchard were different from these ideas suggested by Bates.]

³⁰ *Vermont Chronicle*. 25 March, 1831. page 49.

CHAPTER TEN

Jedediah Burchard Comes to Vermont.

In October, 1834, Jedediah Burchard arrived in Vermont, and became involved in a protracted meeting in the town of Windsor.

From several of the published reports of the protracted meetings that he led, it appeared that a revival had already started in the local church before he arrived. Thus, one of the comments made about his work was that he came to finish off revivals which had already started. The obvious advantage in situations when the revival had already started was that the Holy Spirit was already at work, so the success of the movement was not so likely to depend upon the impact of Burchard's personality, but upon God.

This first mission is an example of the fact that his mission occurred after a local revival had already started in that town. It was also an interesting allied fact that Windsor was the base from which the *Vermont Chronicle* was published. As a result, the editors got a first hand view of this mission, and so we have probably the best and most balanced published report of any of his missions.

The report was in several parts, and was set in the context of reports about revivals in that area, and in other localities, which the *Chronicle* reported upon as regularly as possible.

“On the whole the prospect before the churches in this county is more encouraging than it has been for a year or two past, and we do cherish the hope that a season of refreshing will soon be experienced in every church within our limits.

Remarks.

1. The revivals enjoyed in the county were immediately connected with the repentance, prayers and efforts of Christians.

The Pastors of these churches endeavoured by plain and direct and persevering effort to stir up their Christian brethren to penitence and prayer and zeal in the cause of God; and continued thus to labor till the object was accomplished. Now, if the Pastors in the county would have a revival in their respective congregations, [several factors involving action become relevant.]³¹

2. The present is the time to enter upon this labor. The attention of the churches is now directed to the subject of a revival – their minds are now occupied in some way in relation to the subject. It is the time then for ministers to urge them on till they shall arise and “prepare the way of the Lord.” Besides, Divine influence has begun to descend upon the extreme parts of the county, and if pastors and churches do right, it may be expected to flow on till it shall spread light and salvation over all the hills and valleys of Cheshire.

3. Members of our churches are exhorted to awake out of their sleep. It should humble them that so much Pastoral labor is required to arouse them to any suitable degree of effort in the cause of religion.

Protracted Meetings in Windsor.

A protracted meeting commenced in this village Oct. 5th, and continued till Oct. 24th, under the direction and labors of Rev. J. Burchard, known as an evangelist in the State of New York. In the meeting, the Congregational, Baptist and Episcopalian Societies, to a considerable extent, united, and the clergymen in

³¹ Several words are missing from the original at this point

the village participated in the exercises. The measures adopted by Mr. Burchard were such as have been adopted in Western New York, within a year or two past.

In some respects they are like those which have been used in Vermont; in other respects they differ. In some of those respects in which they differ, we are compelled to say we do not approve of them. At a future opportunity we shall assign our reasons, and also give a particular account of the meeting in its progress and results.

Meanwhile we say, we have ourselves been much interested, and have rejoiced to see the attention of great numbers called to subjects of religion, many brought to look at their own eternal interests with anxiety, and some, as we believe, born again. We have rejoiced also to witness, at times, a spirit of prayer among brethren, and uniformly an earnest desire that the truth might have its appropriate effects, both in the edification of Christians and in the conversion of sinners. In view of the differences of opinion which have existed and do still exist, in regard to measures, we think the results of the meeting yet too ill-defined to speak of them with confidence.”³²

The next issue contained an article which began with a fuller report on events in the mission, and then a section expressing the aspects of the measures used in the mission with which they did not agree, and lengthy explanations of these opinions were also given. Here is the part of that article which describes the mission:-

The First Report on the Windsor Meeting.

“The careful reader of the *Chronicle* for a considerable time past, will have perceived and will remember, that on this

³² *Vermont Chronicle*. 31 October, 1834. page 174.

subject, we have neither approved nor denounced measures because they were old or new, but have held that every measure should be tried by its own merits, in view of the circumstances where its adoption might be proposed. We are in the same posture of mind still.

Much fog and darkness has pervaded the public on account on the vagueness of the phrase *new measures*. Some ten or fifteen years ago Mr. Nettleton's measures, pursued so successfully in Connecticut, were new. After that, the measures adopted in New York, especially in Oneida county, were new. The protracted meetings common with us in this region in 1830, were new. More recently, the measures pursued in Western New York, for example, Buffalo, Lockport, Rochester, are new. In such changes, it is plainly little to the purpose to approve or condemn measures, till the particular measures are defined. Premising so much, we proceed to give some further account of the protracted meeting in this village, which we noticed last week.

Friday, Oct. 3^d, being the day appointed for a preparatory lecture in the Congregational church, Rev. J. Burchard was present, also some brethren from the Baptist and Episcopal churches. The question was raised: Is it desirable to hold a protracted meeting? – and the vote, nearly unanimous, decided it in the affirmative.

On the Sabbath following, Mr. Burchard, in remarks at the close of the afternoon's service, at the Congregational church, desired the brethren to say by vote, whether they would *take hold* with him and co-operate with him in a protracted meeting; which they did in the affirmative; and by agreement, the services were appointed to be holden in the Baptist meeting-house, and to commence that evening.

From that time till the close of the meeting, with two or three exceptions, there was preaching in the afternoon to

professors of religion, and in the evening to a promiscuous assembly. The preaching, except in two instances, was performed by Mr. Burchard, other clergymen in the village, with the Rev. Mr. Ely, Baptist clergyman of Rockingham, participated in the exercises.

At the commencement of the services, the audiences were exhorted to rise and request prayers for themselves, for their relatives, for all classes of people, for adjoining towns, that the influence of the Holy Spirit might be given according to the various necessities of the subjects. These requests occupied from half an hour to an hour. At the close of the evening's sermon, the invitation was extended to "those who wished to be prayed for, those who had no objection to be prayed for, and those who were willing to give themselves up to God," to come forward and take the front seats. ("Anxious seat") Prayers were then offered for the three classes, after those who were willing to give themselves up, had manifested it by rising. After the benediction, an invitation was given to all who desired, to remain and be individually conversed with, and be made further subjects of prayer.

In the forenoon of each day a meeting was holden, called "the inquiry meeting." To this all were invited who were seriously disposed, and those who had no objection to being particularly conversed with on their personal religious interests. Here all were earnestly exhorted to give themselves to God, to repent, to believe, to submit, meaning the doing of that work which the unconverted impenitent person does at conversion; and it was inculcated that the Holy Spirit was necessary as a co-operative agent, without whose action the renewing and conversion of the heart would not take place. The presence and aid of the Spirit of God was sought in prayer at these meetings. Besides urging on impenitent persons their immediate duty, as above described, they were also urged to express the doing of it,

and to say, "I do now give up myself to God;" and during the meetings, more than 130 made the declaration.

Both at the anxious seat and at the inquiry meeting, the same persons were repeatedly called upon to give themselves up by a similar expressed dedication.

At the same hour that the inquiry meetings were held, there were also social prayer meetings holden at various places. So at the conversations at the close of the service in the evening, professors of religion were requested to retire to the vestry and pray together.

When, on Friday, Oct. 24th, it was determined to bring the protracted meeting to a close, those who had made the engagement to give themselves to God were assembled in the meeting house, and a discourse addressed to them setting forth the tests of Christian experience and character, in some twenty particulars. The preacher then remarked: "All you who feel that I have described your experience, if not in all yet in some of these particulars, are requested to rise."

The same thing was done on one or two other occasions afterwards, on the same day. We believe that all, or very nearly all, who had made the engagement, arose. Then, to prevent the spirit of proselytism among the denominations, it was proposed that each should be asked the question on the spot: "If you conclude to join a church, which church do you wish to join?" This was done, and at the first exercise of this sort, 33 gave in their names as desiring to join the Baptist church, 19 the Congregational church, and 12 the Episcopalian church. On the succeeding occasions the ratio was about the same, making the whole number who made their election, 92.

On the next day, Saturday, Mr. Burchard appointed a meeting at the Congregational meeting house for the examination of those persons who proposed the Congregational church. Eleven presented themselves and were examined. On Sabbath

afternoon another examination was held, when about 23 others were examined. The rules of this church requiring that persons proposed for admission should stand propounded two weeks, and Mr. Burchard stating that some of the candidates were desirous that he should admit them, the church voted to dispense with their rule, and the candidates should stand propounded one week and be admitted the next Sabbath. In the evening they were accordingly propounded.

In the ensuing week the candidates were visited by some of the brethren of the church, and on Friday and Saturday the church met and decided on the case of each individual. On the Sabbath following the admission to the church took place, the number being about 35. How many are expected to join the other churches, or how soon, we have not the means of knowing.

In respect to the doctrines held and insisted on by Mr. B. they were such generally as are held by the orthodox churches in New England; for example, the trinity, deity of Christ, total depravity, atonement, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, the eternal purpose of God, the eternity of future retributions – happiness and misery. On some connected points, especially faith and prayer, we suppose we will be found to differ, holding, we believe, that if any prayer (offered) in faith for any one thing, that thing will certainly be granted.

In respect to the feelings with which Mr. B. was heard as a preacher, they have been in different persons and in the same persons. His peculiarities – in illustration, expression, and intonation, have in the same sermon repeatedly, thrown the audience into spasms of suppressed laughter, alternating with emotions more or less intensely serious – the balance of favourable or unfavourable impressions varying, as each made up his mind to be attracted or repelled. On some occasions the impression was uniformly good on the well disposed seeker after truth.

In respect to harmony of feeling between brethren, and between brethren and Mr. Burchard, it was sometimes cordial and sometimes otherwise; indeed so various has been the complexion of the whole scene, as to render it impossible to describe it as a whole. Sometimes a schism was on the point of breaking out between brethren, and sometimes a fissure was ready to gape between brethren and Mr. B. In review, we think the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace has been preserved to a much greater extent than could have been anticipated, either in the outset or at many points in the progress of the meeting.”

New Measures.

As mentioned, this description of the meeting was followed by the editors’ stating which of the measures they objected to, and their reasons why they did not agree with them. Here we will simply state what their objections were, and not offer their reasons, which often were based upon fine theological points in the New England theology of that day.

1. They objected to “the measure of requiring from unrenewed persons a pledge or declaration, like that we have witnessed; and first from the manner in which it was obtained.” They believed that sinners should be asked to repent and turn to Christ immediately, but that the way Burchard had gone about it was inappropriate.
2. They objected to the measure of the “anxious seat” as it was then being used.
3. They objected to admitting people into church membership on such short notice.

These three factors, and the reasons involved, are discussed at some length.³³

However, another article appeared the following week, written by the Rev. J. Tracy, who was then editor of the ***Boston Recorder***, which made plainer and simpler statements about the FIRST of these issues:-

“I think Mr. Burchard’s proceedings contain two great and manifest errors. The first is, that, in his way of demanding submission, but he and his hearers lose sight of Christ, as the foundation of hope. No error, perhaps, is advanced or held, and some true things are said concerning him; but still, the impression made on the sinner’s mind is, that his salvation is suspended on some act or acts of his own, which are demanded of him by a law, to which he must yield obedience; which obedience to law is to be the known reason why he may have hope. What is this, but salvation by works. etc., etc.

The other mistake, I suppose, to be this. The Bible teaches, that sinners ought to repent, to submit, to give their hearts to God, this minute; and it is doubtless the duty of every preacher to urge it upon them. But he takes it for granted, or at least acts as if he took it for granted, that the Bible requires them to tell *him* whether they will now submit. The Bible contains no such command. He has a right, if he is a suitable man, to preach immediate repentance, and to ask them, if he thinks it wise, whether they will repent now; but they have a right to answer him, if they are ready, or to refuse to answer, if they see fit. When he demands that they shall NOW tell HIM what is passing in their hearts, he usurps an authority which does not belong to him, or to any other creature of God.

³³ *Vermont Chronicle*. 7 November, 1834. page 178.

If he asks, and they answer “No,” I understand he tells them, “Then you will go to hell.” Perhaps they will, but what for? Not because they would not tell Mr. Burchard. If at all, they will go to hell for not submitting. In this, I think, he not only usurps authority, but violates Christian courtesy, and even common politeness; and I think no one, penitent or impenitent, could be blamed for treating such demands in any way, in which it is suitable for a Christian gentleman to treat an unauthorized and disrespectful attack. Still, repeat, if the person questioned is perfectly ready to answer, and does it without compulsion, I see no objections.³⁴

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The POSITIVE Reports of His Missions in Vermont

In this section we will consider the available POSITIVE published reports from the Protracted Meetings in which Burchard participated in Vermont in 1834 and 1835.

The first report came from the Baptist Church in Windsor, and was dated 7 March, 1835. It is naturally different from the one prepared by the editors of the *Vermont Chronicle*, which we have just been considering. It was originally published in the *Christian Watchman*, and was republished in the *Religious Intelligencer*.

After much effort, I have concluded that I could not reproduce these reports in the chronological order in which the

³⁴ *Vermont Chronicle*. 14 November, 1834. page 182. (emphasis added.)

missions occurred. I could not discover the correct order. But the Windsor mission was the first one.

WINDSOR, Vermont.

To the Editor of the *Ch. Watchman*.

Dear Brethren, - It is a great pleasure that I communicate to you a brief notice of the work of God in this place.

Soon after my removal here indications became apparent that a work of grace was about to commence. There was an unusual spirit of prayer in the church, and a very serious attention to the word in the congregation. Undoubtedly the faithful preaching which preceded the commencement of my labors here, together with the vigorous exertions of the church, were instrumental in preparing the way of the Lord.

Early in October last, a protracted meeting commenced, which continued with interest twenty days. In this, the different denominations in the village united. The preaching was principally performed by the Rev. Mr. Burchard, whose whole time has been devoted to such meetings, for a number of years. Though I could not conscientiously approve of all the *measures*, which were introduced in this meeting, still I believe that good was accomplished. For a vast amount of scriptural truth was brought to bear upon the consciences of men, and many Christians had a spirit of agonizing prayer for sinners. Therefore, as we might reasonably expect, the spirit of the Lord came down. How many were hopefully converted during the meeting, I am not able to say. When this special effort closed, it was supposed by many, that a reaction would follow, which would speedily terminate the revival. But I am happy to say, that it was far otherwise.

The church, over whose interests I am permitted to watch, began to feel that the continuance of the work, so far as means are concerned, depended on their efforts. Therefore they endeavored

to work as faithfully, as though their exertions alone would convert sinners; and at the same time to depend on the Lord as entirely; as though they had done nothing. And their labors were not in vain in the Lord. Such a winter, I have never before witnessed. Scarcely a day has passed for four months, without increasing the number of joyful converts.

Our meetings for social prayer, and religious inquiry have been peculiarly blessed. While one room has been filled with anxious sinners, and another with praying Christians, the spirit of the Lord has come down with mighty power. Never have I felt so sensibly the need of divine aid, as when witnessing such a scene. Often have I been induced to stand still and see the salvation of God, for it sometimes seemed almost dangerous to speak or move, lest something should be done to hinder the workings of Jehovah.

Thus far, there has been an unusual freedom from mere animal excitement. In addressing the impenitent, the effort has been *first* to convince the *understanding*, and then to make appeals to the *heart*.

Therefore the cases of conviction have generally been characterized by clear views of the holiness, and justice of the divine law, and a great *self-loathing*.

Our baptizing seasons have been very solemn, and I trust profitable. Many received their first impressions while witnessing the administration of this delightful ordinance. Our first baptism was a scene long to be remembered. After an interval of about three years, we were again permitted to visit the water-side. There in the presence of a large and solemn assembly, by the kind assistance of Bro. Tracy of Claremont, thirty-two were buried with Christ by baptism. Among them were found the grand-parent of 77, and the grand-child of 13. We have had frequent baptisms since. The whole number received since November is seventy-nine. Nearly twenty more

have been received as candidates for baptism, and many others are indulging hopes in the Saviour, who will probably soon follow. Not far from fifty have united with the Congregational church, and about thirty with the Episcopalians.

I rejoice to say that the work is still going on. The voice of inquiry is yet heard. Especially in some parts of the town, the prospects are more encouraging than at any former period. The Temperance cause in this place has been greatly strengthened by this revival, thus showing that the cause of Temperance and the cause of Christ are intimately connected.

May this work of God never cease, while there is an unconverted sinner among us.

Yours, &c., Elijah Hutchinson.³⁵

SPRINGFIELD, Vermont.

This report appeared first in the *New England Spectator*, and was reproduced in the *Religious Intelligencer* in two installments.

Narrative of a Revival of Religion in Springfield, Vermont.

The history of the Christian church presents a diversified scene. Light and shade, prosperity and adversity, joy and sorrow, revivals, defections and apostacies, follow each other in quick succession. In the apostolic age, a season of ‘refreshing from the presence of the Lord’ was frequently followed by a terrible persecution; sometimes by alarming instances of apostasy; and generally by declensions more or less gradual. What is true of the great community of Christians, is so, in some degree, of individual churches. Unusual prosperity in a church seems to me now like ‘a handwriting upon the wall,’ or a signal held out from

³⁵ *Religious Intelligencer*. Volume 19. 21 March, 1835. pages 685 – 686.

heaven, 'prepare for trials.' It is therefore with fear and trembling that I proceed to give some account of the recent dealings of God with the church and people under my pastoral care.

Almost a year ago, some of the brethren of this church began to feel an unusual solicitude for a revival of religion. In the spring and summer of this year, we endeavored to 'prepare the way of the Lord,' by special attention to discipline; and while two or three wanderers were reclaimed, several were excluded from the fellowship of the church. The first Sabbath in June, President Bates of Middlebury college, was with us. We had what is called a two days meeting, embracing the Sabbath and following Monday. The principal part of the labor was performed by the president. And these efforts, probably, had their share of influence in securing the glorious results which we have recently witnessed.

Last spring, some of our brethren established a Sabbath morning prayer meeting, and sustained it through the summer and autumn. There were two principal subjects of prayer – the youth, and those unconverted husbands whose wives were members of the church. Of this number, there were nearly fifty. About midsummer, and thence forward, this praying band enjoyed unusual nearness to God and freedom in prayer. For a long time, a female prayer meeting has been sustained. Last summer the meeting became very interesting, and special divine influence was enjoyed. The families of those sisters who have sustained this meeting have been signally blessed. In the judgment of charity, salvation has come in every house. In the course of the summer I preached a series of discourses on the moral law, in connection with the lessons of the Sabbath school. In addition to other labors of love, the cause of temperance was well sustained; and from May, 1833, to May, 1834, there was an addition to the temperance society of two hundred members. In the month of August, our Baptist brethren of North Springfield, held a

protracted meeting of seven or eight days continuance. The meeting was well sustained, and attended, and followed with blessed results. Several of our church and congregation attended and received salutary impressions. As the fruit of that and subsequent Christian effort, about fifty have been added to that church.

In the course of this month, also I exchanged labors with the Rev. Joseph Merrill, of Acworth, N.H. Our united efforts were devoted for a week, first to Springfield, then to Acworth. Each day, we visited from house to house, and at 5 o'clock, P.M., held in some section of the town a religious meeting. These efforts were attended with manifest spiritual advantage to our people.

The population of the town is nearly three thousand. A week or two before the meeting commenced, a very considerable portion of the inhabitants were visited at their houses, and kindly invited to attend. This conciliatory measure had a very happy effect. It was in our heart to offer salvation in the name of the Lord to all Springfield. Thus it will be seen, that, by the blessing of God upon our labors, we had been preparing for our recent meeting at least one year.

We commenced our meeting on Thursday, October 30th, - continued two days, - adjourned over Saturday, - celebrated the Lord's supper on the Sabbath with unusual interest, - admitted three persons into the church, - and adjourned again till Monday evening. On Tuesday evening, November the 4th, Rev. J. Burchard arrived agreeably to previous arrangement, and immediately commenced his labors. The following pastors, Converse, Sage, Merrill, Burnap, Bradford and Graves, were with us for a longer or shorter time, and participated in the services of the meeting with great unanimity. Three Methodist ministers, Bates, Fletcher, and Quimby, were occasionally present, assisted in our labors, and manifested a truly Christian spirit. In the third

week of our convocation, our Methodist brethren held in their church a quarterly meeting, which proved to be a season of deep interest, and in connection with it, we understand there were several hopeful conversions. Thus, simultaneously, all the people of God in town were cheered with the visitations of his love. In our church, the state of feeling was excellent; God had evidently ‘bowed their heart as the heart of one man’ – not one discrepant voice – a most delightful union of prayer and effort. The deacons and elders especially were favored with a fresh anointing from the Holy One. There was no open opposition to the work of God; the impression of the community here, and around us, was manifestly strong in its favor. The fear of God fell upon all the people.

For three weeks, our meetings continued very much in the same form; a meeting for religious inquiry every forenoon, in the afternoon a sermon followed by a meeting for inquiry, and similar exercises in the evening. The fourth week we had preaching every evening, and some meetings in the day time. Most of this time seemed like one continued Sabbath; and the very atmosphere sacred. God was moving onward in the majesty of his love, and from day to day rolling in upon us a sea of glory. The power of the Highest overshadowed us, and the windows of heaven were opened, and we had hardly room to receive the blessings that descended. Though the attention to religion was intense and long continued, there was no disturbance, no outcry of joy or sorrow, no trespass upon the rules of Christian decorum; all was still, solemn, peaceful; there was unusual silence and quietness in the village. Our house of worship, which is large, was filled from day to day, and oftentimes to overflowing. On one Sabbath, it became indispensable for the whole church to retire to another place, to make room for the great multitude convened. People flocked in from all the neighboring towns, some traveling a distance of fifteen miles. They came with the

expectation of finding their Saviour here; and, blessed be God, they did not come in vain. About one hundred and thirty persons from other towns were, while here, the happy subjects of renewing grace. The whole number of hopeful converts, exclusive of children under fourteen years, is, as nearly as we could ascertain, from three hundred and fifty to four hundred. How many of these will appear unto praise and glory in the day when the Lord shall make up his jewels, the decisions of the judgment will tell. After the meeting had been in progress about one week, the number of hopeful conversions for seven days in succession averaged more than thirty a day; and one day there was forty. During the continuance of the meeting, we observed four days of fasting and prayer. On the fourth Sabbath in November, ninety-three were received into the church, and for the first time, sat down at the table of the Lord. On the succeeding Sabbath, forty-five others were admitted to the communion; and on the first Sabbath of December, sixteen more, making in all one hundred and fifty-four, who, we hope will prove to be 'the first fruits unto God and the Lamb,' of this precious revival. We expect further additions: several have been recently examined and accepted by the church, and undoubtedly some of the subjects of this work in town will unite with other Christian denominations.

As the work of grace here narrated, is, for this section of country, extraordinary, it appears proper to say something more of its character and circumstances.

With the exception of one or two days, the weather was uncommonly fine. If we could have had our choice out of every month in the year, we could not possibly have made a better selection.

The meeting in some form continued thirty days. Had the question been discussed beforehand in the church whether we should have a meeting three or four weeks in succession, we should probably have decided at once, that in our circumstances,

it would be neither prudent nor practicable. We commenced the meeting with no previous purpose as to the time of its continuance; intending to hold it as long as the providence of God, and the operations of his Spirit, should seem to dictate. Not only was the meeting unusually well attended by the inhabitants of Springfield, but people flocked in from six or eight of the adjacent towns, and were daily pressing into the kingdom of Christ. Thus situated, it was impossible for the first three weeks to close the meeting, without doing violence to our most solemn convictions of duty.

There is a diversity of opinion regarding early admissions to the church. On this point, we have no definite rule; but suppose that we ought to be guided by the circumstances that attend each application, by the present evidence of piety, or the want of it. The time of supposed conversion, is, in our opinion, of little account; except that great distance of time necessarily invalidates the evidence of piety, because in such a case, the person has lived long in disobedience to God. The operations of the Holy Spirit are exceedingly diversified; of course revivals have different characteristics. Where the Gospel is faithfully preached, the evidence of piety in young converts depends, doubtless, very much upon the *amount* of divine influence enjoyed. A wind which moves a vessel a mile an hour, may be sufficient to carry her into port; but persons on the beach watching her, may at times be in doubt whether she moves or not. Give to that vessel a wind which carries her ten miles an hour, and who can doubt her motion? Many excellent Christians come, we believe, into the kingdom of God by the silent movings of the Holy Spirit; while others enter in by the strong wind of a powerful revival. The early evidences of piety in new born souls, we should expect to be clearer in the latter case, than in the former. The church agreed to celebrate the Lord's Supper on the fourth Sabbath of the month; and we thought it our duty to open

our doors for the admission of members. For two or three days before the Sabbath, the pastor and elders had sessions, at certain hours, for the examination of candidates, and these examinations were conducted with unusual care. We did not receive every applicant; some were requested to wait for further probation. Of the members received, many had been the subjects of special seriousness months and years before; many had been trained up in the Sabbath school and Bible class, and with scarcely an exception, they had been uniformly persons of correct habits and moral deportment. As to the practice of *propounding* for admission into the church, we have no strife with our brethren – in some cases it may be wise; but still we search the scriptures in vain to find an example, or warrant for it, except in the general principle that we should guard the purity of the church. We make no attack and pass no censure upon our respected brethren who may think and act differently from us; and it is possible that we have been premature in the early reception of these dear lambs. We have, however, acted in the fear of God, and under a deep affecting sense of our responsibility. We went directly to the word of God for direction; and to us it is plain, that there is nothing to forbid, and much to encourage the inception of persons into the church, as soon as they give satisfactory evidence that they have been ‘born again.’ In relation to persons just emerging from pagan darkness, or persons grossly ignorant of grossly immoral, considerable time would be requisite to test the reality of their conversion. But the case of intelligent people of good moral character, educated in the Sabbath school, and under the sound of the Gospel, is vastly different. One bright star has recently arisen, and dispelled much of our darkness. The *temperance reformation* has diminished immensely the danger of spurious conversions, and removed some of the principal embarrassments in the way of early admissions into the church. But whatever views we may entertain on this subject, it becomes

us all ‘to watch and pray lest we enter into temptation;’ and to the young soldiers of the Cross in this place, we would say, ‘let not him that putteth on the harness beset as he that putteth it off.’³⁶

SECOND INSTALLMENT

As to the doctrines preached in this revival, we feel perfectly conscious that we stand upon a rock. We have no fear, no wavering. The moral law, comprehending the extent, strictness, and purity of its requisitions, and its tremendous penalty; the entire and exceeding sinfulness of unregenerate men; the divine sovereignty, that God doeth what he will with his own; ‘the election of grace;’ the final perseverance of all true believers in obedience to salvation; and the endless rewards and punishments of the future state, were doctrines fully and fearlessly proclaimed; not generally in set and formal discourses, but in due proportions, and in a manner so plain that they were understood. “Christ and him crucified, God manifest in the flesh, was, in every discourse and in every conversation, exhibited as the sinner’s only hope. If, however, any one truth was more prominent than another it was the doctrine of divine influence, or the necessity of the special operations of the Holy Ghost in order for the conversion of a single soul. We shuddered at the thought of means and measures, and excitement, without special divine influence. During the meeting, we endeavored to give great prominence to the office-work of the Holy Spirit, and this may be one reason why we have been so richly blessed. The free agency and accountability of men was taught, and their dependence upon divine influence urged as a reason for immediate repentance; because if they continued obstinate, the Spirit might make his final departure, and then there could be no hope of salvation. They were taught not to wait for some strange,

³⁶ *Religious Intelligencer*. 14 February, 1835. pages 605 – 607.

unknown impulse – that God would not invade the freedom of the will, nor set aside their agency; that the operations of the Spirit, how powerful soever they may be, are in accordance with the laws of the human mind, and that, therefore, they ought immediately to receive Christ and believe on his name; and in doing this, the Holy Ghost would give them ‘power to become sons of God.’- they would be new creatures. The opinion has been entertained, that in a season of revival, some of these truths, especially divine sovereignty, and the entire dependence of the sinner upon the Holy Spirit for a new heart ought not to be prominently presented. But our experience has taught us, that these truths, judiciously exhibited, instead of hindering, do greatly advance the work of God.

For the information of some of my brethren, I would say something about measures. We wish, in some way, to awaken the careless, to break up the death slumber in which many remain for years even under the sound of the gospel, to bring divine truth to bear upon the understanding and the heart, to animate Christians to vigorous effort in the cause of Christ, to guide inquiring souls, to come into personal friendly contact with men, and as far as possible and on Christian principles, to lead them to an immediate decision on the subject of religion. The best way of doing this is all we want of measures, and to us it is perfectly immaterial whether they be new or old. Most of the time we had three meetings for religious inquiry each day. I took part in every one of these exercises, considering them, in some respects, the most important of all our meetings. The conversations thus had with individuals were plain and faithful, and greatly blessed of God. Inquirers were told repeatedly, that submission to man was in no case demanded, that it constituted no part of their duty. On this point, I think no one could mistake, unless he possessed uncommon obtuseness of intellect. They were also told that repentance for sin, faith in Christ and submission to God, *pressed*

home, brought to bear upon the understanding and the conscience, was ‘mighty through God, to the pulling down of the strongholds’ of sin. No other effort, we believe, was so successful in winning souls to Christ.

Persons professing to have submitted to God, or to have found peace in believing, were not dismissed at once to the world, nor to the church. They were requested to meet us every morning in the inquiry room for further conversation respecting their spiritual state. And, so far as practicable, they attended the morning meeting from day to day, and from week to week. Thus, by personal and familiar discourse and illustration, they acquired an amount of knowledge respecting Christian principles, duties and feelings, and an establishment in the faith and hope of the gospel, which months of instruction in the ordinary way, would hardly have secured to them.

One thing somewhat novel, was the requesting of prayers at the opening of each meeting. This practice has, however, been attended with very salutary effects. The individual preferring the same request from day to day, from meeting to meeting, became himself intensely interested in the subject for whom he requested prayers. These petitions have, we believe, been answered in a multitude of instances. We do not know a single family for whom prayers were perseveringly requested, which has not received a rich spiritual blessing. Many a father is now rejoicing over his son, new born to God; many a mother over her daughter; many a wife over her husband. Jehovah has shown himself the hearer of prayer.

One word about ‘anxious seats,’ as by some infelicity of language they are unfortunately called. It has been said; that they ought to be used, if used at all, ‘as a means of conversion to the convicted, and not as a means of conviction to the awakened.’ It is, however, remarkably plain, that the Spirit of God is not bound by any such rules. Some of our most intelligent young men have

since told us, that when the invitation to take those seats was given, they were conscious of no seriousness; but having decided to go and converse with the ministers, they felt themselves committed in favor of religion; and in some instances immediately, in others gradually, they were convicted of sin. This mode of preaching the gospel to individuals, by personal conversation, has been, I have no doubt, through the gracious co-operation of the Holy Spirit, the means of the conversion of many souls.

Great and successful efforts were made to induce people to attend the meetings for religious inquiry. And each day during the continuance of it, the brethren separated themselves into several little praying circles; the sisters did the same, and the great burden of their prayers was, the conversion of those perishing souls whom we were persuading to be reconciled to God. Thus scores, and sometimes probably hundreds of hearts were ascending to God in supplication at the same time. It is not too much to say, that we felt these prayers. While pointing sinners to the Lamb of God, we sometimes felt ourselves overshadowed with the fearful and glorious presence of Jehovah. Something seemed to whisper, 'be still for God is here.' When we knelt down to pray with inquirers, there was a wrestling with God, a travail in spirit for the birth of souls, and an expectation of immediate answers of peace, which, we believe, we experienced only when 'the Spirit maketh intercession for us.' In their appropriate place, the efforts of the church were as important and successful as the labors of the ministers. So far as human agency was necessary, we consider the preparation made, the blessed state of feeling in the church, the amount of instruction communicated, and the earnest, effectual prayer offered, as fully commensurate with the result. To God be the praise for the *preparation*, the *effort*, and the *result*. His blessing crowned the whole.

To us it appears self-evident, that in building up the kingdom of Christ in this apostate world, in promoting revivals of religion at home, and in sending the gospel abroad to the destitute and to the heathen, *effort* much more *abundant* and *efficient* than heretofore, *must be made*: but that he, who *trusts in measures, new or old*, will be deserted by the Spirit of God.

The subjects of this work have been of all ages, from the hoary head of threescore years and ten, down to the little child of seven or eight. They have generally had clear conviction of sin, varying in duration from a few days to a few weeks; generally the time of conviction has been short, and one reason may be, they were taught that there was no virtue in conviction, while the heart is in rebellion to God. For the most part, the converts are apparently strong and happy: but they have had no wonderful raptures, nor ecstasies of joy. They do not appear assuming nor officious, but humble and affectionate. An unusual number of them are heads of families, male or female. Seventy of them have already united with the church; between thirty and forty family altars have been recently erected; and twenty of our sisters, who two months ago came alone to the Lord's supper, now stand in a new spiritual relation to their companions, and have had the happiness to sit down with them at this Christian feast. A considerable number of influential people have shared in this visitation of mercy.

And we bless God that a large proportion of our young people are now rejoicing in the hope of eternal life. Several young men who are commencing an education are of this number. It is not improbably, that this revival will eventually give to the church some faithful heralds of the cross. We have no expectation that, in the establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom on the earth, our colleges and seminaries are to be set aside; but our prayer is, that 'the Spirit may be poured out from on high'

upon them, and that thus they may be fitted more perfectly to meet the exigencies of the times, the wants of the world.

We should do violence to our feelings, and neglect an evident duty, should we omit to mention in this narrative the children's department. Mrs. Burchard, assisted by the pastor's wife and others, held a meeting once a day for the children fourteen years and younger. These meetings were very interesting to the children, to the Sabbath school teachers, and to mothers and fathers who sometimes attended. This department of Christian effort was evidently smiled upon by that kind and gracious Shepherd, who gathers the lambs in his arms, and carries them in his bosom. A goodly number of these little ones have in the judgment of charity, been 'born again.' The blessing seemed to descend most abundantly, and almost exclusively, upon those who had been instructed in the Sabbath school. Twelve of these children we have received into the church; and others probably give equal evidence of a change of heart. The Lord give us wisdom, that we may know how to deal with these children of the covenant, and of the Sabbath school, these lambs of Christ. These labors of love for the children may tell as much upon the destinies of the world, as our more observable efforts for the salvation of adults. There is a great deal of practical unbelief in the church respecting the early conversion of children. Undoubtedly we ought with deep humility, and fasting and prayer, to examine this subject anew.

This is the ninth protracted meeting that has been holden in town, and the third in this church. Nearly all of these meetings have been successful; nor have we been apprised of one unhappy reaction. These holden in our church, have been the means of great good. The first, in October, 1831, before the present pastor had labored here, was richly blessed; and in the succeeding month, forty-three were received into the church in one day. The second was holden in January 1833. – The revivals connected

with these two meetings were the means of bringing into the church about eighty persons. Thus far they have appeared well as other members. Of the recent meeting we would only say, that we have never seen clearer manifestations of the work of the Holy Spirit.

I here beg permission to depart a little from simple narrative to mention some thoughts which of late have strongly impressed my mind. Formerly the opinion prevailed, that there was nothing for the sinner to do, except to be decently moral; that he must wait for some mighty impulse or influence to overtake him, and make him a Christian in spite of himself; that as salvation is all of grace, God must do everything, and man nothing. The sinner was quieted in his sin perhaps to the ruin of his soul, under the fallacious idea of waiting God's time, while he was living in rebellion against him. Against a notion so monstrous and so fatal, good and talented men lifted the warning voice. They brought forward, clearly and fully, the doctrine of man's agency and accountability; proved unanswerably that he has something to do; that he is made capable of obeying the divine commands, and that for any refusal or delay he deserves the everlasting wrath of God. These truths are not new; but in some sections they had been permitted to fall into disrepute. For bringing them forward into public view and estimation, these brethren deserve our thanks. But we fear that some have dwelt so much and so long upon the agency of man, as not properly to recognize the agency of God, and to leave in the shade the work of the Holy Spirit. This, we believe, is the danger to which some portions of the church are now exposed. We should be happy to learn that our fear is groundless.

One truth has of late impressed my mind more than ever before. It is this; that the Christian dispensation is the dispensation of the Spirit. – When our Saviour was about to leave the world, he promised the disciples another comforter, even the

Spirit of truth, who should abide with them for ever. The comforter, the Holy Ghost, 'reproves the world,' generally speaking, 'of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.' He is called 'the Spirit of promise;' He is the great subject of promise to the Christian church the source and sum of all spiritual blessings. As it respects mediation between God and man, Jesus Christ is all in all; - as it respects regeneration and sanctification, and all pure revivals of religion, though human instrumentality is employed, the Holy Ghost is all in all. We deplore most sincerely, cold and formal and melancholy acknowledgements of dependence, while nothing is attempted, nothing done. And we equally deplore the bringing forward the doctrine of divine sovereignty as an apology for inactivity, and consequent want of success. Such conduct does not honor, but grieves the Holy Spirit. But in avoiding one error, we should be careful not to run into another. Revivals, where the Holy Spirit is not duly acknowledged, humbly relied on, and sought for, must be defective in point of purity, and cannot secure permanent blessings to the church. Much is said and written on the subject of revivals; it is a subject of infinite importance and of extensive relations; but in some respects it may be simplified. To secure them the influences of the Holy Spirit are supremely needed and indispensable. Let a deep and affection sense of our need of divine influence be felt by all the ministers; let it pervade all the churches, seminaries and schools; then would fervent and effectual prayer every where ascend to heaven, and a new era in the history of revivals immediately commence. 'The Spirit poured out from on high,' makes 'the wilderness a fruitful field.' This would settle a multitude of difficult questions; for revivals produced by the Holy Spirit, through the instrumentality of divine truth, would certainly be pure; and men deeply imbued with such a heavenly influence, would not be likely to make serious mistakes. This would give a new and mighty impulse to all the

benevolent operations of the age, and hasten on the conversion of the world. Let all the brethren who are desirous of enjoying revivals of religion, first of all, endeavor to feel suitably their need of the Holy Spirit, and out away from them whatever may grieve him; then use the means which they believe are necessary to promote a revival, in humble dependence on his willing, promised aid; and though now they sow in tears, shortly they will reap in joy.

During our long meeting, brother Burchard performed the greatest part of the ministerial labors, and I deem it a duty which I owe to God, to say that his labors have been greatly blessed. His doctrinal views harmonized with those of the brethren present, and we labored together with great cordiality. While he preached the truth with great plainness and boldness, his manner was conciliatory. He has left us; but he enjoys the confidence and grateful love of the young converts and of the whole church, and has I believe, the kind regards of many others. In his farewell discourse, he made judicious remarks respecting evangelists and settled pastors. The tendency of his labors with us has been to strengthen the hands of the pastor and enlarge the sphere of his usefulness.

It only remains to request the prayers of my beloved brethren in the ministry and other Christian friends for myself and the flock under my care, that we may be humble and thankful, give God all the glory for his marvelous loving kindness, and live answerably to our high and increased obligations.

Daniel O. Morton.

Pastor of the Cong. Church in Springfield, Vt.³⁷

³⁷ *Religious Intelligencer*. 21 February. 1835. pages 618 – 621.

WEATHERSFIELD, Vermont.

Including a History of the Church in Perkinsville.

We are obliged to abridge this interesting narrative, on account of its length. It was sent us in manuscript, through the Post Office, with postage paid 56 cents, - unpaid 79.

Former Revival. Three years ago, the Congregational church in this place was blessed with a special work of the Holy Spirit. During that season of divine refreshing, more than a hundred sinners were hopefully renewed into the image of Christ, and were, by a public profession of their faith, added to our number. Of these, be it spoken in honor of God's abounding mercy, nearly every individual, it is thought, still gives scriptural evidence of Christian character.

State of the Church. The revival to which I refer, continued, without much abatement, for several months. At length, symptoms of declension, that fearful plague of the church, began to be felt and manifested. From about the commencement of the year 1833, to the beginning of October last, the religious state of things here was somewhat gloomy and threatening. Discord between individual brethren, in connection with the general prevalence of stupidity, like a fatal cancer, preyed upon the vital energies of the church. During this period of depression and conflict, however, one encouraging circumstance remained. Some of the brethren felt deeply the crime and hazard in which we were involved, and sighed, and prayed and struggled for the returning light and life.

Protracted Meeting. After setting apart, and observing seasons for humiliation and prayer; visiting most of the families of the brethren, and praying with them, it was proposed that the

neighborhood clergy and churches should be invited in to our aid. Accordingly, a protracted meeting was appointed here, to commence on the 14th of October, and continue indefinitely, as circumstances might dictate. This series of religious meetings was continued eight days, and was evidently attended with the special presence and benediction of the great head of the church. A number of our brethren in the ministry kindly afforded their labors. Divine truth was presented to a listening audience, from day to day, in a very plain and powerful manner. Christian professors, some of the first days, were particularly addressed, and not without good effect. The Holy Spirit through the word, breathed upon the dry bones. Indications of spiritual life became visible. Most of the brethren waking from their slumbers, manifested something of the spirit of prayer. Sinners were now made the object of special attention. Their native character and condition were faithfully described, and placed before them. They were urged to immediate repentance and submission to God, while the Saviour was held up to them as their only and all-sufficient refuge and hope. Numbers became anxious, and before the meeting closed, eight or ten apparently submitted their hearts to Christ, and expressed hope in the pardoning mercy of God.

Perkinsville. It may not be improper here to observe, that at Perkinsville, situated on the Black River, in the west part of the town, are established two woolen manufactories, now in successful operation, which in connection with a constant stream of mechanics, bring in a frequent change, and somewhat rapid growth of population. A house for public worship was erected there a few years since, in which is preaching most of the time on the Sabbath, by different orders who own and alternately occupy the house. And notwithstanding that village shared in most of the religious revivals formerly enjoyed in this town, and was noticed for the correctness of its moral habits and its attachment to

religious institutions, within a few years past, owing probably to a combination of causes, its moral aspect has been painfully reversed. Vice and hurtful error have been gaining an ascendancy over the influence of Christian principle and gospel order. Grieved and alarmed at this, Christians in Weathersfield, and individuals abroad, who have had their eye upon the growing importance of the place, felt the expediency of united Christian effort – in dependence upon divine aid, to drive back from that village the powers of darkness, and bring down upon the population the invigorating light and transforming influence of the Holy Spirit, in a revival of religion. Nothing short of securing this blessing, it was justly thought, could meet the exigencies of the place – give a truly sound and virtuous character to the regulations by which its interests are to be sustained, or sanctify to the best purposes the daily increasing influence which it exerts upon the surrounding community.

Protracted Meeting There. Under these impressions, deepened by what they saw at the first protracted meeting here in the center, and afterwards at Springfield, where a shower of divine mercy was so abundantly vouchsafed upon so many belonging in and out of that place, the friends of truth in the west part of this town, upon whom special responsibility rested, being encouraged in their object by some of the neighboring ministers and their brethren, gave out an appointment for a series of religious meetings to commence in Perkinsville, on Thursday, the 26th of November.

Morning Meetings for Inquiry and Prayer. A room for inquiry was opened on Tuesday morning at 10 o'clock, at which hour, and to which place, the anxious were invited, and all others who were willing to be prayed for, and conversed with, upon the subject of their immortal interest. This room was large,-

generally filled,- some days crowded with sinners most of whom were deeply anxious to obtain salvation. Some, who through the importunity of Christian friends came in careless, received impressions here which terminated in their hopeful conversion to Christ. While the ministers of the gospel were laboring with sinners in the room of inquiry Christian professors embodied themselves in the house of God for prayer and exhortation. There assembled, like the disciples at Jerusalem, all in one accord, in one place, with uplifted hands and hearts, and with strong faith, they supplicated, at the mercy seat, the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the ministers, and all in the anxious room, whom they were instructing and attempting to lead to the Lamb of God. They felt deeply the importance of obtaining this blessing. The ambassadors of the Lord themselves, I trust felt the necessity of it, knowing they could do nothing effectually, unless the spirit of grace should breathe into their hearts the prayer of faith, and give effect to those efforts. They felt an awful sense of their responsibility, and yet of their deficiency. Soon after this morning inquiry meeting was attended a new impulse was given to the work. An increase of spirit of prayer became visible, both in Christian ministers and professors. The former, for whom the Church was now engaged in offering up their intercessions in the house of God, entered upon their labors in the inquiring room with more ardor of love for the salvation of souls. The prevalence of prayer began to be manifested in a very conspicuous manner. The number of the anxious increased rapidly. Open opposition to the revival became less imposing in its appearance, and in some instances was observed to give way to the force of truth.

The number of credible conversions in that village and the immediate vicinity, is reckoned at seventy.

Church Formed. Our brethren and friends in the west part of the town, separated from us by long and tedious hills, many of them having no means of conveyance to the center, their number continually increasing, had for more than a year, contemplated the formation of a district branch of our church in Perkinsville, with particular reference to their local accommodation. And although it was foreseen that this object, carried into effect, would of course take from us a number of valued members, there appeared to be a ready and full concurrence in the proposal; and I believe entire harmony upon the subject among all the brethren still exists. It now became a question, whether the object above mentioned should be attended to at the close of that meeting, or deferred to some future time. After ascertaining the wishes of the brethren especially concerned, the pastors present, after having sought direction of Zion's God at the mercy seat, were united in the opinion that duty required us to go forward, and immediately attend to the proposal of our brethren. A meeting accordingly was appointed, to be holden in the village, on Monday evening, December 6th, at which were requested to be present brethren of different orders, all recent converts in that section, and others who had formerly cherished hopes, and a committee from our church. At this meeting, it was proposed that those present who felt it to be their duty to join any church, should give their names to the denomination with which they wished to unite. Thirty-one, twenty-seven of whom are fruits of the present revival, gave their names to join the Congregational church, or rather to be formed into a distinct branch, eight received baptism, after which the whole entered into a solemn covenant with God and one another, - a beloved brother of good report was set apart by prayer and the imposition of hands, to the responsible office of deacon in that infant flock of God, who were then commended through faith and fervent supplication. To the watchful care and continued benediction of the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls. The Rev.

Mr. Morxon, of Springfield, assisted on that interesting occasion, since which, nine have been added to the Congregational church, five of whom received baptism, and fourteen to the Methodists. The Baptists in North Springfield, we understand, are about to organize in that village a branch of their church. The Methodists had previously a class meeting there. Thus, in the thriving village of Perkinsville, three Christian denominations have measurably established themselves, each of which have more or less shared in this present revival. How important it is that, they should combine their exertions and influence in the common cause of truth upon gospel principles, reciprocate the kindest feelings, and make it evident to all, that they have more of the distinguishing spirit of their divine Saviour, than of the soul-killing spirit of the world.

Weathersfield. It was now thought expedient to remove the meeting from Perkinsville to Weathersfield center. It may to some appear injudicious to repeat so soon, in the same place, a protracted meeting. As a general principle, it undoubtedly is so; but there are cases in which it may become a duty. Such, it is believed, was the case of this church, in relation to the arrangement in question, as subsequent results seem strongly to indicate. It was thought to be a very favourable time in this place for Christian effort in behalf of *all*; especially in behalf of that class of sinners who had long remained unreclaimed under the ordinary means. The cloud of mercy which rested over the valley, from which descended such a life-giving refreshing shower, was now perceived by the eye of faith, spreading and moving forward in solemn majesty. Our church had been reproved and deeply affected for her backsliding. – We had felt some searching of heart, and I trust, by the spirit of God, we had been humbled to repentance, and thus prepared, in some measure, to seek still greater blessings in the further use of extra means.

We had solemnly and publicly pledged ourselves, by the grace of God, to rise to a higher and better state of feeling, and a more holy practice,- that we should quit our idolatrous hold of earth, and live for God and for the souls of the perishing. We were struggling to redeem the pledge.

Protracted Meeting. With these views and impressions, our last protracted meeting commenced here in the center of this town, on Tuesday afternoon, 8th of December, and closed on the 17th. On the first day, few except church members attended. Mr. Birchard (sic) addressed the audience. The observations which he offered went to show the deep and solemn obligations upon Christian ministers and churches, especially in relation to the appropriate means for a revival of religion. We felt justly and seasonably reproved,- were sensible that we had attempted more than we had effected, in respect to the state of feeling and action required of us,- that we must enter still deeper into the work of self-examination,- give our hearts up to God more entirely,- feel more of his presence, and be more wholly absorbed in divine and eternal realities. And I believe, if ever Christians here mourned over their secret sins and wrestled for a blessing, they did so at this time.

Nearly the same exercises and arrangements were adopted here as in Perkinsville. The assembly on Wednesday was large. Before sermon, the church, most of whom were present, came forward into the aisles, confessed their sins before God and their fellow men, and were made a subject of prayer. The occasion was solemn and heart-moving. The audience seemed to say by the solemnity and interest which were manifested in nearly every countenance, *reality* and *importance* are involved in this movement. The church, and I believe many others, felt as though a mighty obstacle was removed out of the way. God seemed to sanction this measure. During these exercises, the Holy Spirit

came down in rich effusions. The chariot wheels of salvation began to move forward more rapidly. Cases of conviction and conversion became frequent and numerous, sinners crowded into the inquiring room and anxious seats, and from twelve to fifteen daily were hopefully born of God.

Additions to the Church. During this continued meeting in the center, one hundred and fifteen professed to give their hearts up to Christ, and to obtain hopes of eternal life through his merits. Adding to which number, seventy reckoned at Perkinsville, the amount is one hundred and eighty-five, - the aggregate number of hopeful conversions in this town during the meetings in question. Of the one hundred and eighty-five one hundred and eighty have joined churches, of which, *seventy-one are heads of families*, and ninety-one received baptism. Additions to this church were as follows: December 14th, 1834; fifty, thirty-four of whom were baptized; December 18th, thirty-nine were admitted, thirty baptized; January 4th, 1835, twelve were admitted, seven baptized.

Expectations and Results. Thus God has once more displayed the riches of his mercy towards this people in a wonderful degree and manner. It was thought and said, when this last protracted meeting on these hills was in contemplation that our limits were restricted, and the ground had been so much pre-occupied, but little could be expected to be done. Numbers, however, through faith and prayer, extended their views further upon the subject, - believed and expected greater things. And God seems to be saying now to his believing, praying people here, 'be it unto thee according to thy faith.' Let them remember who is the author and finisher of their faith, and to whom belongs the praise.

Instead of a few gleanings, we have been permitted to reap a plentiful harvest. A great and happy change has been

effected in the moral and religious condition and prospects of those portions of this town which have shared in this revival, especially the Congregational church and society in the center. And it seems to be the heartfelt language of all who have participated in this work, that it is not by human power or might that this glorious change has been wrought, but by the spirit of the living God.

Immediate Admissions to the Church. In admitting members to the church, we have deviated somewhat from the general practice. The custom of requiring candidates to stand propounded a number of weeks or months, after being examined and approved by the church, has no warrant from the Bible. We have no proof that the apostles knew any such practice. They admitted persons immediately after hopeful conversion. – See Acts, chapters 2, 10, 16.

That they were not infallible in distinguishing between genuine and spurious conversion seems evident, because they sometimes admitted the unsound. The truth is, God never designed his church, in this respect, should be directed by such miracle, but by such knowledge and motives as result from a proper regard for the gospel. We feel warranted in the practice of early admissions by apostolic usage, which we consider to be applicable to us in this particular at the present day. – This practice, however, we are prepared to adopt as a general principle, not in every individual case. Where sufficient previous instruction has not been acquired, or scriptural evidence is not obtained, or a professed purpose to abandon previous sinful habits needs to be further tried; in these and similar cases, delay becomes necessary. But what good reason for delay can be adduced, when the church have faithfully examined, and are satisfied. But is said, it is impossible to obtain evidence of conversion in so short a time, and while sinners are under so

much excitement. Did the apostles think so? Would Christian ministers and professors drink deeper of the spirit of Christ, and be faithful in looking up and applying to young converts the scriptural evidence of genuine conversion, they would not find it necessary to be six months or one month in making up their judgment, whether they manifest any degree of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Much disaster to the church has grown out of the intrusion of the unsanctified within her sacred inclosures. But the great inlet of this evil has been not early careless admissions. It is when churches sleep, that the enemy sows tares among them. Much effort was used here to instruct the recent converts in the discriminating points of Christian experience, and to ascertain by repeated and close examination, their real character and motives previously to their connecting themselves with the church. And, after all, in more or less cases, we may have erred in judgment. Time will decide.

Mr. Birchard. The exertions of Rev. Mr. Birchard (sic) here in these protracted meetings, claim respectful mention, and our cordial approbation. A great share of the public services was performed by him. His labors were blessed; God put his seal upon them by attending them with a copious effusion of the Holy Spirit.

Measures. As to new and old measures, we feel no particular interest in the excitement occasioned by the injudicious use of these terms. Let Christian ministers and churches draw all their instruction from the pure fountain of divine inspiration, and let them be careful so to believe, and preach, and pray, and live, as will tend most to raise the standard of Christian piety, break up the death slumbers of perishing sinners, and lead all immediately to feel and act for God, and for the interests of immortality.

The revival here still continues. Christians are vigorous and active; meetings are interesting, and conversions frequent. The cause of God prospers. The borders of Zion are enlarged. Let God have all the glory.

James Converse.

Pastor of the church in Weathersfield, Vt.

Weathersfield, Feb. 26th, 1835.³⁸

GRAFTON, Vermont.

Brother Richards, - Permit me, through the medium of your paper, to publish a short account of a recent work of grace among my people. The church in this place, though small, has generally been very harmonious in sentiment and action. But a little more than two years ago, the question came up in relation to the erection of a new house of worship. The members of the church and society were divided in respect to its location. This division produced a very unhappy and alarming state of things. We appeared at one time to be on the brink of ruin as a church and society. But there were some among us, who put their trust in the Lord and prayed for the peace of Jerusalem. They expected deliverance for Zion; but they knew not how it would come. While the clouds of darkness and doubt were thus hanging over us, He who sits above, and manages all human affairs, and who loves Zion far better than the most devoted Christian, had determined not to give his heritage to reproach; and was even then on his way to repair the breach, build up his cause, and bless his people.

The result of the division was, that one part of the church and society built a new meeting house, and the other thoroughly

³⁸ *Religious Intelligencer*. Volume 19. 28 March, 1835. pages 698 – 701.

repaired the old one in connexion with other religious denominations. The time came, when the new house was to be dedicated, and it was thought advisable in connexion with the dedication, to hold a protracted season of worship. This meeting was held in the month of September last, and was continued eight days. Neighbouring brethren in the ministry by invitation came and assisted. A principal effort in this meeting was to restore peace and harmony to the church. This effort was crowned with the divine blessing. Most, if not all, of the members were led to feel that the cause of religion and the salvation of souls, was far more valuable than party prejudices and local prepossessions. And feeling thus, they were led to mutual confession and forgiveness; and to unite their prayers and efforts for the upbuilding of the cause of God. The meeting was a very pleasant, happy and useful meeting. The Spirit of Peace was truly in the midst of us, not only restoring peace to the church, but also reconciling sinners unto God through the blood of the everlasting covenant. There were during the meeting several hopeful conversions, and the exercises left a very salutary impression upon the people generally. From that time there appeared to be an unusual spirit of prayer among the people of God, and an earnest expectation of greater things still to come. Much anxiety was manifested by Christians for their impenitent friends and neighbours - especially was this the case with many of the sisters of the church, whose companions were living without God in the world. This was the state of things during the autumn. It was expected that the old house, which was undergoing repairs, at this time, would be ready to be occupied about the first of January. Of course as we had held a protracted meeting in the new house, we must hold one too in the other. Accordingly one was appointed to commence the last week in December, - and the Rev. J. Burchard, who was then labouring in Springfield, was invited to be present and assist in the exercises.

This being known, it excited very general attention. And the ten thousand reports and stories, which were afloat concerning the *man*, induced every body to wish to see and hear for themselves. It was evident from the operation of things, that there was great alarm in the camp of Satan. Such a systematic effort of lying could not be put forth without the agency of the father of lies. There was to be heard the hum of preparation, as though on the eve of battle. On the one side there was the restlessness, and bustle, and agitation, as is always the case when men are dissatisfied with themselves; and seek relief from this unpleasant feeling by finding fault with every body and every thing. Men in public places would rage and rave against ministers, and Christians, and meetings, and then go home, as they afterwards confessed, to spend a sleepless night in horrible forebodings. On the other side there was the voice of humble, holy, reverential prayer, becoming more deep-felt and earnest every hour.

Our meeting commenced several days before Mr. Burchard arrived. During this time Christians were made sensible that they had been placing too much dependence on an arm of flesh, and were led to humble themselves before God and look to him alone. Mr. B. arrived on Friday. Saturday the meeting was well attended and solemn, as it had been before. Sabbath the house was filled to overflowing, and sinners were bowing under the mighty influences of the Spirit of God. A deep and awful solemnity filled the place. The congregation appeared as though they felt that eternity was opening to their view, and many, it is believed, found the sanctuary to be the very gate of Heaven. From this time the work seemed to go on with increased power for ten or twelve days. God's Spirit is represented as descending like the showers that water the earth. This effusion was like one of those mighty showers which happen in mid-summer. The whole face of nature seems renewed in a few hours, and continues to brighten after the shower is past. Many

came from neighbouring towns and shared in the rich grace which was shed upon this people. As the apparent result of this meeting, 250 professed to submit to God. An addition of 117 has at this time and since been made to the church. There are several more who design making a public profession. Many family altars have been erected, and many households have joy and peace, and seem to be walking in the statutes of the Lord. About one half of the professed submissions were of persons from other towns, many of whom have united with the churches.

We had, during the meeting, several days of fasting and prayer, and three communion seasons, all of which seemed to be blessed. It is now more than six months since the meeting closed; and the more I have seen of the results, the more I am satisfied that it was a genuine work of the Holy Spirit, and the greater appears to be the duty of this church to express their gratitude to God by being more devoted to his cause and service.

The instructions of Mrs. Burchard produced a very happy, and we hope in many instances, saving impression upon the minds of the children who were under her care. All the glory belongeth unto God, who worketh and none can hinder him.

M. B. Bradford. Grafton, August 6, 1835.³⁹

WOODSTOCK, Vermont.

This report was first published in the *Vermont Chronicle*, and was later reproduced in the *Religious Intelligencer*. It was in Woodstock that Burchard first met Russell Streeter.

Narrative of a Revival of Religion at Woodstock, Vermont.

“There is joy,” said the Savior, “in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth.”

³⁹ *Vermont Chronicle*. Thursday, 20 August, 1835. pages 133 – 134.

Surely, then, if on earth there be a scene above all others, to which the eye of the Christian or the gaze of the celestial spirits will be turned with an intensity of interest, it is that of a church just returning from the field of labor, bearing her golden sheaves and shouting her harvest home. This, God, who is rich in mercy, has permitted us to witness. And now, for the glory of his name, the honor of the Great Head of the church, and the encouragement of his saints, we are bound to make known his deeds among the people, and talk of all his wondrous works.

Before entering, however, upon a narrative of recent interesting occurrences among us, it will be proper to sketch briefly the history of this church during the last three years. In the autumn of 1831, a protracted meeting commenced in this place under very favorable auspices, and in its progress was owned and blessed by the Great Head of the church. The people though destitute of a settled pastor, had, for several months previous, enjoyed the faithful labors of the Rev. Rufus A. Putnam, now of Chichester, N.H. And, under God, to his many prayers and unwearied exertions chiefly, they owe the happy results of that meeting. Near its close, the writer, according to previous invitation, visited the place as a candidate for settlement, and entered with trembling into this whitened field of labor. In January, 1832 he was ordained pastor of the Congregational church and society. The good work which had commenced with the protracted services of the autumn previous, continued to progress with varied degrees of interest and power.

Through the whole of the ensuing year the Son of Peace abode with us; the spirit of grace and supplication remained in the hearts of the church. The evening conference and prayer meetings, as also the weekly meeting for inquiry, were well attended. Every week, with scarcely an exception, new cases of conviction and conversion were brought to notice, and not a communion season passed without the addition of such we trust

as shall be saved to the church of the Redeemer. The whole number of persons admitted to the church by profession during the year ending September, 1832, was 56.

Encouraged by these circumstances, the church voted to hold a second protracted meeting, which was accordingly commenced precisely one year from the first. It was not, however, as richly blessed. Still, the results were good, and the number of hopeful conversions amounted to about 20.

A few months passed on, and the delightful harmony which had hitherto prevailed in the church, gave way to unhappy jealousies, followed at length by the more open manifestation of an unbrotherly feeling, that soon marred the peace and prosperity of our Israel. Formal votes and disciplinary measures could not perfectly restore that heaven-born charity "which suffereth long, and is kind." The removal of one difficulty but gave place to another, and trouble after trouble followed in quick succession, like the hurrying messengers of the tried patriarch. Thus it continued with us for more than a year. But early in the last summer the Spirit of God was manifestly present, arousing here and there a Christian brother or a beloved sister to an unusual engagedness in prayer. These holy influences increased and spread among us, and the hopes of those who had still remembered Zion in all her afflictions, and wept and prayed for her in secret places, were greatly revived.

It was in consequences of appearances so favorable, that, after some consultation with a few of the brethren, the pastor appointed a protracted evening prayer meeting, as preparatory, should providence and the results of the meeting so direct, to other more public protracted services. It was well attended, and continued for nearly three weeks without interruption. It resulted, we believe, in much good. The spirit of prevalent wrestling prayer in the church was greatly increased, and several of the brethren and sisters from that time until the dear hour when

the blessing came, went day and night with their hearts heavy within them.

Nearly at the same time an interesting boy, the only son of his mother, and she a widow, was removed from life under circumstances peculiarly painful. The effect of this strange dispensation upon the young companions and play-mates of the deceased was obviously beneficial, solemnizing the mind and disposing them to listen with a deep interest to the warnings and invitations of the gospel. At the Sabbath school concert in November, I addressed the children present on the duty of daily secret prayer, and related in connection an incident an anecdote illustrating the benefits of *social* prayer. These remarks deeply interested them at the time, and several of the boys agreed among themselves to commence immediately a social prayer meeting, which was accordingly done. Between 20 and 30 usually met from week to week at the house of some brother in the church. Cheered by these indications of awakened interest among the children, I publicly requested all the boys, who were willing to meet me for the purpose of prayer and religious conversation, to come to my house upon an appointed evening. This I continued to do from time to time. The attendance at each successive interview continually increased, and at the last, but a short time previous to the protracted meeting, more than sixty boys were present. Some of them were deeply convinced of sin by the Holy Ghost, while a few indulged a trembling hope in the only Saviour, and are now members of the church. These meetings will not, I trust, be soon forgotten. They were always marked with a deep solemnity, a fixed and almost breathless attention,, and a peculiar tenderness of feeling. At times, while addressing them upon the claims of God's law; their character in his sight, and the all-sufficiency and worth of the Saviour, for the moment I could not proceed, overcome with my own emotions, and interrupted by the expressions of feeling on the part of my little

auditors. We wept together. One of our meetings closed with the judgment hymn – “O there will be mourning...” sung by the children with an evident effect on their young hearts. We parted in silence and in tears. As I closed the door after them, my heart breathed a prayer over these dear children, that in the last great day, they may be counted among the jewels, that shall ever adorn the brow of our Redeemer.

About the middle of November the church voted to hold a protracted meeting, and to invite the Rev. J. Burchard to conduct it, under the superintendence of the pastor. In the mean time the spirit of grace and supplication, which during the summer and autumn had been peculiarly marked among us, was greatly increased. How often was I told by some dear brother or sister of the church – “Sir, I never knew before what is meant by agony in prayer. I could not sleep the last night. I could do nothing but weep and pray, and pray and weep, all the night long, for the church and for sinners.” We felt, indeed, that the crisis for our beloved Zion was at hand, and every day the conviction became more deep and irresistible, that unless God should speedily appear in his mercy, to build us up, judgments more awful than any we had yet experienced must befall us. This it was, that nerved the soul of many a dear brother and sister to a more intense feeling, and a wrestling agony in prayer.

About eight weeks before the protracted meeting, a committee of twelve were appointed to visit every member of the church, but especially for the purpose of bringing together those who were known to cherish towards each other unkindness of feeling, in the hope, that by prayer and conversation with them, every existing difficulty might be removed. At the same time we commenced the observing of a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer, once a week. Immediately the manifestations of Jehovah’s presence and blessing increased upon us. By the breath of the Almighty was one trouble after another swept

entirely away, and the whole host of God's elect prepared to move onward in the good work with harmony and energy of action. So mighty had the blessed Spirit prevailed in this long-troubled church.

Under these favorable auspices, our protracted meeting commenced, Feb. 10th. The *first* day God was there. We felt it. Prejudices were in a good degree removed, and the way more perfectly prepared for an abundant blessing. The work went on in each succeeding day with increasing majesty and power. The meetings were well sustained, crowded to the last. On Sunday, March 8th, we closed the holy convocation. Five months have now passed since its close, and we still say *the results are very precious*. There has been nothing like reaction. Peace is within our borders, and He, who loveth Zion, remembers us still to bless us.

The revival pervaded, in a marked degree, the higher and middle ranks of society. Men of wealth, talents and influence have bowed to the holy supremacy of Immanuel, God with us. Very few of the converts with whom I am acquainted, have experienced anything like the *rapture* of pardon. The general characteristics of the work upon their hearts have been, rather clear and just apprehensions of sin, their enormity and ill-desert, accompanied by great self-loathing on its account. Another peculiarity is a readiness to work for Christ, with a feeling that now they are not their own, but His, who has bought them with his precious blood. Never, never may this truth be forgotten by them.

As another result of this revival, I cannot forbear noticing the unusual degree of harmony and co-operation among different evangelical denominations in this place. The hearts of Christians have been knit together. They have prayed and labored as one, and God has blessed them as one. *Hundreds* have professed submission to Christ. Of these nearly two hundred belong to

adjacent towns. One hundred and sixteen have been received into the Congregational church in this place, by profession; about fifty, if I am informed correctly, into the Episcopal church, and others have connected themselves with the Methodists. More remain to be gathered into the fold.

In connection with what has been said, respecting the result of the protracted meeting, a passing notice is due to the labors of Mrs. Burchard in the department of children. A large number of these little ones under her especial charge, received instruction from day to day suited to their infantile capacities, which will not, we trust, be soon forgotten, but continue to bring forth fruit after the endeared instructress shall have rested from her labors. Had no other benefit resulted from her efforts, the feeling awakened in behalf of this interesting portion of our community, and the exertions for their best welfare, to which they have aroused *mothers*, especially, would surely form no unimportant item in the amount of good effected. But this is not all. There are children here – and a goodly number – who, we cannot doubt, have consecrated the dew of their youths to the blessed Saviour. The artless story of what God has wrought for them, as told in the simplicity of childhood, and the development of their feelings in confidence to their most intimate friends, will draw tears from the eye of that Christian who has imbibed, in any measure, the spirit of Him who taketh the lambs in his arms and folded them in his bosom. Some of them look forward with increasing interest to the work of the ministry, and may yet be found treading in the footsteps of Parsons, and of Fisk, planting the banner of the gospel in “the land where the patriarchs rest, and where the bones of the prophets are laid.”

The doctrines preached during the protracted meeting, were in substance those which I had learned in my childhood at the feet of the lamented Payson, and which in later years have

been confirmed by the illustrations and arguments of my revered instructors at the school of Andover.

The Divine sovereignty, Jehovah's eternal purpose in the salvation of the soul, the sinner's guilt, his wretched and lost condition, his voluntary and continued disobedience of the righteous law of God, and as the first consequence thereof, his exposure while in a state of impenitence and unbelief, to "everlasting destruction from the presence of God and the glory of His power;" the free and gracious atonement wrought out by the vicarious sufferings of the Lamb of God; His eternal deity, and his prevalent intercessions with the Father; the only terms of reconciliation and pardon, viz. repentance towards God, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the unconditional surrender of the heart at the foot of the cross – these all were repeatedly, earnestly and powerfully, brought home to the hearts and consciences of sinners, and blessed to the salvation of many. But more prominently, if that were possible, than all the rest, and in the fore-ground of the harmonious picture, was placed the godhead of "the eternal Spirit, third person of the adorable Trinity;" the absolute necessity of his gracious influences in the conviction and conversion of the sinner, and the consequent dependence of both saint and sinner upon his mighty arm. Never have I felt more deeply my own insignificance, and the nothingness of the creature, as an instrument in the salvation of souls. The infinite fullness of the Godhead and the office-work of the blessed Spirit arose to an importance never realized before. And like a drop melting away on the bosom of the waters, *self* was lost in God, the great All in All.

Through the mighty working of the good Spirit, scenes interesting beyond description were daily witnessed in the house of God during the continuance of the protracted services. But more than all, at the inquiry meeting, to which the fore-noon of each day was exclusively devoted, the presence and power of

God were made manifest in a wonderful degree. That room, and the interesting scenes witnessed there, will never be forgotten. Hereafter, on the plains of Paradise, it will be remembered with exceeding joy as the birth-place of immortal souls. There was no undue excitement, no outbreking of highly wrought feeling – nothing, save now and then the unbidden tear stealing down the cheek, the stifled sob, the suppressed sighing of a heart bowed and broken under its mighty burden. Usually a stillness deep and awful pervaded the room, as if the angel of retribution were there, spreading the scroll of his past life before the sinner. And there were seasons, when nothing it seemed could be said or done, but to wait and see the salvation of our God. The place was made dreadful with his immediate presence, and in some measure we realized the feelings of Moses, when, standing on the burning mount before the great “I AM,” pavillioned in the clouds, he exclaimed, “I exceedingly fear and quake.”

The measures introduced during the meeting were in some particulars *novel*, and in their first effect *startling*; and yet, when better understood, commending themselves to the good man’s heart and conscience, from their consonance with sound philosophy and the word of God, and from the powerful and beneficial results produced. They were never attended with any great excitement. I have been permitted to witness revivals of greater, and others of less power; but not, equally important in its results, accompanied with less apparent animal feeling. A similar remark was made by several of my brethren.

One of the more prominent and most successful measures was the practice of presenting verbal and written requests for prayer, in the public assembly, and in the inquiry room. The effect, in the first place, upon those who asked, was greatly beneficial – tending at every repetition of their requests, to increase the interest already felt for the beloved objects of their solicitude – especially as all were requested to accompany prayer

with action; to see and converse with their friends, if near, - if distant, to write them. But this is not the only happy result. Very many requests were presented, and many gracious answers returned.

Prayer indeed has wrought wonders here. But we have much yet to learn of its prevalent power with God – its *omnipotence*, I had almost said. How little is there of that strong and persevering faith, that, planting itself on the rock of God's eternal promise, settles there with the determination not to let the Angel of the covenant go, until he bless us. There is much, far too much, of criminal, practical unbelief in the church of God, that will not take him at his word. And although he has said that, more cheerfully than ever parent gave the bread of life to his hungering children, He will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him – yet we are slow of heart to believe, that what the Eternal, the immutable One has said, he will do. Did we trust our Father in heaven, and rely upon his unfailing promise with the same confidence we cherish towards our fellow men, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath the heart of man conceived, the great and glorious things, that would be, not *spoken* merely, but *done*, also, for our beloved Zion.

I have said that the measures introduced in the progress of the meeting, were in some particulars *novel*. Indulge me in one or two remarks on this point.

I would not be understood as the advocate of everything new under the sun; yet now, in this boasted age of moral and intellectual improvement, it is quite too late to write down *Novelty* as a sufficient and unanswerable objection to the advances of science and Christianity. Religion itself is indeed eternal as the throne of its God. But the mere *circumstantials* of religion, the mode of its presentation, to the mind, and the means by which it may be made to bear, with all its holy energy, upon the heart and conscience of the sinner, are questions of

expediency, in regard to which men may, and do, honestly differ. But is it not obvious that a new spirit must be breathing into the heart of the church, a new energy infused, new and more efficient methods adopted, if ever the glorious things God hath spoken of Zion, shall be fully accomplished. How comparatively powerless the gospel is now! How far from producing the results which characterized the Apostolic ministry. Why the difference? They depended no less than we, on the promised aid of the Holy Spirit. They *felt* their dependence *more*. They better understood the prevalent power of prayer with God. They better knew the luxury of self-denying effort for their Master's sake. And counting all things but dross in comparison with the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, their Lord – to Jews they became as Jews, to the Greeks as Greeks, that by all means they might save some. Let the church but rise to the fervor of apostolic panting, and the energy of apostolic action, and the question will no longer be – are the measures new, or are they old? But will they promote the glory of God – the honor of His Son Jesus Christ, and the salvation of immortal souls? Nay, the church will be on the alert to discover new and more successful means of presenting the truth, and bringing about the great and desired result – the world's conversion.

Long ago, I verily believe, had this spirit but lived and burned in the hearts of Christians, had the church of the Redeemer more closely followed in the footsteps of Him whose meat and drink it was to do His Father's will – the world would have been supplied with the ministry of reconciliation, and filled with the light of the knowledge of his truth. Long ago would the chains, which have bound our earth in the thralldom of sin and Satan, have been broken, and the shout of her ransomed sons and daughters, like the voice of many waters, have reached the ear, and shaken the throne of the Eternal. But alas! It is not so. And

instead of this, the coldness, the apathy, and the selfishness of Christians, have caused already the ruin of unnumbered millions.

O! Why is it thus? When shall the Levites, who bear the vessels of the Lord, and they who minister at the altar, glow more and more with the spirit of apostles and martyrs. When shall we have done with unhallowed contentions about men and measures, and by harmonious energetic action, seek to accomplish the work, which our Father has given us to do? God speed the day, when “the watchmen on the walls of Zion shall see eye to eye;” heart shall be knit to its fellow heart; “they shall lift up the voice together shall they sing, for the Lord hath comforted His people, He hath redeemed Jerusalem.”

ROBERT SOUTHGATE.⁴⁰

(Pastor, Woodstock Congregational Church.)

NORWICH, Vermont.

Feeling, as we do, that it is not only an imperious duty, but a precious privilege, at stated seasons, to recount and make known the dealings of God with us, not only as individuals, but associate bodies: we propose to give a brief statement of the revival connected with our late protracted meeting.

Previous to January, 1835, very little signs of spiritual life appeared in either church. They were much like the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel’s vision, exceeding dry. Now and then, indeed, a ray of light seemed to streak the horizon, but it suddenly vanished and left a more awful impression of the surrounding darkness.

⁴⁰ *Vermont Chronicle*. 13 August, 1835. page 130.

See also *Religious Intelligencer*. Volume 20. 5 September, 1835. pages 218 – 221.

About the first of February, some of the members became somewhat aroused. Nothing, however, marked in this character appeared, save that the two churches, for several weeks in succession, observed weekly a season for confession, fasting and prayer. These meetings, under God, were blessed, in fixing the minds of brethren on the extent of their desolations till they began, in some measure, to see their situation, feel their distress, and weep over it. At this period, March 12th, Rev. Jedediah Burchard, at the solicitations of both churches, arrived and commenced a series of religious meetings, in conjunction with the beloved pastor of the north church, and other brethren in the ministry from the adjacent towns.

From this period to the close of his labours, on the 29th of March, and for some time afterwards, the members of both churches manifested, more or less, the spirit of their Lord and Master, in earnest and persevering prayer and self-denying labour for the glory of God and the salvation of sinners. The result was such as may always be expected with certainty, from the sure word of prophecy: "As soon as Zion travailed she brought forth her children." Many were pricked in the heart and brought to inquire, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" The Holy Ghost was in our midst in great power; and through his blessing alone on the means used, a multitude "dead in trespasses and sins" were made alive in Christ Jesus.

The number of those who professed submission to the Lord Jesus Christ, all circumstances considered, was very large. We are not to suppose, however, that all who professed submission did, in sincerity, give up their hearts to Christ; and after making all reasonable allowances, there were, in the judgment of charity, about 200 conversions to God. Nearly one half of this number were from 10 or 12 adjacent towns. Of those in Norwich hopefully born of the Spirit, 70 have united with the

churches, among whom are 20 heads of families, including females.

The doctrines preached were those which are cordially embraced by all our churches; viz., The entire depravity of the heart, the immediate obligation of the sinner to “repent and believe the gospel,” the necessity of being born again of the Holy Ghost, the eternal Deity of Christ, a final judgment, a future state of rewards and punishments, and the perseverance of the saints. Peculiar prominence, throughout the meeting, was given to the office work of the Holy Ghost in the conviction and conversion of sinners. Again and again were we told of our entire and absolute dependence on the operations of the Holy Spirit, for the least possible good result; and then exhorted fervently and effectually to pray for these operations in mighty power. And thanks be to God, he has not only inspired but answered our prayers, and granted us most abundant blessings; so that we are ready to exclaim, “What hath God wrought?” and to say with the Psalmist, “O sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory.” – “The Lord hath made known his salvation;” and again, “This is the Lord’s doings; it is marvellous in our eyes.”

For some time previous to the meeting, our church had been without a pastor, and had become quite inefficient, both as to physical and moral effort. Upon this church in particular, and we believe it is equally true of the other, the influence of this meeting has been most salutary. Never before has the church been better united, or put forth more energy in support of a preached gospel and other means of grace. In conclusion we would say, that while we would place our entire dependence on the arm of the Almighty and not on man, we can but feel that, under God, we owe much to the indefatigable labours of the Rev. Mr. Burchard and his wife, in their several distinct departments;

that we view them peculiarly qualified of God for usefulness in the vineyard of their Lord and Master; and, though absent from us in body, they will not cease to be remembered in our aspirations to the throne of grace.

Signed and published by vote of the South Church.
J. Burton, Mod. & Clerk. Norwich, July 16, 1835.⁴¹

MONTPELIER, Vermont.

Narrative of a Revival of Religion in Montpelier, Vt., during the Protracted Meeting held in May and June, 1835.

The First Congregational Church in Montpelier was organised in 1808, with 17 members; since which we have enjoyed the ministry and ordinances of Christianity in almost uninterrupted succession. We have been visited by a special work of the Spirit in 1810, '16, '17, '26, '27, and in 1832. During the eight years last past the additions have been less than the removals by emigration and death; so that the church has numbered about 170 resident members, although at some previous periods its members were over 200.

A second Congregational Church was organized in February, 1835, with twelve members chiefly from the first church, by agreement of all parties.

The present protracted meeting, held by the united request of both churches, and here briefly described, was commenced May 12, 1835, by a sermon in the evening from the **Rev. Jedediah Burchard**. This evangelist had been previously solicited to visit Montpelier at some time in the progress of his

⁴¹ *Vermont Chronicle*. 23 July, 1835. page 118.

labours. The providence of God opened the way for him sooner than was expected, so that our people had notice of it only about forty-eight hours before his arrival in town. Circumstances truly discouraging attended the first week of the meeting, such as pressure of the planting interest, incessant rains for several days, and probably most of all by the unexpected commencement of the meeting, Christians were not prepared, in general, to devote their time and their souls according to the measure of its importance. Still the preaching was honoured by the presence of the Holy Spirit near the beginning, for after the second day the number of converts increased daily. Christians acknowledged and embraced the manifestations of the Divine presence, and sustained the measures introduced, and confidence in the course pursued and in the truths preached, rapidly gained strength. Thus situated, the prospects of the second week were eminently encouraging. Christians entered promptly and ardently into the labours of prayer and visiting. The young converts, with their hearty co-operation, stepped into the ranks among the older soldiers of the cross. These efforts spread conviction deeper and broader among the impenitent, and the work of conversion progressed with great power. The Holy Spirit was indeed come down, convicting the unreflecting of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. The third week the work progressed with augmented power. The activity of the churches and converts became more systematic and animated, and the meeting house and inquiry room were crowded, including many from the neighbouring towns. The whole population were unquestionably moved by the presence of the Most High. We were forcibly reminded of the prophecy, "In the latter days, saith God, the Sun of Righteousness shall arise," and "I will pour out my Spirit." During the first three weeks about 350 professed to give their hearts to God in unconditional submission. During the first twelve days of June the work continued, though with diminished power.

The meeting continued thirty-four days in its original form, viz., in the forenoon, a meeting of religious instruction to inquiring sinners and also to young converts; sermons in the afternoon and evening, succeeded by an invitation to all who had no objection to be prayed for or who wished or were willing for personal conversation and instruction to come forward and take the front and side seats. Three or four of the last of these days were chiefly employed in illustrations of doctrinal and practical Christianity; also the week following was principally devoted to the same object, by giving illustrations peculiarly adapted to all capacities.

The meeting closed at the end of forty-one days, and the attendance and interest were sustained to the last. Between 400 and 500 profess submission to God, and half of whom reside in the town of Montpelier, and the others are from no less than twenty different towns, from three to fifty miles distant. This work of grace is already extending to several neighbouring towns, through the influence, as we believe, of the young converts returning with hearts renewed, and warmed by the love of Jesus Christ. That these germs of a work of grace, universal in the State of Vermont, may not perish in the blossom, but ripen into the fruits of eternal life, is the theme of many fervent prayers.

The preaching was mostly performed by the Rev. J. Burchard, but the ministers in the vicinity and several from a distance rendered valuable assistance in different stages of the work, for which we return our affectionate and grateful acknowledgements.

No doctrines new or uncommon in the churches of Vermont, were the instruments of success in this blessed meeting. By a peculiar power of illustration, the old and familiar truths received a resurrection and stood up, an exceeding great *army of truths*, before the mental vision of the attentive audience, and each truth had a tongue given, which said to some sinner, "*Thou*

art the man,” and many responded, “I am a sinner, what shall I do to be saved?”

The doctrines most frequently and forcibly illustrated, *were human depravity and accountability – the eternal Deity of Jesus Christ – the sovereignty and eternal purposes of Jehovah – a judgment of eternal rewards and punishments – the final perseverance of the saints – the power of every human being to do his duty – and the immediate submission to Jesus Christ the first and greatest of all duties – but the necessity of being born again by the special power of the Holy Spirit, without which all prayer and all preaching is vain, and without which there is no regeneration and no salvation, was pre-eminently the doctrine preached first, last, and midst, in the pulpit, and in the inquiry room.*

The meeting has been sustained throughout with less excitement of animal feeling, than any general revival which we have before witnessed. A cool head and a broken heart, a tender conscience and a firm purpose to obey God, have been the prominent characteristics of the work. The subjects of the work are from all ranks in society and of all ages. About 160 of the converts have united with the churches, nearly all of whom are within the circle of the societies. We hope and believe others will also come forward and unite.

The labours of Mrs. Burchard in her department of instruction to mothers and children, are worthy of particular notice. Some of the children who daily attended these instructions are hopeful subjects of this blessed work. The Holy Spirit operated with the truths on their understandings and hearts, and made them willing in the day of his power to give themselves to their blessed Saviour, who has said, “Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not.” Mrs. Burchard’s meetings for mothers and teachers, were instrumental, through the blessing of God, to deepen the interest and give efficacy to the efforts for

the immediate conversion of the children within the covenant, and in the Sabbath Schools. Truly the hearts of many fathers and mothers have been turned to the children, and the hearts of children to the fathers. A Maternal Association has been formed, which promises to be a valuable auxiliary in the churches.

We are happy to inform our sister churches in Vermont, and others to whom this information may come, that rarely in the history of our churches has any effort for Christ, in this place, resulted more harmoniously, or more firmly cemented the affections of the whole body. So far from being calculated to disturb the heavenly relationship between the watchmen and the sheep and lambs of Christ's flock, we believe our churches were never better prepared to sustain a devoted minister with heart and hand, to esteem the servant highly for the sake of his blessed Master and for his own work's sake, to sympathize in his arduous responsibilities, and to hold up his hands. Mutual esteem and harmony exist between the two churches, and may these be preserved as the apple of the eye.

We feel it a duty as well as a privilege, to render a public tribute of thanksgiving to God our Saviour for this glorious display of his grace, effected by the energy of the eternal Spirit. The extent of the blessing we do not know. Time will in some degree show, but the light of eternity will fully disclose it.

We have pleasure in expressing our approbation of the labours of Rev. J. Burchard among us, whom God hath used as a prominent instrument in carrying forward his work. He, as also Mrs. Burchard, leave us with the undissembled love of the churches and converts, attended by our earnest prayers that God will give them health and strength, and crown their future labours with his abundant blessings.

Signed and published by vote of the Churches.
Jeduthan Loomis, Clerk of the first Church.

C. L. Knapp, Clerk of the Free Church.⁴²

ROYALTON, Vermont.

Messrs. Editors, - I have thought it my duty to publish a brief notice of what God has done for this church the season past, for his own glory and for the encouragement of the friends of Zion.

The Congregational church in Royalton has been often blessed with seasons of special revival. A shower of spiritual blessings has recently fallen upon it by which many hearts have been made glad. In 1831 there was a general revival in town. From Sept., 1831 to Sept., 1832, 93 were added to the church by profession. During the last winter, many of the members became sensible that they were in a state of spiritual lethargy, and were evidently moved by the Holy Spirit to awake from their slumbers. The reviving influences of the Spirit were enjoyed in some of the neighbouring churches, and a large portion of this church began to feel the necessity of "preparing the way of the Lord." Lectures and conferences were more fully attended, and some impenitent sinners manifested anxiety about their spiritual interests. In February the church resolved to make preparations for a protracted meeting. A day of fasting and prayer was appointed, which was observed weekly most of the time till the protracted meeting commenced. Neighbourhood and family prayer meetings were also appointed, and many of these meetings were seasons of deep and solemn interest. A large committee, appointed by the church, visited nearly every family in town, a measure which was evidently productive of great good. Much effort was made to purify the church. Gospel discipline was revived, some erring members were reclaimed, and some

⁴² *Vermont Chronicle*. Thursday, 16 July, 1835. pages 113 – 114.

excommunicated. Meetings of all kinds were full and solemn, and during the spring some embraced the hope of heaven through the blood of Christ, and commenced the song of salvation.

A protracted meeting commenced on the 23rd of June, when by previous invitation of the church, Rev. J. Burchard arrived, and in concert with the Pastor, pursued the measures usually introduced by him in similar meetings. He did most of the public *preaching*, but was essentially aided by the counsel and cheerful co-operation of the neighbouring clergymen. In no instance did he introduce any measure in opposition to the views of the Pastor and the church. He invariably consulted them, and the ministering brethren when present, in regard to the whole operation.

At the very commencement of the meeting, there was an evident display of the power of divine truth. The house was full and awfully solemn. On the second day of the meeting the inquiry room, (a large room in the Academy,) was nearly filled, and 27 professed submission to God. The meeting continued 21 days, during the first ten of which, more than 200 professed to give their hearts to the Saviour. The whole number of professed submissions was more than 250 adults, about half of whom were from other towns. None were reckoned as converts or Christians, who merely *professed* submission to God, yet nearly all who professed thus to do, give satisfactory evidence that they have been born of the Holy Spirit.

During the continuance of the meeting, the audience was large, and at times the concourse of people was so immense, that it was impossible for all to get into the meeting-house; yet there was a remarkable stillness, and not the least accident is known to have occurred. No doubt many were present who were altogether opposed to the measures adopted and the doctrines preached; yet nothing worth the name of opposition was manifested, from the commencement to the close of the meeting.

Those who were mere spectators, generally were respectful and gentlemanly in their deportment. Deep solemnity pervaded the great mass of mind present, and the general sentiment was, "God's power is here displayed." Christians prayed in the Holy Ghost, and many who had been long hardened in rebellion against God, were brought to cry out, in the language of the humble publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

The sinner's guilt and duty, the claims of God's law, the plan of salvation by Christ, our entire dependence on the blood of atonement, free moral agency and divine sovereignty, the eternal Deity of Christ, and all the leading doctrines of the reformation were constantly and clearly exhibited. The absolute necessity of regeneration by the special power of the Holy Spirit, without which all human effort, all means, all preaching and praying are utterly vain, was urged first, midst and last, in the pulpit and in the inquiry room. There was no effort to excite mere animal feeling; every appeal was mainly to the judgment and conscience, and it may truly be said that there was no *excitement*, in the usual acceptance of that term. It seemed impossible for an individual to misunderstand the nature of the transactions in which he was engaged; every possible effort was made to prevent self-deception. Those who professed to give their hearts to God, generally seemed to understand clearly that they were making a covenant with the invisible omniscient Jehovah, and that their vows were to have a solemn bearing upon their eternal destiny. This was what God wrought through an instrumentality of his own appointment, and to him be all the glory.

Mrs. Burchard's labours with mothers and children were greatly blessed of God. Many mothers were brought to feel as they never did before, the dread responsibility of their relation, to exercise stronger faith in the promises of a *covenant-keeping God*. Some awaked as from a dream, and began to labour for the conversion of their children, believing that, under God, it

depended on them whether their children, while yet very young, should become the subjects of renewing grace, and many dear children, we trust, are seemingly converted, and long will they cherish a grateful remembrance of that *friend*, who was instrumental in leading them to the blessed Saviour.

In respect to the general results of those efforts, 105 have been added to the Congregational church by profession. Among this number is the oldest man in town, (90,) two others about 80, several in middle life, 22 male and 18 female heads of families, six teachers of district schools, and most of the young people who attend upon the ministrations of the gospel. The youth of the Academy shared in the blessing, and probably five or six who have recently united with the church, will eventually become preachers of the everlasting gospel. Others it is expected will soon unite with the church, while some, it is to be feared, will wait for another revival, or for the summons of death to awaken them to a sense of their duty. There have been some hopeful conversions since the protracted meeting closed, the church were never more harmonious, never loved one another and the cause of Christ more fervently, and never seemed more highly to value the importance of the settled ministry. When assembled together we are forcibly reminded of the beautiful exclamation, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

The blessed influence of this revival has been felt in other towns in the vicinity, in some of which God is now displaying the triumphs of his grace.

In conclusion, I cannot forbear remarking that were Christians to enter cordially into the work of God, willing to adopt any means consistent with the word of God, and which are manifestly blest in the conversion of men, without giving preference either to old or new measures, any farther than is seen in them an adaptation to accomplish the great end of the gospel

ministry, the light of truth, and the millennial glory of the church would doubtless spread more rapidly over the world, and the moral darkness which now covers a great portion of the earth would quickly flee away. President Edwards said, "We live in those latter days, wherein we may be specially warranted to expect that things will be accomplished concerning which it will be said *who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things?* When will the world be converted to Christ by the present progress of the spiritual warfare? Will the devil give up his strongholds without a desperate struggle? May the Great Head of the Church unite all Christians in harmonious, untiring efforts, consistent with his truth, for the promotion of his glory, the salvation of this lost world. In behalf of the church,

A. C. Washburn, Pastor.
Royalton, 26th September, 1835.⁴³

SHOREHAM, Vermont.

God, in the plenitude of his mercy, has recently poured the blessings of his Spirit upon the people of this place. In the hope that a statement of some of the most interesting circumstances of this work of God may excite other churches to labour and pray for similar blessings, I send you the following account.

Before entering upon my narrative, permit me to refer briefly to the state of religion here for a few years past. The present pastor commenced his labours in this place in October, 1833. For more than two years previous to this, the church has been destitute of a settled pastor. They had not for a long time

⁴³ *Vermont Chronicle*. 1st October, 1835. page 158.

been favoured with a general revival of religion. The state of piety was very low. The church had diminished in numbers nearly 100 by deaths and removals. Many had gone out from us to people the regions of the West. When I came here the church appeared to be very much discouraged. Nothing specially worthy of mention occurred until last winter and spring, when appearances began to be more favourable. During this time several who had indulged hopes in former years were revived and united themselves with the church, and there were a few cases of hopeful conversion. In the summer, however, it was apparent that the spirit of piety began to decline. There was manifestly but little fervent prayer for the conversion of sinners. This state of things continued until about the 1st of October, when our Consociation met at New Haven [Vermont]. From the narratives there given, it appeared that during the year, with a single exception, the churches had fallen into a deplorable state of lukewarmness and inactivity. The dark prospects hanging over us appeared deeply to affect the hearts of ministers and delegates present. Two evenings of our session were spent wholly in prayer and conversation relative to what should be done to revive religion among us.

In view of our declensions, the Consociation resolved to hold in all our churches what in this region have been called circular conferences. Our plan was to have all the ministers attend, with a considerable number of lay delegates from each church. These meetings were holden every week, spending one whole day and evening in one town, and moving the next day to a neighbouring society to attend a similar meeting. This plan brought all our ministers, and a considerable portion of the members of our churches, into action, and the effect was evidently salutary.

Our first meeting of this kind was held in Shoreham early in October, in which it was evident that God was present with

ministers and people. These meetings continued to increase in interest as they were holden successively in Weybridge, Bridport, Cornwall, New Haven, and Middlebury. They seemed to be preparing the way for a revival of God's work in these churches, when Rev. J. Burchard came to this place and commenced a protracted meeting on Tuesday, the 27th of October last. On Thursday of the same week we held our first meeting of inquiry, and though few were present, it was evident that the Spirit of God was there. It was not however until Saturday that the whole church appeared to be humbled deeply for their sins, and took hold of the work in earnest.

God then appeared in our midst in the majesty of his power and grace, and sinners were seen daily bowing to the supremacy of Jesus Christ. While many Christians and ministers in the churches around were praying for us, and many of them participating with us in the labours of this joyful revival, the work went on until the 11th of November, when on account of a pressing call for Mr. Burchard's services at Middlebury the meeting was brought to a close, having been continued sixteen days. During this favoured season 200 persons professed to submit their hearts to God, about 70 of whom reside in other towns. Had the meeting continued another week, doubtless this number would have been considerably increased. Since the commencement of this work 95 members have been added to this church, some have united with other churches, and others will probably soon make a profession.

One thing worthy of notice in this work is, that with a very few exceptions, those who have been in the habit of attending public worship with us, have been made the hopeful subjects of grace. Our meeting likewise brought out many to attend on these extraordinary means, who have not heretofore been constant attendants at the house of God. Those who were

with us daily from its commencement to its close, are now for the most part rejoicing in hope.

The means used were similar to those employed by Mr. Burchard in other places, and of which full accounts have been given to the public. The measures in many respects were *new* to Christians in this region, and on this account *startling* to some at first; but when their novelty had passed away, and the church had learned their design and come fully into them, they were eminently blessed of God.

A general and most interesting moral change has been wrought in my congregation. In preaching, I have now, with a few exceptions, to address an assembly of Christians. Much interest was felt for our choir of singers. During our meeting, united prayer was several times offered on their behalf. For a few Sabbaths past I trust that they have all lifted up their hearts as well as voices in the songs of Zion. In our supplications, our Roman Catholic population were not forgotten. Several of them, we believe, now worship God in spirit and in truth. From the success attending our feeble efforts in their behalf, we are greatly encouraged to labour for the conversion of this class of people.

There is at present a good degree of engagedness in the church. A delightful harmony prevails; such a union has not existed among us for many years. Had not a sinner been converted, the elevated tone of feeling and the energy of action in the church would abundantly repay us for all the labour which has been performed, and all the time which has been spent in this meeting. Since its close we have re-organized our Sabbath school with more than twice the number of scholars we ever had in it before. A greater interest in the benevolent objects of the day has been excited. Our collection which we have just taken up for foreign missions, amounts to double the sum which we raised last year. Of the appearance of the converts in this revival, it may perhaps be premature to say much at present. Before they

emerged into hope, they did not appear in general to have so deep and overwhelming a sense of sin as many whom I have seen in other revivals. This difference perhaps may be attributed in part to the clearness of the instructions given in relation to the way of salvation, and the manner in which immediate submission was urged upon the sinner. While sinners were exhorted now to give their hearts to God, and Christians were praying for them, they seemed to be brought into the kingdom, without that prolonged struggle, and that deep anguish, which were often experienced when the soundness of a sinner's conversion was judged by the degree of distress and agony previously suffered. This difference may be accounted for on the ground of their yielding the controversy with God so soon. Notwithstanding this difference, the converts appear now to have a deep sense of their own sinfulness, and so far as I am able to judge, bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and are going deeper into experience of divine things. While they appear to be sufficiently meditative and studious to know the will of God, they are likewise *active* in doing his will.

One of the great excellencies of our meeting was that more than half of the preaching was addressed directly to Christians; and no small portion of the instructions given were adapted to form an elevated Christian character. Foremost among the doctrines held forth was that of dependence upon the Eternal Spirit, not to make the sinner *able* but to make him *willing* in the day of God's power. In all that we did, we endeavoured to go first to God for help. Every second day was observed by us as a day of fasting and prayer, till near the close of our meeting. And it is difficult to contemplate that on one day, while we were fasting and praying, two large churches at a distance, separated from us by mountains, and without any previous arrangement as to the day, were doing the same on our behalf, all bowing down before the eternal throne for the descent

of the Spirit of God in Shoreham. No sooner had this free-will offering been made, and the incense of our united prayers ascended on high, than the blessings of heaven came down upon us in richer profusion than ever before.

On the next day – 35 persons professed to have given their hearts to God; a day richer in blessings to this people than any they had ever before seen.

In connexion with dependence upon God, which we placed first, midst, and last, we held out prominently the scripture doctrine of immediate repentance, and we endeavoured so to shape our measures as to carry out this doctrine into practice. We came to the sinner saying, Be ye now reconciled to God. Will you now give your heart to him? And God we believe was with us pressing his own claim, and many we trust felt to acknowledge it, saying, I do give my soul away to him forever.

Whatever danger there may be apprehended from such a measure, there is none we think to be feared in an atmosphere of prayer. Out of that atmosphere, no measures can avail anything. They are not unfrequently instruments which turn against those who use them.

Our object was not to make the sinner say I submit, and then to set him down as certainly converted; (for we considered no one so, without further evidence;) but to bring God's claims upon him in such a way that he could evade them no longer; so as to break up that "indecision and determination not to act" which cleave like a second nature to those who are dead in trespasses and sins. Every minister conversant with revivals, finds his greatest obstacle to success in the indecision of the sinner; in his determination not to move, unless compelled by an irresistible influence. This it was our object to remove by calling upon him to say what he would do. If we judged correctly, no means under God have proved so effectual. When we come to the sinner and say to him, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve," he is

brought to a stand. Thus did Baxter, who brought the gospel to bear with such mighty power upon whole masses of society. We learn his practice from what he says: “Strive to bring all your exhortations to an issue. – If you reprove a sin, cease not till the sinner *promises* you to leave it and the occasion of it.. If you are exhorting to a duty, urge for a *promise* to set upon it *presently*.”

When we consider the number of our congregation, which has never been large, and our location, which is not favourable to the convening of great assemblies, and when we take into the account the opposing influences with which we have to contend, we regard this as a great and glorious work. Ministers and churches have considered this as a very unpromising field for labour. It was not expected by them that much could be done here. But God has been with us, and has gloriously triumphed over the powers of darkness. It was a favourable circumstance that before our meeting commenced there was a kind of revival atmosphere surrounding many of our towns; a spirit excited by the circular conferences, to which allusion has already been made. It gave us the benefit of the prayers, sympathies, and labours, of Christians and ministers in the vicinity. The work has not been confined to this place, but is extending on every side. In connexion with the meeting here, and the one in Middlebury, which followed it, it is supposed that in nine or ten towns, including those named, as many as six hundred souls have passed from death unto life within seven or eight weeks past.

Before closing this communication, permit me to say that Mrs. Burchard’s labours among the ladies and children were highly appreciated, and that the benefit derived from her instructions will not be soon forgotten.

Josiah F. Goodhue.
Shoreham, 16 December, 1835.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ *Vermont Chronicle*. 31 December, 1835. page 210.

HINESBURGH, Vermont. Written 4 June, 1836.

Messrs. Editors, - Please publish the following, and you will oblige those who are interested in the revivals of true religion.

It is now some more than nine months since it became evident that there were special tokens of the Divine presence in this place. For a year previous to this, there had been nothing worthy of particular notice in the state of religion among us. In the spring of 1835, a weekly meeting was appointed for the special benefit of young Christians. This meeting was well attended and soon assumed a very interesting character. The Holy Spirit was with us, apparently, from the commencement. We could truly say, at every meeting, "Lord, it is good of us to be here." Frequently, when together, we devoted a considerable portion of the time to prayer for specific objects – requests being often made and renewed. This was evidently happy in its influence, inasmuch as it was obviously the means of exciting more interest in prayer, and of calling forth more especial efforts in relation to these objects. It was interesting to notice that a spirit of Christian love, of watchfulness, of prayer and faith, was gradually increasing from week to week. Some time in the month of August, there began to be some seriousness among the impenitent. A young man (student at the Academy) was hopefully converted. This circumstance awakened the interest of a few of the older members of the Church. They began to exclaim, with tears, "The Lord is in this place, and we knew it not" They betook themselves to prayer – began to meet in little circles for prayer; and here was the commencement of a more general interest. The impenitent began to attend these meetings, and very soon they became crowded and solemn. A spirit of enquiry on the subject of religion was generally excited,

especially among the youth. We continued to meet, from evening to evening, for a number of weeks, and during this time some fifteen were hopefully converted, several of whom united with the church, and have given pleasing evidence since, that they were truly born of the Spirit. In the midst of this revival, when, to human view, prospects were flattering for an extensive work, the pastor of the church was taken sick and confined for eight weeks. This providence seemed to divert the attention of the people. The meetings for the most Part were suspended – and before he became able to labour again efficiently at all, it was apparent that the revival was far on the decline. There was still remaining, however, a state of feeling among some of the members of the church, which was encouraging. This continued, and with some, I believe, increased. I mention this here, to show that there was a degree of preparation among the people of God for the more glorious and extensive outpouring of the Spirit which we have been permitted more recently to witness – a very brief narrative of which I will now give.

On the 14th of January last, we commenced a protracted meeting, the church having been for some time previous fully of the opinion that the state of things among us called for some special efforts for the conversion of sinners. Our meeting continued two weeks. We were favoured with the labours of the Rev. Jedediah Burchard, who had been invited, by vote of the church, to co-operate with the pastor in conducting the meeting. The Rev. Dr. Bates, also, being at Hinesburgh to attend a Literary Convention, was invited to remain and assist in the meeting. He spent several days with us, and rendered the most valuable assistance. Several other clergymen were occasionally present and took part in the exercises. The meeting, on the whole – though for a few days unhappily interrupted, was one of great interest. From the commencement the congregation was unusually large; and while there was little of animal excitement,

there was yet, very early in the meeting, a deep and solemn interest awakened in view of truth. The plain, pungent and practical manner in which the truth was preached, had a peculiar tendency to arrest and fix the attention and produce conviction. God was manifestly present by His Spirit to honour his word, to quicken the graces of his people, and to incline the sinner to yield obedience to the truth. During the meeting, a large number, in the judgment of charity, were truly converted to Christ. Many of these were cases of special interest, exhibiting in a conspicuous manner the grace of God. In visiting several families of late, and conversing with them, I could but exclaim, How blessed and glorious the change! Where there was no voice of prayer heard; where the Sabbath, God's word and name, were profaned, and the interests of the soul trifled with, there is now a manifest reverence for God, and a delight in His worship. The Bible is consulted, the morning and evening sacrifice is offered, and there is a prominent care for the soul.

From among the subjects of the revival, sixty-one, during the meeting and since, have been received into our church. Several have united with the Baptist and Methodist churches. These new members, as a body, give good evidence of piety – and so far as we can ascertain, this is true of those who were hopefully converted at our meeting from other towns. To God be all the praise for what He hath wrought by his Spirit in the midst of us; and while we rejoice in the numbers who have been brought to bow to the scepter of his mercy, we have great occasion, also, to be grateful to God, in view of the happy influence of the meeting on the church. May the Spirit continue with us – may the great Head of the Church guide us to do his will, and permit us – unworthy as we are – to enjoy other seasons of like interest.

I would say in closing, that we cannot do justice to our feelings without expressing our cordial approbation of the labors

of Mrs. Burchard among the ladies and children during the meeting. A great and manifest blessing was the result of her efforts.

By vote of the Church,
Brainerd Kent, Pastor.⁴⁵

This report from Hinesburgh was the last one to be published in the *Vermont Chronicle*. This one, and the one from Williston, perhaps reflect the more antagonistic attitude that the editors of the *Chronicle* were taking to Burchard at this later stage. It had been prepared months after the mission had finished, as had also the Williston report, below. The Williston report seems to argue with the editors in order to justify its place in the paper, instead of being banished as a report about something the editors were no longer interested in.

WILLISTON, Vermont.

Messrs. Richards and Tracy:

Brethren, - You will oblige some of your subscribers, and the friends of religion in this region, by publishing in the *Chronicle* the following account of a revival of religion in this town.

Since the manifestation of God in the flesh, has there been any fact, *can* there any, of such interest in the church, as the manifestation of God by the spirit; when he appears to convert sinners and to advance his people in holiness. These two great truths are the foundation and hope of the church. And should they not be regarded with similar interest by all? They stand conspicuous in the revelation which God has made to man. If the

⁴⁵ *Vermont Chronicle*. 16 June, 1836. page 94.

former was an exhibition of the perfections of God to the view of intelligence, *so* is the **latter**. If the former brought the highest glory to God and good to men, so does the latter. If the former will be a theme of wonder and praise eternally in heaven, so will the latter. If Christ the atonement, is the chief corner stone – the foundation of the spiritual house – it is by the power of the eternal Spirit that the superstructure is erected – that the Temple of the Lord is completed. And when we know *how* the church should welcome the **one**, *then* we know how we should be affected by the **other**.

What, like this, brings the scenes and interests of immortality to the view of all; and compels even the enemies of the cross to acknowledge the reality and to feel the claims of the religion of the Bible? Is there, indeed, any dispensation, which should so awaken the gratitude, break the hearts, strengthen the faith, kindle the zeal, and arouse the energies of the disciples of Christ, as such a blessed visitation from God. If there is a general joy among the high and lofty intelligences of heaven, when **one** poor sinner here repents, *how* ought the church on earth to feel in view of the same occurrence? and how ought the church in **Vermont** to feel when God by the effusions of the Spirit is bringing sinners to repentance in great numbers, and daily adding to the church such as shall be saved. Should not the voice of joy and gladness, the voice of thanksgiving and melody, be heard from the habitations of the godly, on the occasions of the saving operations of Divine power on the hearts on the lost children of Adam? Is it not due, too, to the cause of religion generally, and to the honour of our Lord and Saviour, to report the works of the Spirit of God, whenever these seasons of refreshing are enjoyed, that the world may be admonished, and the friends of the Redeemer rejoice together, thank God, and take courage? Such considerations induce me to send to you for publication this communication.

During the former part of the last year, there was more than usual of the spirit of prevailing prayer apparent, among the people of God; and we were led to make some special efforts to win sinners to Christ; and in the event, rejoiced over the hopeful conversions of about thirty souls within the bounds of our own congregation. From that time to its commencement, we anticipated the meeting the fruits of which I am now to record. In the mean time, some efforts were made to set the house of God in order. The influence of the spirit was felt more and more, bestirring the church to this great work; and although our state was by no means what it ought to have been, yet it was such as encouraged us to expect the blessing of God on our anticipated efforts for the conversion of souls. For some weeks previous to the meeting the aspect of our society was materially changed. Our assemblies were unusually solemn. The loudness and violence of opposition was in a good degree suppressed. The Divine presence seemed to rest down upon us, and the minds of many to be awed by it, and more favourably inclined towards the means of grace. The Lord appeared, indeed, to be drawing nearer and nearer to us for good.

Our meeting commenced Dec. 29, 1835 under the directions of the Pastor and the Rev. Jedediah Burchard. It continued during two weeks – was one of *very great interest* – exceedingly rich, and refreshing to the Christian heart. No occurrence particularly annoyed its progress. There was great unity of Spirit and of effort; and although our congregation is not generally large, we hope as many as one hundred and fifty souls were truly converted to God. *How surprising* and yet how *glorious the change*. But for the importunity with which the blessing had been sought, we could scarcely have credited our senses. We are even constrained to cry what hath God wrought? And what is worthy of particular notice, more than one half were

heads of families. Thus is wrested from the opposers of revivals, their favourite objection: that it is chiefly the minds of youth which are the subjects of this professedly spiritual renovation; they being a mere easy prey to the devices and cunning craftiness of designing men. Eighty of these hopeful converts, we have received into our church. And although the attention to the subject of religion is not now as general as it was, yet the good spirit of our God is with us still; a portion of our meetings are truly spiritual and profitable.

Religious inquiry has been awakened widely in towns about us, where there have been no protracted meetings, and the whole region has appeared as one field, ripe for harvest. The hopeful converts, as a body, appear well. They seem to be humble, and devoted.

The influence of the meeting on the church, is a great increase in spirituality, promptness in duty, and Christian zeal. The influence in the community, we believe to be salutary, and there is a conviction favourable to the claims of religion more extensive than before the meeting. We feel that God has wrought a great work for us, whereof we are glad. To his Name be *all* the praise, and *all* the glory.

We speak of this, as the work of God, with great confidence and assurance; and this we do, as we believe, for the best of reasons; reasons which commend themselves to every man's conscience. Some of the facts which lead us thus to believe, and thus to speak, we would briefly notice.

But we would first remark, that in forming our opinion of this work, the inquiry with us has not been, whether *every* professed convert, nor whether a *few* of these converts were *genuine Christians*, (as one would be asking too much and the other too little;) but whether *generally*, as a body, they were truly born of God,

Neither has our inquiry related to the means or measures adopted, provided all those employed were consistent with known and acknowledged principle. But what we have deemed essential is the nature of the work – the change effected – *is it of God?*

Neither have we deemed it necessary to defer our judgment until we shall learn the future history of the subjects of this work. For this would be a departure from the usage of the friends of revivals, in every age of revivals. *They* have uniformly met their opposers, infidels and errorists – as did the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, “through Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye have crucified, and slain, hath God shed forth this which ye do now see and hear.” It would be a singular course, for a minister of the Gospel, in a time when sinners were flocking to Christ in multitudes – bowing to the cross, prostrated by the power of the Spirit – to *yield* the question to the *infidel*, as to the *nature and origin* of the work; perhaps until the minister and the infidel and the church were all in their graves. No; they defended the work, on the strength of the evidence presented on the *occasion*. *So do we*. As a matter of course, the work of God *will stand*.

The works of the Spirit, as the works of Christ, testify to their Author. The fruits of the spirit are proofs of the operations of the spirit. On this subject the church may adopt the language of her Saviour – “we speak that we do know, and testify that we have *seen*.”

When we hear the great fundamental truths of the gospel, preached in a very clear, forcible and happy manner to the impenitent; when we have evidence, that the spirit of God in the church, is making intercession for the saints according to the will of God, with groanings which cannot be uttered; when we see that spirit of agonizing supplication, which God has said He will pour upon his people, and by which He has said, he will be sought unto, to give a new heart and a new spirit to sinners.

When we see the church proving her faith by her works – in special efforts to win souls to Christ; when we see general attention of the multitude, to the subject of religion; when we observe the manifest power of the Holy Spirit in our assemblies; when we see great moral sensibility on the part of the unbelieving; thus evincing to us, that God has wrested from the sinner his shield, and given the truth access to the conscience and the heart; when we see *all this*, we say it is the *Lord*, the great work of revival has *begun*, or is in happy *progress*. *All this*, Messrs Editors, we have seen, during the time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

But we have further testimony to this effect in the change effected in those who, we trust, have been converted, during this season. When in former times, one was converted, it was said of him, *behold he prayeth*, the proud, haughty spirit of the unbeliever is broken, and he bows his neck to the yoke of Christ, and glories in his cross; and with a settled purpose to *trust* and *obey* that *same* Saviour, he cries, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” Such, so far as man can see, has been the fact, with the subjects of this work. It would gladden any Christian heart, to observe the number of family altars lately erected among us, and also the humble diffidence, and yet the promptness with which these same persons take a part in our meetings for social divine worship. If a sinner is born of the Spirit, he is become a child of God and feels as a child; he delights in God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, - has peace in him – enjoys his presence – thirsts after that presence, loves his closet, because there he finds his Saviour and God – loves Christians, because they are children of God – the Bible because it is the word of God – Zion because it is the cause of God – delights in the Sabbath – divine worship – hates sin for its nature – loves holiness for it’s own sake – feels the struggles of the Christian warfare in the soul – resolves on perpetual obedience, whatever may be the portion of the soul –

relies solely on the blood of Christ as his only righteousness – **greatly** desires the salvation of sinners, - feels kindly towards all, even his enemies.

When the persons who but yesterday were thoughtless, prayerless, perhaps profane, and dead in trespasses and sins; now in their account of their religious views and feelings, - and that account is confirmed by their general character and conduct – evince to us that they are the subjects of such exercises as these, with the variety of degree and symmetry, which we are to expect in different minds; what does it prove, but that with them “old things have passed away, and all things become new;” but, that there is a change of the heart – of the affections? And when we perceive these **great** moral changes, in the church and out of the church; what **other** conviction can it fasten upon an unprejudiced mind, than that it is the work of God. From the nature of the effect, may we not learn the nature and the character of the cases. So we do; and call on our souls, and all that is within us, and all around us, to whom this report may come, to give **glory to God** for His **infinite** condescension and unmeasurable mercy and grace in the gift of his Spirit, and we do pray, and earnestly request **all** who hear of us to pray, that we may bring no reproach upon this cause by any future defections from the service of Christ. And should we not, and should not all the church **pray**, that these blessed influences may continue, until **all** the barren hills and mountains of Vermont shall be richly overspread with the growths of grace, and the fruit of the spirit.

The above is by a vote of the church,
J. Hurlburt, Pastor.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ *Vermont Chronicle*. 26 May, 1836, page 82.

PART FOUR

The Attacks from Eastman and Streeter.

From Charles G. Eastman.

The following are reproductions of the main sermons which Eastman published, in order to belittle the influence of Burchard. In the case of the Reviewer, the Rev. Leonard Withington, he certainly succeeded.

The first sermon is one which Burchard seemed to have used as the first sermon when he arrived in a place. They were collected from sermons preached at Burlington, Williston and Hinesburgh.

SERMON ONE.

PSALM 51: verses 12 and 13.

My friends, David, who spoke these words, was a king. He cared not for worldly favour or popular applause. And, indeed, why should he? – for he possessed all that heart could wish. Yet although surrounded by these earthly blessings he had lost the joy of salvation. It was after his great crime – after Nathan had repeated before him the inimitable parable of the ewe lamb which pierced him to the very soul – it was then, I say he cried out in the language of this text:- ‘Restore unto me the joy of

thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways and sinners shall be converted unto the.’ David has lost the free spirit of grace and cried to God for mercy. David felt right, my friends, - for what is a man without spirit? – What is a minister? A corpse! A spiritual corpse! – a lifeless piece of clay. What makes a corpse? The absence of the spirit. What makes a spiritual corpse? The absence of the Holy Ghost – the free Spirit of God!

Now, many of this Church are in a cold state, I dare say. I don’t mean to say they are worse than in other places, but I *always* find them so. My friends, how do you feel? I would ask you in a kind and affectionate manner, - how do you feel? Have you lost the joy of your salvation – are you stupid and lukewarm? Well, just turn in your Bibles and see what God Almighty says about Church members who have lost the joy of their salvation. [Revelations 3d chapter, 13th, 15th and 19th verses,] Hark! ‘He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the Churches – I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot. – So then because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.’

What a tremendous rebuke was this to the Laodicean Church! This Church is in the same situation. Hear what God says, ‘ye are lukewarm,’ that is, *nauseous* like warm water taken into the stomach – so then, ‘I will spue thee out of my mouth.’ And so he should too – for what can he do with a lukewarm, stupid Christian? Why, he is neither the one thing nor the other: neither a Christian nor an infidel. You all remember the beautiful story of Jacob’s vision of the ladder – how, when he was flying before his infuriated brother Esau, he was overtaken by night in the forest – how he laid his weary head upon the stones which he had heaped up for a pillow, and while he slept, with no lamps but the twinkling stars and no covering but the

canopy of heaven, he had a dream, - he saw a ladder reaching from the earth to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending upon it, and Jesus Christ, the angel of the Covenant was at the top. Now, this ladder represents faith. All of you have been up some rounds of it. There's a man says he has been up on the fifth, and is now on the third. Here's one who says he has been on the *eighth* round, and after having retrograded three rounds, now stands on the *fifth*. There's a man out yonder, says, 'I believe I've been up some rounds, and was once on the fourth.' Well, where are ye now, friend? 'Why, to tell the truth, I'm *flat on the ground!* Now friend, you who profess the religion of Jesus Christ - Wake up! - Wake up, and become ardent in the cause. Depend upon it, if you continue in your present lukewarm state, you come under the awful denunciation of Jehovah. You must have faith. God can't use ye without faith and he won't use you! - You must out away the sin of damning unbelief. Murder holds no comparison to the great sin of *damning unbelief!*

There's a man, now - Let the minister ask him, Do you believe? Why, yes? - Well, have you got faith, friend? What round are ye on? - He'll look him right in the face, and say "Why, really I don't know - I believe I haven't got much faith, but then you'll find we're *all just so*. *All just so?* How ridiculous is this. - There's a man from Manchester holds a promissory note against a merchant in Burlington. It becomes due, - he presents it. 'Oh, I can't pay,' says he. Can't pay it! - Why not? - Ain't you able? Oh, yes, but *we don't pay our debts here in Burlington*. If you'll just take the trouble to enquire, Sir, you'll find us *all alike* in Burlington.' Well, you don't suppose this is going to excuse you, do ye? - Here, Sir, I've got your promise and your signature and you *must* pay me. Now friends, don't you see you're being all alike don't excuse ye. The very

moment the Church get out of the way, salvation will flow like a mighty river!

Now, sinner, don't you stumble over cold, lifeless Church members into hell. – Don't delay – don't wait for them to grow better, but give your hearts right up to Christ. I don't want you to be a long while under conviction – I don't want to make you willing to be damned for the glory of God. – It's as much as I can do to make people willing to be saved! People used to think a man must be a long time under conviction – three or four weeks at least, and very often a man would be six months getting religion. But my friends, this is all wrong. I tell you it's all wrong. – It is just as the devil would have it. Don't you know a man sins against the Holy Ghost when he's waiting, waiting for a sudden conversion as if by a galvanic shock? To make it plain. Suppose I had a son Henry, - He had run away with old Gibbs, the pirate, and had gone with him to the West Indies in his little schooner, and killed twenty men. I happen down to New York and meet him on the dock. Says I, you must leave off this awful business and return home, or you are ruined for ever. Tell me directly, will you do it? 'Well,' says he, 'I don't exactly know about that, father. I don't know as I feel *prepared*. – I want to reflect a couple of hours, *whether I'll murder any more men!*' Why, my son, ought to be damned for hesitating a moment! Ah sinner, you've murdered Christ – your Saviour, your only hope! How long will you continue to pierce his side by continuing in rebellion against him? 'Stop,' say you, 'I want to reflect whether to drive *any more nails there!*'

When a man is under conviction, what shall he do? Why, the minister used to tell him to read his Bible and pray. Now I don't want you to do so, you will be apt to distract your minds and ultimately lose all feeling on the subject. Fasten your minds on a few, - two or three of the most prominent promises. One is

as good as twenty – give yourself up to Christ for him to rule and reign over you for time and eternity, and you shall obtain salvation. Suppose I was drowning – had fallen overboard:- there were twenty ropes thrown out. I take hold of one, don't like it – try another, and another. I'll choose this one. No, that is more convenient. All this time I am growing weaker and weaker, and get benumbed with the cold, and at last sink down and am lost among all these chances of escape! Now, I should be a fool, shouldn't I, to throw my life away so? Well, the sinner acts just about as consistently when he thinks he's going to get salvation by reading his Bible merely.

Do you want a revival here? 'Why, yes,' Well how are you a going to get it, if you have lost the free Spirit of God, and have no faith? 'O we are going to pray. We'll pray in our closets and in our families, as we have done. We'll go to the meeting and to conference.' Why, my friends, do you expect a revival on these conditions? Nonsense! 'But we hope the blessing will come.' *Hope it will come?* God *commands* you to have it. If you want refreshing here – if you want sinners, who are exposed to the eternal wrath of God, to be converted, you must come to the determination to exercise faith. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. You must form the *resolution!* Faith's what does it. Make up your minds to do it. Before you can do any thing you must form a determination. Why you couldn't have come to this house if you hadn't first determined to do it.

Now Christians, you see how necessary it is that you have the joy of your salvation restored. It's of no use for you to talk to sinners unless you have the spirit of God in your *own hearts*. They'll laugh you to scorn and make you ashamed of it. [Keep those boys still there, by the door.] O what a stupid state this Church is in! My soul! You have been as cold as Greenland these two years! – You'll almost freeze one to death! The Church must come out! Come out! If you want to get to heaven

yourselves or see others converted, you must act in earnest! Don't serve the devil any longer with one hand and God with the other. There's no being on earth I so detest as a hypocrite. I won't be one. You can't talk about God and salvation. 'Ye are *dumb dogs*.' You need not laugh, - this is Scripture. God calls you so. You can't talk about these things, so as to make people believe what you say. Why not? For this plain simple reason. 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.'

See that man there, - what's he doing? He's making a speech at the election. Don't you see the people crowding around him, - all attention. What makes the man talk so? O, politics! *politics!* POLITICS! He's full and running over with politics. So with the tract agent. I never saw a tract agent in my life but was full of tracts, tracts - nothing but tracts. He's all tracts, without and within. His whole soul is in the work, and so it ought to be. Just as with the Temperance agent. - He's all temperance. Just so with the lawyer. He's always talking of his briefs. The doctor - he can hardly meet a man without almost instinctively trying to feel his pulse. So with the warrior, - even on his deathbed he is full of his profession. In his last dream Napoleon cried out 'To battle!' So with the Christian who feels the importance of his subject. When he feels as David did to cry out 'restore unto me the joy of thy salvation,' - what then? 'Sinners shall be converted unto God.'

Christians! You who profess to believe that sinners are exposed to eternal damnation, - you must get the joy of your salvation restored and pray, and get back the free Spirit of God in your own hearts, or they will never, never, *never* be converted. Your only hope is in the Spirit of God. You cant talk to sinners without it, any more than I can. I wouldn't have come all the way here to Burlington to try and have these poor lost sinners converted, unless I had supposed that the Holy Spirit was here! Talk to a sinner about his eternal interests, without the joy of

salvation and the spirit of God in your *own* hearts! Why you might as well talk to the armed rhinoceros or Norwegian bear! I believe God sent me here. I came to help your minister, and if the grace of God assists me, *I will* help him as a poor piece of clay. But to what purpose do I entreat the sinner to repent, if I have not God's eternal Spirit lighting up my own heart, and showing itself in my very countenance! I might as well entreat the lightnings to stay their course! God help this Church to see their need of faith and of the Holy Spirit!

And now, sinners, - let me tell you, you are in the hollow of God's hand! - One single breath of the Omnipotent Jehovah would send you to perdition in a moment! God would be just in doing it, and all the hosts of heaven would say Amen! - Amen!! - Glory be to God. Yet he upholds you - guilty rebels, every breath you draw! Be ye reconciled to God is the command, and you must obey it, or you are lost for ever.

A Mr. ----, one of the converts at Middlebury, had been *seeking* God and reading his Bible for 20 years. He came to the meeting - gave up his heart to Christ while sitting on that anxious seat, and fell into the arms of Jesus! And now, I want every man, woman and child, (you in the gallery there too) to come forward and take these anxious seats. Come! Come forward! We won't hurt ye! [Comes down from the pulpit] Many a one blesses the day when he took this first step. Don't be ashamed of Christ! - Make room, there you old professors! - Clear those seats if you please! Come, we invite you to come forward. Christians will pray for you. God hears and answers prayer, don't he? May be you will get the blessing?

Mr. Converse. Many regard this as a commitment. It is so. This is just what we want. Ought you not to commit yourselves at sometimes? Most certainly...

Mr. Burchard. Many have objections to this method of proceeding, but if any man can tell me a better way I will thank him. I certainly would thank him most kindly. Supposing a man has the fever and ague – he feels very cold.- He is a shivering round on the East side of the house and cant get warm. All he can do, he can't get warm. I raise him up and take him round to the *South* side. The sun pours down his rays, and he soon begins to feel comfortable. Before he had only the light:-*now*, he has the rays. We have put him where he can *feel*. The man that takes these anxious seats will be apt to take them again, and again, till finally, he gives up his heart to Christ and goes home rejoicing. As brother Converse has just said, we want to get the sinner to commit himself. What are you doing there, Paul! Take care;- aint you committing yourself? 'Blessed be God, I am,' says Paul. But aint you saying a little too much, when you declare that you will serve Christ whom you have just been persecuting. 'No,' says Paul, 'I will do all I can to glorify his name, and thank God if I am counted worthy to suffer reproach for his name' sake. Here's a committal. Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles committed himself. [Burchard mounts a bench] Sinner! Hear what the prodigal says:- I've strayed from my father's house – I've wandered far from the path of duty. Here I am, all in rags – nothing to eat but these husks. I cant eat husks. Well, says I, why don't you go home to your father's house – he has bread enough! O says he, I cant do that. I cant commit myself. I'll do everything but that! – but cant commit myself. I'll do everything but that. But finally, he musters his courage and sets out. It's done! – He arrives safe, and his father weeps and rejoices over his long lost son! So with the sinner... He's willing to do anything but the right one. Willing to be any thing but a Christian.

Now, sinner, I want to get your minds into the willing posture. I want to introduce a train of thought. Nothing is so

well calculated to produce the *desired effect* as these anxious seats I wouldn't have you think there's any virtue in a front seat, but by taking these you commit yourselves – you take the first step towards the kingdom of your Heavenly Father.

To illustrate. Suppose I tell my son, 'Henry, you must go and plough tomorrow.' Tomorrow comes. Says I, 'Henry, why haven't you ploughed as I told you?' 'Father,' says he, 'I've come to a determination not to plough any more.' I urge him, he continues obstinate, and won't do as I bid him. 'Well,' says I, 'Henry if you won't do as I want you to, you must leave my house. – Here are fifty dollars - take them, and don't let me see you again till you alter your course of conduct and become willing to obey me.' He takes the money and starts off. Well, he gets down to New York, - gets into a gambling house among sharpers, and before he knows it, loses all his money. It's all gone to the last penny. He sells some of his clothes, and sets out to come home. He is taken sick at Poughkeepsie and is obliged to stay there a long time. One night about ten o'clock, - just as I am reading a chapter in the Bible before going to bed, - who should open the door but my son Henry. He walks right past me, and kneels – in the attitude of prayer. I could hardly believe my eyes – he was pale and emaciated, and his garments all tattered and torn. Says I, Henry, did I not tell you never to let me see your face again till you became a better boy? 'Father,' says he, 'I am sorry for what I have done. I have been sick, and as I don't expect to live long, I have come all the way back to get your blessing before I die.' I see he is penitent;- his haggard looks tell me he is in earnest. I lay down my Bible, clasp him to my bosom, and he is forgiven in a moment!

This is the very course you ought to take, my friends. Give your hearts right up to God your Heavenly Father, and he

cannot refuse your salvation, he has promised it and his promise shall stand forever.⁴⁷

SERMON TWO.

I shall make a few plain remarks on the portion of Scripture contained in the Gospel according to Mark 10th chapter – from the 46th to 52nd inclusive.

And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimeus the son of Timeus, sat by the highway side begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me! And many charged him that he should hold his peace, but he cried out the more a great deal, Thou son of David have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they called the blind man saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise, he calleth thee. And he, casting aside his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

The object of Christ's mission was to make it consistent for God to save souls, who were exposed to the curse of his violated law. He was such a Saviour as we want – he was bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. He could sympathize with the sons of men, for he was tempted in all points like as we are,

⁴⁷ Eastman. pages 1 – 13.

although without sin. He was born of a virgin – his cradle was a manger and poverty his lot. The Son of Man had not a place whereon to lay his head. He was sought unto by many and turned none empty away. Even humble females came to him for advice and instruction. And, I don't know why it is so – but such is the fact that at the present day twice as many females as males attend the ordinances of God's house.

But to return: Bartimeus, the son of Timeus sat by the highway side begging. We may suppose, to paraphrase it in our own way, that he sat just as we see beggars now a days in the street of our large cities, to obtain a penny from the passing traveller. By and by a noise comes to his ear. He hears the sound of coming feet, as the multitude comes nearer, like a great army; 'What's that noise there?' he cries. 'Hark! What's that sound I hear?' "The Son of David is coming." Now this poor blind Bartimeus was an intelligent sort of a man – he knew a Messiah was promised, and he believed in him. They had read the Scriptures to him. – He had heard of the Son of David, and of the miracles he had wrought. Hark! He hears the people shout – 'The Son of David comes!' 'Now', says he to himself, I'll have my eye opened.. – He cried out in the language of the text, 'Son of David, have mercy upon me! – Have mercy upon me!' Stop your noise, said someone in the crowd, - you poor, degraded beggar! – What! Do you suppose the Son of David will answer you? But, he cried out the more. – 'Son of David - have mercy on me!' Just then the Messiah was passing:- surrounded by ten or fifteen thousand people:-for our Saviour used very often to preach to five or ten – or even twenty thousand. 'Now,' thought Bartimeus, 'this is my only chance.' He cried out again, at the top of his voice, - 'Son of David, have mercy on me.' He heard him this time. The Messiah stood still and commanded him to be called. Some of the multitude took him by the hand and led him to Jesus. 'What do you want, blind man?' says he. "Lord, that I

might receive my sight!’ No sooner said than done, - the scales fall from his eyes, his sight is restored, and he goes on his way rejoicing.

Now sinner, this is just the course I want you to take. Go into your closets – pray for yourselves that God will give you light. Some say a man’s heart is a closet. No, no, it only means privacy. How would this sound, I want to know? ‘Do you, Mister Benson, go into your heart, and when you have got in, shut the door of your heart – (mind that), and then Mr. Benson, do you pray.’ Pshaw! Nonsense! In the original it means a warehouse, a shop, a parlor, or *any* place of privacy. If you don’t get an answer the first time, go again and again – but keep praying till God hears your petition, and you obtain salvation.

Well, says one, I thought prayer was simply a desire of the heart. No, no! Bartimeus might have sat by the way side all his life time, all the time sincerely desiring in his heart to have his sight restored. Don’t you see the mere *desire* wont answer? This poor blind man prayed – he called earnestly and sincerely upon Jesus - and the more the multitude opposed him the more he prayed. So you ought to do my friends;- I tell you – you go to meeting altogether too much:- Every sermon you hear only increases your load of guilt. It won’t do for you to go as you have done for years past, never praying at all. If you ever mean to be Christians you must expect opposition;- but pray although you are opposed by principalities and powers. Ah sinner! Could you realize your own situation, how you would pray! How you would agonize! Go – look at that burial ground! The lightning flash, and the winds whistle over it! – all else is silent! You cant tell how many have gone to hell from Burlington! It ought to make you tremble to think of it. The very thoughts of eternal hell will make a man’s hair stand! I entreat you then, to pray like the poor blind man, ‘Son of David have mercy on me!’

Bartimeus threw off his outer garment that he might run more easily among the multitude. This represents self-righteousness and all merit for the works of the sinner which must be cast off. There is no merit in a long conviction. God never required any such thing. If a boy hated his father do you think he would get any praise for delaying to do his duty and becoming a dutiful son? No! every day he continued in rebellion would enhance his guilt. There is an error which prevails very extensively in regard to this subject. A man is seeking for salvation: he has been four weeks under conviction. The minister tells him to go home and read his Bible and pray, and if he continues in the same state of mind, he may conclude that he has got the '*effectual calling*,' and if not, that it's only the '*common calling*.' Well, if the man concludes that he has got the effectual calling, at the end of some weeks he is taken into the Church. 'There,' says the deacon, 'mark my words, there's a man that'll wear.' Now, my friends, this is wrong – wholly wrong.

The reason why so few errorists are converted is that they do not feel their blindness – they don't feel as if they stood in need of a Saviour. Mister you may contradict this, if you please, but you'll find it true. Mark me, I say, you'll find it true. Well, when a man asks like the poor jailer 'what shall I do to be saved?' shall I tell him to believe and give up his heart to Christ? Stop, says one, you ought to be six weeks about that! You ought to be in anguish of soul a long time,- and then, perhaps, God will have mercy upon you, when he sees how you are struggling. Nonsense! The fact is, this is a contrivance of the devil, making men put confidence in a long tedious conviction, and then making them claim salvation in consideration of what they have suffered. It is all self-righteousness, which must be cast off as the blind man's garment was, or you can never have your eyes open to a sense of your situation. Self-righteousness clings to man as tight

as his very skin. – The sinner cannot submit to say ‘I am a poor, blind, miserable wretch exposed to God’s vengeance.’ He still flatters himself that he has some merit – some redeeming traits in his character. I have read of an Athenian soldier, what we now a days call a grenadier. A vessel – one of the enemy’s vessels was pushing off. – The army was coming up and he ran out of the ranks down to the beach and caught hold of the prow with his right hand. They cut that off. – Then with his left. They cut that off. He next seized the prow with his teeth – off went his head. With just such desperation the sinner clings to his self-righteousness! I heard of a gentleman in Virginia, a pious man. He asked one of his negroes one day, who had experienced religion, how long he was under conviction. ‘Two days, master.’ Two days! Said the gentleman, I was two months under conviction. Well, master, said the negro, it always takes you rich men a great while to go to Jesus, you got so many clothes – but when poor black man feels he needs Saviour, - he got no property – no clothes to trouble him – he runs right to Jesus! It is a fact that salvation flows to honest, unsophisticated country people, with far more ease – they know salvation must come through the channel of ordinances, and they come into the kingdom with far less trouble. But to return. When the poor blind beggar had his eye opened, he leaped for joy – he gazed around him, he saw the multitude – every thing looked beautifully. He looked at the cerulean arch over his head with admiration. – he gazed on the face of the *handsomest man that ever lived* – the Son of David, who had just opened his eye! What a moment of delight was that! Thus feels the soul loosed from sin by the Holy Spirit. Thus the young convert feels, as it is well expressed, ‘full of joy unspeakable and full of glory!’

How did poor Bartimeus go to Christ? He could not walk alone, being blind. Well, why didn’t he despair? O, because he knew that some of those who were not blind would help him.

They took him by the arm and pressed through the crowd – they cry ‘give way!’ and the surrounding multitude stood back. They led him right up to Christ:- ‘There, Messiah, we’ve brought you a poor blind man, who wants his eyes opened – we can’t do it.’ I know it,’ says he, ‘you have done your duty, the rest remains for me.’ They had brought the man where he would feel the mercy of the Saviour. They had brought him directly before his notice. Well, when I ask you by and by to come forward, you will ask ‘*why take the front seats?* Why take the front seats? What good will that do? Why would you place a man who had the ague on the south side of the house? Why, to warm him I suppose. What makes the boy take a convex glass and let the rays of the sun fall upon it? This might seem a little curious at first, but pretty soon you see the powder *flash*, and then you see he has been bringing the rays to a *focus*. Now, just so by these anxious seats, we purpose to bring truth to bear on your consciences.⁴⁸

SERMON THREE.

Matthew 14: 22, 31. (Jesus walking on the water.)

A few remarks by way of inference. Firstly, while Peter could walk he was not afraid, but when the wind became boisterous, he became intimidated by the circumstances around him. They were such as would frighten any man. – As he looked at them, and the apparition before him, his very heart sank within him. His feet began to sink the moment his faith failed him. This gave rise to the cry ‘Lord, - save me!’ I will only detain you about fifteen minutes with this individual. I don’t design to give you a discourse this afternoon. I can’t do it and get through with

⁴⁸ Eastman. pages 14 – 21.

the business which is to be done. But then, to return to this man. Suppose, when he was safely on board the vessel, and was walking on the plank, after he had been taken out, he should address his Saviour thus:- ‘Master, I have been thinking about this affair. It makes me feel very uneasy.- I believe I ought to have been taken up on the right side of the deck of the vessel. ‘Well,’ said his Master, ‘you was *overboard*, wasn’t you, Peter?’ O, yes – I’ve no doubt I should have been drowned before this time if you hadn’t helped me out. ‘Well, Peter, if you are only *safe*, why need you to care which side of the ship you were taken out on?’ O I don’t feel safe – I think I can’t really be safe. – To tell the truth you did not take me out as I *expected*.’ Well, Peter, if you aint satisfied, just jump overboard and try it again.’ O no, says Peter, thank you. I’d rather stay where I am! – but after all, I believe I aint exactly safe.

Some people talk just about like this. ‘O we like salvation. – Like to see sinners converted, but then – we *don’t like the way you do it!*’ They are so wrapt up in prejudice, that they don’t care if men all go to hell, if they wont be saved *exactly* according to their notions. They are *very much* rejoicing to see sinners get into the ark of safety, if they’ll only come up on the *right side of the ship*. What folly! – to set themselves up to domineer over God Almighty – to say how his eternal spirit shall operate.

‘The wind bloweth were it listeth, we hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth.’ Who would think of finding fault with the wind for not blowing just to suit him? Here comes a man. – Says he, ‘I wont have anything to do with such a wind. You may talk as much as you have to: I wont have anything to do with these *Vermont winds*. They don’t blow at all as they do where I live.’ Well, friend, what are you going to do about it, eh? I don’t believe your muttering and scolding will change ‘em much one way or the

other. ‘Well,’ says he, ‘I told you I wouldn’t have anything to do with them, and I wont – that’s flat.’

Well, what’s the result? The poor man scolds and frets about the wind, but the wind continues to blow in spite of him. Just so when there is a revival, and the wind of the Holy Spirit is blowing mightily, and sinners are prostrated by its influence – Some men say ‘I won’t have any thing *at all* to do with it – I object to it *altogether*. It doesn’t agree with *my metaphysical mind*, I would say, I mean, *my old fashioned notions*, - *and so on!*’

Why didn’t he put me over three or four streaks of plank says Peter? True I *hope* I am safe, but it aint in the way I *expected*. Don’t you see friends, this is mere nonsense? You’re a pretty fellow, aint you, Peter? – what’s the difference to you I want to know, so long as you are safe aboard the vessel?

Secondly. Another query which might have arisen in Peter’s mind. ‘I don’t know as I was in the water long enough. I rather think I ought to have been there about three weeks!’ What’s that, Peter? ‘Why – I am afraid I was not in the water *long enough*. – If I had only laid there three weeks, then the Master might have taken me out, and it would have been a complete cure. – I should have felt perfectly safe. ‘Well, Peter, is there any other reason why you feel dissatisfied? O Yes. I don’t know – I believe I *didn’t feel bad enough* when I was in the water! I ought to have gone down two or three times, (I believe they drown the third time) but if I remember, I didn’t go down *at all*. I don’t believe I felt bad enough. They say it is *indispensably necessary* to feel *like death* in order to be safe.’ O what nonsense! And yet people now a days talk just like this! ‘No,’ says Peter, My Saviour put me as upon a rock, and I am safe, thanks be to his name! I cried out, Lord, save me,- save me *any how*. I give myself away:- the Saviour was there and caught me!

A word to you sinners. You must take the same course. You are drowning – not in a watery grave, but in eternal hell! Just cry Lord, save me – exercise faith, for when Peter’s faith failed him his feet began to sink:- Throw yourselves into the arms of God’s mercy, and he will put your feet in a sure place, even on the Rock Christ. And now I want every man, woman and child to come forward and take these front seats. &c. &c.⁴⁹

SERMON FOUR.

The New Birth.

I will direct your attention for a few moments to the 5th Chapter of John, 3rd verse, last clause.⁵⁰

Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of Heaven.

By these words of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the celebrated Nicodemus, a ruler of Jews, he appears to have been a very amiable man – it is not said in the text that he was not – what the world calls ‘a good sort of man.’ He was somewhat acquainted with our Saviour, and with the miracle he had wrought. He wanted to interview with him, but the reproach was so great, - so great was the disgrace of associating with him, or of being seen in his company, that he set out by night to visit the poor persecuted Jesus. Entering the house where he was, he instantly recognized him. ‘Rabbi,’ says Nicodemus, ‘we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.’ Now our Saviour understood all about

⁴⁹ Eastman. pages 22 – 26.

⁵⁰ Incorrect reference numbers are in the original.

him; he knew what was passing in his mind, and had known from eternity. He answered him, to paraphrase it in our own way, 'I know all about you, Nicodemus; I knew perfectly before even you left your house. I tell you verily, 'except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' I acknowledge you to be an amiable man. You go to the church; pray regularly. Your external deportment is perfectly good. In one word, my friends, he was *just such a man as you and I would wish to be*. What said our Lord? Verily, Nicodemus, notwithstanding all your morality, you must be born again, or you will never see the kingdom of God. In perfect astonishment, Nicodemus asks again, 'How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man is born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, *ye must be born again*. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the spirit.' Nicodemus answered, and said, 'How can these things be?'

Now my beloved friends, the astonishment of Nicodemus, was no greater than that of many others, now-a-days. We shall treat this subject in a syllogistic manner, and casting away all reliance on our own strength, hand you over to Him 'who spake as never man spake.' Hark! You will hear Him, first Romans 'filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity.' Once more, third chapter of the same epistle, speaking of the wicked: 'Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit: the poison of asps is under their lips.' What an expression, - their mouths are an open sepulchre, full of dead men's bones! - rottenness! - throw off the lid: see the

greedy worm rioting in the mouldering flesh! The mouth of the wicked is just like this: ‘an open sepulchre;’ their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness; there is no fear of God before their eyes. Is not this Scripture? Why, yes. The truth is, *men don’t think of these things.*

So much for the character of man! There is not one of you, professors of religion and all, if God should withdraw his blessed spirit, who would not become murderers, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God; these consequences would follow in an instant.

Do you want proof? Look at France. When the goddess of liberty was set up, and the citizens of her capital worshipped at her shrine! When every Bible was thrown from that ancient city. Blood flowed in the streets of Paris at noon day. All law was at an end; there was anarchy and wild misrule! Read here the character of man. Now let us describe God. I shall hand you over to God’s own poet – Isaiah; ‘I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the Seraphims; each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried to another, holy! Holy! Holy is the Lord God of Hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory; and the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, woe is me! For I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips; and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts. Here you have the description of Almighty God. Hark! The very angels of God – the Cherubim and the burning Seraphim – veil their faces with their silvery wings – crying holy! Holy! Holy! Is the Lord God Omnipotent; the whole earth is full if thy glory. ‘The very heavens are unclean in thy sight.’

Now bring a man all rotten, full of pollution, whose mouth is the open sepulcher, I have just described – take him into the flaming presence of the King of Kings. What has he to do there? What have I to do with the livid lightnings? What has stubble to do with the fire? What business has a sinner in the presence of God Omnipotent? Even if there was no hell, he would be burned up by the blaze of his glory. The most holy saint that ever lived would be burned up in a moment; even Saul of Tarsus would not have time to say, ‘I am ruined!’ Ah my friends, depend upon it, the wicked can never stand and look upon Jehovah and live! Jesus Christ, the Son, stands between us and the Father, with one hand upon the hand of the guilty rebel, while with the other he wards off the uplifted sword of Justice, and shows his Father reconciled.

Now, to show that there is such a thing as endless, unlimited punishment. It can be shown beyond a doubt, from the grand principle of *moral assimilation*. Well, then, I’ll begin to prove it. Where does the drunkard find happiness? Why, certainly, among those of similar habits, if any where. Why? ‘O’ says he, ‘I feel happiest in the bar room or grog shop, because I there find companions who talk as I talk and feel as I feel. Take the moral young man, (one of these clerks in Burlington, for instance) why does he seek young men of good habits and character as his associates, and scorn the recreant wretch? Simply because they talk as he talks and feels as he feels. Well, my friends, you’ll find it so everywhere. What makes politicians get together and talk? O, because they feel an interest in the same subjects, and feel alike about it. Well, just so you’ll find it even in the department of religion. There comes a minister: - a very good sort of a minister, too, by the way. A few Baptists want to build a meeting house. One says, ‘I’ll give 500 dollars.’ ‘Well,’ says another, ‘I’ll give 200.’ Another says ‘I’ll give 50,’ – and so on down, till they get enough. Well, what’s the matter?

O, we want a Baptist minister. *Want a Baptist minister?* You've got a minister, hant ye? O yes, but not a Baptist, though. I want a Baptist minister. What for? O, he'll talk as I talk and feel as I feel.

There's the Methodists:- 'We think we are about right. We are the followers of old John Wesley.' Poor despised creatures as they are, - you'll find them very often going off five or six miles, *right by other meetings*, to get to one of their own sort:- and they'll go to prayer meetings and camp meetings, and get *as happy!*

Next comes the Episcopalians! – with her valid forms and *true apostolic Creed!* The only true *genuine, apostolic mother Church. Always right!* – *never* mistaken in any thing. Well, we don't say this isn't right. And *they* will have a house at any rate, if money will buy it. They'll have the liturgy and Prayer Book too, you may depend on't. And they always love their minister, I've always remarked that. Now far be it from me to exclaim against this. If you want to build a house to worship in your own way, you have an undoubted right to do it. We have no objection. They cannot rest till they have their house built. They are never at home elsewhere, although they may endure other preaching.

To illustrate the principle of moral assimilation still farther. Suppose a man travelling on one of the great Western Lakes. It was once my fortune to travel – I mean by the providence of God. I met with a man on one of the packets, - a very civil man, by the bye. I found he was from Virginia. 'I am going,' said he, 'to play cards with a certain man up the Lake. I understand he plays a deep game.' I afterwards learned that the same man returned home with three or four thousand dollars in his pocket, which he won of the individual he went to gamble with. Now let us suppose this individual to have been on board a packet boat, when he was going up to play with his companion in iniquity at the head of the Lake. It was a beautiful night in June.

– There was a fresh breeze propelling the little bark at the rate of five or six miles an hour. He looks aloft. All is beautiful. Star after star appears in the cerulean arch:- but he heeds them not – he is going to gamble!

It happens that there are five or six very pious deacons aboard, who, we will suppose, are going to hold a protracted meeting up the Lake also. Well, it comes prayer time – they ask him to go down to prayers. ‘What,’ says he, ‘prayers aboard a packet sloop! That’s something new. However, I’ll go down, I think, on the whole. Well, he goes down below. The Bible is read, - a prayer is made – all passes off well.

All at once the wind rises. Waves roll – the little vessel rocks and pitches among the waves – the wind is dead ahead. The deacons take it all for the best and think there is a Providence in it. They find out what he is going after, and pray for his conversion. They talk with him and press him on the subject of religion, almost omitting the rules of politeness. He at last gets out of patience, and separates from them and goes down into the hold of the vessel. He finds one of them praying there, too. As a last resort he goes into the forecabin, and lo he finds that occupied in the same way. ‘Well,’ says he, ‘I am in a pretty pickle, aint I? – crammed up in here with these fanatical old deacons, and not a place to put the sole of my foot. I do really wish I was ashore. He steps up to the captain. – says he – ‘Captain, I’ll thank you to put me ashore. I can’t abide these fanatical old deacons – they tease me constantly about their religion and what not, so I can’t take a moment’s peace. I wish you’d put me ashore.’ ‘I can’t do it,’ says the Captain – ‘we’re twenty miles from land and the wind’s blowing a hurricane. If you’ve got into bad company, it’s not my fault - I have to take all that come.’ He sees it is of no use to expostulate and gives it up. Now hear that man pray – he wanted the wind to blow. If he ever

prayed it was that the wind might breeze up, and waft the little bark into port.

At last the wind changes. She scuds away ten or twelve miles an hour. The pennon is seen flying gracefully by those on the shore, as she comes majestically up the bay. At last she comes to her moorings – he jumps ashore rejoicing.- ‘There,’ says he, ‘thank God for my deliverance! He meets with some gamblers who were expecting him. What’s the matter?’ say they. ‘Matter! Matter enough,’ says he, ‘I have been wind bound – let me see:- nine days I think. We had five or six old deacons aboard. They bored me almost to death with their fanatical notions. I certainly thought they’d ha’ killed me.’ ‘You have had a hard siege on’t.’ ‘Yes, but thank God, I’ve got ashore at last. Is there any playing tonight?’ ‘Yes,’ says one of them. ‘Go up such a street, - turn the corner there and you’ll see a house with green blinds. Go in, and at the end of the hall, you find several steps.- just go up and knock at the door.’ He goes and raps – rap, rap, rap. They know the knock. A gambler can’t be mistaken. He is introduced.- They suit down around the table. The cigars and brandy bottles are set on,- they sit and play and chat and grow merry:- and if ever that man sung a song of deliverance, it was that he had got rid of those ‘sycophantic old deacons.’

Well, let us reverse the principle. You’ll see it will apply just as well. Let there be six or seven gamblers and old one deacon – a very pious man, but with more zeal than knowledge. The deacon is up on deck, walking, and gazing at the starry vault over his head – it’s a beautiful night. By and by he breaks out and sings one of his favourite hymns,

‘When I can read my title clear
To mansions in the skies,’

Or some such one. Hark! The deacon hears noise below. He listens – ‘high’, - ‘low,’ – ‘game,’ ‘whist.’ (it must be whist

they're playing.) – and then comes up a muttering curse as from the very belly of hell! ‘What, what,’ says he, ‘What’s this?’ The deacon is a good man, but hasn’t seen the world. ‘I’ll stop these wretches,’ says he, ‘come what will.’ Down he goes into the cabin. ‘Put up those cards,’ says he, ‘don’t you know you are violating God’s law? Why, I am *astonished!*’ They lean back in their chairs, and look at the deacon, and wink, and a kind of suppressed laugh goes round. ‘Won’t you set by and take a hand?, says one. The deacon is embarrassed, he hardly knows what to do; but finally recollects the old adage ‘not to cast pearls before swine,’ and retreats. Well the poor deacon tries the forecastle and hold, but finds both occupied; and ever and anon as he paces the deck, hears the curse come up in the very dialect of the damned! He is in perfect torment, ‘This is hell enough for me,’ says he, ‘I hope I may never see a worse one.’ He goes to the Captain, ‘I want to go ashore.’ – ‘I can’t carry you,’ says the Captain. ‘I’ll give you twenty dollars,’ says the deacon, or fifty dollars, or one hundred dollars, if you will only put me ashore.’ ‘I can’t do it,’ says the Captain, ‘it’s impossible; I can put you overboard if you wish, and then you may swim ashore.’ ‘No! No! I want no such thing.’ He prays, ‘O Lord save me from this belly of hell, and grant that I may get away from these wretches, and put my foot once more on land.’ At last the vessel gets into port; he meets his friends on the dock, who are expecting him. They shake hands and he is so rejoiced he can hardly contain himself. ‘We had six or seven notorious gamblers aboard,’ says he, continually cursing and swearing. I pray I may never get into a worse hell. But is there any meeting tonight?’ ‘Yes – go up street by two white houses – turn the corner, and you’ll see a large brick house; you’ll find a meeting there.’ The deacon goes according to direction. He comes into the prayer meeting just as are singing,

‘We are marching through Immanuel’s ground,

To fairer worlds on high.’

He hears them talk and pray, and if ever he was happy it was at that moment.

Well, you may say, *this is an extreme case*; so it is, but you will invariably find it just so in every other case imaginable. Just so when we want you to come forward to take the front seats – many reply tartly, ‘Can’t you pray for me as well where I am? – I’m very well seated where I am.’ What makes a man talk in this way? Because, he doesn’t like to come where he knows Christians will talk with him. He would rather remain with those who feel as he feels, and talk as he talks. This is common sense.

Well, according to the text; no one who is not born again by the influences of the Holy Spirit – the third person of the Godhead, shall ever see the kingdom of God. Sinner, what would you do in heaven? ‘I would wander over the fields of Paradise, and see all that was worthy my attention.’ *So you would.* ‘I would hear the music of the heavenly harps.’ *So you would.* ‘I would visit the apostles and martyrs.’ *So you would.* But after you had been there six weeks, you would wish yourself back again. You would be a poor wandering exile. What would a man do there who denied the eternal deity of Christ, which is the key stone to the whole Christian edifice? He could not praise him when he had never believed in him as his Almighty Redeemer. How could he sing of the merits of the Lamb of God, when he had never trusted in him? The very devils in hell believe in the eternal deity of Christ! They are in this respect more like Christians, than the errorists either of England or Burlington. Yes! The very lost powers of the pit believe and tremble. Take one of these, and place him in heaven; what could he see to admire? Infinite holiness and happiness? Would he gaze with pleasure on the enjoyments which once were his? Heaven would be to him the worst of hells! Take even the moral man, the respecter of religion; place him in heaven among the

angels and spirits of just men made perfect, and his prayer would be '*deliver me!*' The angel puts a golden harp into his hand – Hark! What could Nicodemus (a very amiable man) do in heaven? The angel puts a harp into his hands, after he has seen all. 'I have seen everything,' says Nicodemus, 'and wish to go now.' 'No, no,' says Gabriel, 'you must stay and sing the everlasting praises of Jesus Christ, with all the hosts of the Redeemed.' 'Nonsense!' says he, 'I never believed in him.' He would pray Gabriel to deliver him, my friends, and would be in complete misery till he got out. How could he sing praises to a Redeemer whom he never trusted in, or tried to obey? He could not *from the very nature of the case*. He would want to get back to those worldly honors and pleasures which had so long engrossed his attention.

To illustrate this. Suppose a young man – one of the merchants of Burlington, goes down to the city of New York to purchase his stock of goods. He has a very rich uncle there, whom he visits. His uncle is very glad to see him and urges him to stay. He prolongs his visit – stays longer than he expected. One morning he tells his uncle – says he, 'I am going to Burlington.' "Going to Burlington! Why, what does this mean? – Do you want to leave your uncle? Haven't I treated you well?' 'O yes, and I am very thankful for it, but to tell the truth, I left my heart there:- home is home even though it be Burlington: besides, I have just received a letter stating that my wife is very unwell.' 'What,' says his uncle, 'do you prefer that little village of Burlington to the city of New York – one of the finest cities in the world? If this is the way you slight my goodness to you, I'll *make you stay.*' Now, suppose it was decreed so, that he could detain him, what do you suppose his feelings would be? The most excruciating misery that mind could conceive of. He would scale any barrier – he would wade through fire and water, to return to the objects of his affection. He had wandered all over

the city – he had seen the Park and Battery. ‘O,’ says he, ‘I must go! I must go – I can’t stay away any longer from my home. I must go back to Burlington!’

Just so with the sinner. After he had seen everything and satisfied his curiosity, every moment you keep him in Paradise after that, would seem an age. You make it a complete hell for him! And you may contradict this, if you please – but if you live till you are gray, you can never make two and two any thing else but four. You *can’t make five of it.*

‘Stop,’ say the errorists, ‘you make up a doctrine for us, and then fight against it. We admit that we are sinners.’ Well, says I, you must be born again, must not ye? ‘O we believe we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye – the Bible says so, don’t it?’ But *when* will you be born again, says I, - when you die? ‘O we believe in *Liberal Sentiments.* We shall all be changed, - that change is the new birth. – We mean to live a good moral life and all will be well with us.’

My friends, this is the doctrine of the devil! – who but Beelzebub could delude men in this way? According to your notions, the physical pang of dissolution will change the whole man: will produce a radical, entire change. As well might I expect a Canary bird to change his color by merely loosing him from his cage. I open the door – he flies away – ‘Well,’ says one, ‘you don’t s’pose that’s going to change his color, do ye?’ Why, yes, I do. I wait patiently – he comes back after three or four weeks. ‘Is he white?’ says you. ‘No,’ says I, - I guess he ain’t changed much. ‘Well,’ says you, ‘you must have been very foolish to have expected any such thing.’

Well, Mister, you say, the soul which is shut up in the cage - that is, the body of the poor, rotten errorist, - the very moment it is liberated, will become white as snow. He goes on till he is fifty or sixty – sickness overtakes him – he begins to crumble:- You say the very moment he breathes his last breath,

that very soul which one moment before was black with pollution, becomes changed and fitted for heaven – and wings its way to the bosom of Abraham! There goes the Universalist! – he goes and takes his seat at the right hand of God. His motto on earth was ‘eat, drink and be merry,’ and he has now gone to the abode of everlasting blessedness. Nonsense! There is no child in this house who does not know better.

When is this change to take place? When a man is dead: – rotten? How would this sound? Rotten man! repent! Take him up – see his swollen, putrid corpse. See the greedy worms crawl over his livid face – picking his eye balls from their very sockets! Rotten man, repent! Believe! Ah, my friends, this is too serious a subject to trifle with. Can you not see that this is impossible. There is no repentance in the grave!

Some say ‘we shall be changed gradually,’ but my friends, this changing gradually is only making clean the outside of the platter. There must be a radical cure. You must be born again! There must be a new creation. To be born again is to have a complete moral creation, by the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit. ‘Old things must pass away and all things become new.’ This is done by the Holy Ghost, who is sent by Jesus Christ from out of heaven. The Holy Ghost must establish his kingdom in the heart – and Satan must be driven out:- Just as Napoleon, at the time he declared himself Protectorate of the Powers of the Rhine, after having taken France and Italy; took possession, after having repulsed and defeated the powers who had held sway before. The Holy Ghost must set up his everlasting kingdom after the heart is freed from Principalities and Powers. A man who is truly converted is so changed that everybody sees it. Look at that errorist there. A week ago he was cursing and swearing at the grog shop or the grocery. Instead of cursing and swearing, he prays in his family morning and evening – All the angels in heaven exult now the family altar

is raised. The very man that used to ridicule and blackguard (to speak plain) those who profess religion, and talk against protracted meetings, around in the barrooms and such places – now talks of the Bible Society and Missionary Society and the benevolent operations of the day. There’s a change of heart: one may *see* that.

I ask the Universalist. – have you got this change, Sir? No. It’s impossible. No man can have it unless he is born again by the spirit. God Almighty declares there is no other way. He says come. The Spirit and the bride say come! Then come forward, while the wind of the Spirit is blowing. Many have felt its influences since this meeting commenced, who would gladly come out and say amen, and testify that what I have stated is true! And now I want every man, woman and child to come forward and take the front seats and be talked and prayed with. &c. &c.⁵¹

REMARKS AT COMMUNION.

I will read a few verses of the eleventh chapter of First Corinthians, as this is the chapter which has frightened so many young converts at the communion table. I say this chapter has alarmed many young converts, lest they should eat and drink unworthily. Commencing at the seventeenth verse. [House be still] “Now in this that I declare unto you, I praise you not, that ye come together, not for the better but for the worse. For first of all, when ye come together in the Church, I hear that there be divisions among you, and I partly believe it For there must be also, heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.” What! Read it again. For there must be also, *heresies among you*, that they which are approved

⁵¹ Eastman. pages 27 – 44.

may be made manifest among you. Well, then, my dear friends, it does not appear that the Saviour contemplated that the Church would be pure. I have always thought that God suffered the errorists to live merely to show the distinction between the tares and the wheat. He lets the tares and the wheat grow together till the harvest. 'When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating every one taketh before others, his own supper, and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What! Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the Church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you, shall I praise you in this? I trust you are not the individuals to whom Paul alluded. There is not one of you in this house guilty of drunkenness. "I praise you not;" that is, you Corinthians, that's the meaning of it. 'For I have received of the Lord, that which I also delivered unto you. That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it and said, Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also, he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood; this do ye, as often as ye drink it in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup ye do show the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.' Now what is the meaning of this?

'Take, eat, this is my body,' – 'He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. – For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. What is the meaning of this passage which has made so many infidels

tremble, for fear they should eat unworthily. They, that is, the Corinthians, were intoxicated at the very communion table of our Lord. They had perverted the sacrament, and defiled the table of the Son with drunkenness, and it was for this that they were to suffer the penalty denounced in this chapter. So they ought to. Don't you see, then, that it was only meant for such persons. Well, who is there in this house that will do this? None, I believe. You don't come for this. Well, but we may be deceived. Just so; so we all may be. True, we ought to examine ourselves. He that makes a mock of these things, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself not discerning the Lord's body. 'For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.' That is, are dead. They ate and drank in this way, and God met them on the spot, and killed them. God put his hand upon them, and hid them in the grave – the sepulchre. 'For, if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged, but when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that [lest] we should be condemned with the world.' I thought it my duty to explain this passage, as it is one which has caused much anxiety among young converts. And now, I wish to make one remark. If there is any one time when the devil is more busy than at another, it is when the young convert first comes to the communion table. It is then that he 'goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.' Now, my beloved friends, if you don't want to come to the communion table – if you don't feel as if you could do it, that is the very reason why you ought to come. I want every one in the house to come. Let them come, young and old, - come just as you are – as from miserable creatures. God welcomes you.

PRAYER.

O gracious King! O Son of God! We draw near to thy Majesty, and beseech thine eternal benediction to rest upon these

people and sister Churches. For Vergennes we entreat Thee, and for the outpouring of Thine eternal Spirit. Repulse the powers of darkness – drive back principalities and powers – let salvation flow abundantly – let us see in these symbols, the beneficence of God. Let it be a feast of fat things – of wine on the lees well refined to thy children. How blessed it is to set at the table of the King of Kings, who had spread his banner over us. We beseech Thee to hear, O God, incline Thine ear and hear our petition, for Jesus Christ’s sake. – Amen.⁵²

REMARKS AT THE ANXIOUS SEATS.

Saturday evening, December 26.

Many persons have objections to these means, - [House still] – I say many have serious objections to these measures. Here comes a man whose labours God has abundantly blessed. ‘Well,’ says one, ‘I don’t care – it’s new *measures* – I’ll have nothing to do with that fellow! Away, then, with your *moral machinery*! – It’s all moral machinery! – there’s no Spirit in it! Away with it!’ A man that knows how to adapt means to produce a certain effect:- If he doesn’t happen to use precisely the same means that some others use:- Oh – Away! Away with him!

Suppose I wanted to raise this house two feet: Well, how am I to do it? Why, by the screw and lever. Now, these are my means – these are my ‘power and wisdom’ by which I will accomplish my purpose. Well, what is preaching the Gospel but the means by which salvation is going to come to Burlington if at all? God declares in Romans that the Gospel of Christ is the wisdom and power of God unto salvation. And on account of this, when Paul wrote his epistle, which was before the Roman

⁵² Eastman. pages 45 – 49.

power was broken,- what was Rome then? She sat like Juno among the other Goddesses awing a tributary world into submission! ‘Well,’ says Paul, ‘though you are so lofty and proud – yet I am not ashamed to speak to you, for preaching the Gospel is the wisdom and power of God unto salvation.’ When Paul was in Lesser Asia, he visited from house to house,, beseeching them with tears. Now a minister may be very good in other respects – he may preach and attend to the public duties of the house of God, and yet fail in visiting from house to house. No minister preaches the Gospel acceptably who barely preaches a couple of sermons on the Sabbath. You must bring the Gospel before the eyes of the people through the medium of familiar conversation, divested of the *inverted style* in which it appears in the pulpit. The people must be visited. Well, suppose instead of going around to the houses, I invite them to call at my study – it would be much more convenient for me. If I should go around to visit, I could not make over ten visits a day at the outside and talk and pray with them. Now this could be done in half the time by having them call on me. ‘O well,’ says you, ‘I’ve no objection to that; not in the least.’ Well, supposing my study isn’t large enough to accommodate so many people – what shall I do in such a case? - ‘Can’t you ask them to go to some other house where there is more room?’ says you. ‘Yes,’ says I, ‘suppose we take them over to the vestry.’ ‘Ah, take care,’ says you, ‘I’m afraid that’s new measures.’ New measures! – My friends, take care! This is a deception of the devil. What is this getting the people together in the anxious room to be talked and prayed with, but preaching the Gospel?

Now why is it some people look upon this as a great *bugbear*. “What’s all this?” says one. “It looks to me like new measures. – They’ve got something up to the white house they call anxious seats. I don’t like it at all.” ‘Why not,’ says I. ‘O *it’s all new measures!!*’ Pshaw! - What’s the difference where I

take the people? whether to my study or to any other room, it's all the same. I want to talk and pray with them. What is this but preaching the Gospel? There is no man of *common sense* who will make any objections.

It is a *positive fact*, and I speak it advisedly, when I say it, that one hundred sinners will rampart behind one lukewarm Christian professors. If Christians would only bury their lukewarmness, and merge all upon the altar, we should find less opposition, from what we call the ungodly world. I find far more opposition from the members of the Church, (who ought to be my friends) than from any other source whatever! Alas! for the damning sin of unbelief! – this is what instigated the Pharisees to oppose and persecute Jesus Christ; yet ye still act like these same Pharisees, in opposing the progress of revivals, and dictating and finding fault because things don't go just to suit their fancy.

My dear friends, I wish to illustrate to you what I mean by submitting to Jesus Christ. There was a man in one of the southern counties of N. York, (Saratoga, if I'm not mistaken,) his house got afire one night about eleven o'clock – the moon was shining – one of these story and a half houses. His son, Henry, a fine little fellow, four or five years of age, slept in the upper story, in a small bed-room. He heard the fire crackling – jumped out of bed – ran down stairs and tried to extinguish the flames. All at once he remembered that his son Henry was still in the house. He tries to go up the stairs, but cannot. The dense smoke and flames rush through, and the entrance to the chamber is all on fire! He calls – Henry! – Henry! – but no Henry answers. The poor little fellow is fast asleep! He hears nothing – neither the crackling of the devouring elements, nor his father's cries! As a last resort, the father takes a long pole and striking with all his might, he hollered Henry! – Henry! He heard at last, and came to the window – 'What, Father?' says he. "Jump! – jump for your life – the house is on fire!" The poor boy climbs up to the

window sill – he sits and sees the fire behind him and overhead – and then looks down – he sees his father. ‘Jump, my boy!’ ‘Father, I can’t jump!’ He gets the window open – ‘Jump!’ ‘I can’t! I can’t’ At last he lets himself out of the window; - ‘Let go!’ said his father, ‘I’ll catch you – I tell you, you shant hurt a hair of your head; let go!’ ‘O, I can’t let go.’ The fire comes nearer and nearer, there is no alternative – the boy sees it. ‘Father,’ he cries, ‘I come – catch me!’ He drops – in a moment he is in his father’s arms!

Now, sir, whoever you are, if unregenerated, you are in just the same situation. You are hanging over the fire of eternal damnation. Every breath you draw brings you nearer and nearer. Let go all your dependence on self-righteousness and every thing else. Let Go! Let go! Jesus Christ stands to catch you. You have his everlasting promise that he’ll save you. How many of you are willing to do it to-night? All you that are, manifest it by rising, all over the house.

PRAYER.

And now, O Eternal Spirit! We thine unworthy creatures bowed in the dust before thee, do seek thine eternal benediction to rest upon us. Lord of heaven and of earth; around whose throne the cherubim and the burning seraphim continually do cry holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Omnipotent – the whole earth is full of thy glory! – O take that arm from out of thy bosom and save these poor immortal souls from eternal perdition. Let them see their awful situation. Thou hast declared in Luke that thou art more willing to give the Spirit unto them that ask it, than earthly parents are to give good gifts unto their children. Send down thy Spirit, we beseech thee upon the people of Burlington. And O Eternal King, we would supplicate thy name in a particular manner for thy servants ----- and ----- and Miss -----, and thy servant Mrs. -----, and also for thine other servants, ----- and

Mr. -----. Send thy convicting Spirit into their hearts, and make them feel that they must be converted and give their hearts unto thee or they can never see heaven and live. Oh! let salvation flow to-night to every soul now in this house – and hear and answer and forgive, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.⁵³

SERMON FIVE.

Address to the young converts.

I do not intent to preach a regular discourse this evening, but only to make a few plain remarks addressed to the young converts. If an individual was shipwrecked on this lake, and had taken to his small boat; so long as he kept at the oar, we should suppose he must reach the shore at last – but when he lets it go, and lets the little bark drift, common sense would teach us that he must find a watery grave.

Thus with the young convert. While he watches and continues to pray, there is a hope that he will ultimately arrive at the port of everlasting life, but if he omits these, it is extremely doubtful whether he will ever reach heaven. – Nay, it is almost certain that he will not. You must watch and pray. Thus Jesus Christ seemed to feel when he said ‘Watch - I say unto you all, watch.’ Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation – the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.’ There are some points in relation to this subject, which all the young converts lately admitted to the Church, ought to watch with great care. The first is committing yourselves on the side of wrong. We are all of us fond of our own good opinions, or in other words, we are fond of having our opinions thought much of. It is human nature; and if the devil can only get you committed on the wrong side, [house

⁵³ Eastman. pages 50 – 55.

still] I say if the devil can only get you to commit yourselves on the wrong side, - from the very nature of the case, it will be difficult for you to retract, even after you find that you are wrong. Now, I apprehend this is the case with many who have given out their opinions in relation to this meeting. They are, perhaps, persons not used to be contradicted, and the greater the light the greater the anguish of their feelings. If they would humble themselves before God and confess themselves to be in the wrong, it would be easy enough: but this is extremely difficult, especially if we are *reputed* to have some reputation. Young convert, I want to say to you, look well to yourself. Be sure you are right and then go on. Look well to yourself when any course is pointed out to you, and examine it well before you adopt it.

Once more. Beware of ingratitude to your Maker. This great crime is complained of in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and because of this, God forsook the nations of old. The way to obtain blessings at God's hand is to be thankful for what we receive. You ought to be grateful to the Saviour for what you have already received, if you wish to partake of his bountiful goodness. I have often thought that David was called the man after God's own heart because he praised God continually. Hear him. - 'Praise the Lord, O my soul, all that is within me praise his holy name.' - not once only, but constantly. And now, young convert, take care! You will perhaps lose your religion - the joy of salvation in years to come:- but remember hell will be just as hot and burn with the same intensity, and heaven glow with the same celestial radiance that it now does. The same motives for godly walk and conversation will *always* exist. But it is a melancholy fact that the great mass of young Christians, after conversion, settle into a worse than Laodicean state of lukewarmness. Hear then and remember the awful rebuke of God Almighty to the Laodicean Church. - 'Thou art neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm - therefore I will spue thee out

of my mouth.’ O then be grateful and thankful. If you faint and are weary, pray often, and ask of the Holy One of Israel that you may have fortitude and more faith on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Once more. I want these Church members, (especially those who have lately united with the Church) to act as if they felt a desire for the salvation of their fellow beings. You must not throw the whole responsibility upon the minister’s shoulders. If you do, depend upon it, he can do but little for his Master. Let him do what he can, but don’t find fault with him. There are very few ministers who ever do much for the cause of religion, unless their names are bandied about like Saul of tarsus. The apostles were willing to suffer anything for their Master’s cause. They were driven from city to city, and stoned and scourged, and all for righteousness’ sake. So my young friends, it must be with you. Although you may never be called upon to suffer such persecution as this, yet, you must be willing to become any thin or nothing for Christ’s sake. When your duty is plain before you, *do it*, and leave the consequences with God. No doubt the devil will start up and whisper in your ear, ‘what will the world say?’ – but do your duty before God, and you will have an approving conscience, which is a shield against all the obloquy which may be caste upon you.

Once more. I want you young converts here in Burlington, to watch lest you become contented with the mere *name* of religion. If you do this you can never glorify the Father. ‘The Father is glorified,’ 15th chapter of John, 8th verse , ‘when ye bear much *fruit*.’ Now, my friends, the Lord of the vineyard expects fruit of you. Many suppose that religion consists in being decent and looking grave, and so deporting that the world can say naught against them. The question is often asked, ‘what kind of a man is he?’ ‘O he is very amiable.’ Nothing more? ‘Why yes, - he s a very prudent man.’ Well, anything further? – In short, is he pressing forward towards the mark for the prize of

his high calling? ‘I cant say that.’ You cant, eh? Well, friend, let me tell you then. There’s nothing of the man. It is very easy to be called an amiable man. You must not only do all the duties which devolve on you as citizens, and practice the purest morality, but must possess pure and undefiled religion, and keep yourselves unspotted from the world.

I wish to address these young converts particularly, and in my feeble way, to give them due advice, as children just born into the kingdom. Some people think that if a man has got religion, he ought to hold his tongue about it; he ought to go home and mind his own business. Now, young friends, our Master commands us to let our light shine; not to put the candle under a bushel but to place it where it will give light to the whole house. Now, to me it appears perfectly impossible for a man to have true religion and hide it from the world. You must not think of such a thing – you must demean yourselves in such a manner that the world may take witness that you have been with God. As for *looking well* – I want to know what looking well would avail a soldier in the hour of battle? You are to be soldiers of the cross – ain’t ye? Yes. Well, then you are to fight as well as look well. What’s a good looking soldier good for in battle? The enemy are coming up. O, he’s a very orderly, demure sort of a man; an excellent soldier – the only difficulty with him is – *he won’t fight!* Won’t fight! – why what are soldiers for? So with you, my young friends, you are engaged in an aggressive warfare on the territories of death and hell – you are to bring souls from out of the hands of principalities and powers – you are to fight against Beelzebub the prince of devils. I repeat it, you must fight!- Why – the Bible is full of it. Saul of Tarsus fought everywhere manfully for the cause of his Lord and Master, and sung the song of victory. Hear him: ‘I have finished my course – I have fought the good fight – I have kept the faith; hence there is laid up for me a crown of immortal glory.’ Young converts I

have one remark, and that is, rally round your minister. He has labored with you many years, and now expects that you will, every one of you, gird on your armour for the battle. Rally round him, therefore give heed to his counsels – it is he who is to train you in the doctrines you profess – and let your whole conduct show, even to the errorist himself, that you mean to *act like Christians*.

Some people think that it is religion to study the works of God and his character, as displayed in the objects by which we are surrounded. Now, sir, whosoever you are – deceiving yourself with this idea – tell me, do you think thus to glorify God? Supposing I should hire a man to mow out in my field there, and he should stand, day after day, looking at the sun through a smoked glass. Well, I say, friend, what does all this mean? – what do you stand there gazing for? ‘O,’ says he, ‘I was looking at the sun, the glorious orb of day, and contemplating the character of God.’ Well, says I, you are a pretty fellow, I didn’t hire you to look at the sun, but to mow down my fields. I want you to work. I want to know how much such a man would be good for? Why of course you say I might as well not have him. Well now it is just so with those men who belong to the church – who spend their whole time studying the character of God? But do you do nothing else, friend, says I? ‘O yes, I have been praying in my closet these seven years.’ Nothing else? ‘No.’ Well, then just seven years you have been doing nothing for your soul. God requires you to work, like Payson, to work till death in the service of God your master. When an individual looks back through the long vista of time and counts up 100, 150, 200, 300 souls converted to Christ through his instrumentality – what joy fills his heart. Tell me, my young friends, which glorifies God the most, this man, or the one who spent his time without a single effort in the cause of Christ, but merely studying his character in the works of nature? Be active, my friends – break your

pitchers, let your light shine, and cry, ‘the sword of the Lord and of Gideon.’

I want to talk now to the Church. As I said before to the young converts – rally round your minister. Sometimes after a protracted meeting, some say, why can’t we have a protracted meeting all the time? Why not have one *all the time*? I’ll tell you why. Because he that provideth not for his own household is worse than an infidel. But though you cannot have one all the time, yet you may be in the attitude of a protracted meeting. I wish you to understand that a man should be always in a state of spiritual life. Now the Church has made great advancement, within a short time – and I want you to hold your ground – cling fast to the round in the ladder of faith on which you now stand, and press forward towards the mark for the prize of your high calling which is in Christ Jesus. It is sometimes said, this is a sort of *periodical religion*. It is a mere excitement. Now, I would ask any gentleman of common sense if there was at all times the same degree of excitement in the Jewish synagogues and whether their religion was to be called periodical because there was a great meeting every year on the day of Pentecost. But you say that the Church always gets cold and stupid after these protracted meetings. Well, admit the position, that when the excitement is over, they become as cold as ever. Yet, those who get converted at these meetings – every single soul is worth ten thousand worlds like this, if they were not *inhabited*. This Church was in a low state when this meeting commenced? Yes. It couldn’t have been much lower? No. But there were some men so *extremely prudent*, that they would have nothing to do with it.

They do not wish to rise for fear they might fall back again. Their motto is ‘*rise not at all.*’ Now just look at the statistics of the Church, and you can but allow that many have been added to its members on the principle of concentrated effort.

And yet if the least effort is made to rouse the public attention on the subject of religion:- My soul! – what a hue and cry! What strange infatuation! I will tell you where the difficulty is. The hearts of such men are *not right*. If their hearts were right before God, there would be no difficulty. Were any individuals to act thus on temporal subjects, and set themselves up to judge, what would the world say of them? I leave it for you to judge. Now there has been an effort here in Burlington, and many rise up and say the ‘conversions are *all spurious*.’ Now, Sir, whoever you are, if this statement should prove false, you must take the curse. Yes, you must take the curse. The individuals incur an awful responsibility, who sit with their arms folded and make such statements. What do they know about it? ‘O, its all fanaticism – new measures – trash – *we alone* are wise, and wisdom will die with us.’ They sit and call the conversions ‘spurious – all wrong.’ But no, my friends, God has done a great work here. We see the evidence of it all around us. An exceedingly great work has been done for a place where there are so many counteracting currents. ‘Well now you who are so opposed to what you call ‘new measures’ – supposing there had been no effort – I say supposing no effort had been made, how long do you suppose it would have taken to interest individuals on the subject of religion – who have been converted at this meeting? Why, in all human probability it never could have been done.

It has been said that these protracted meetings leave a Church worse than they find it. I deny it – I deny it altogether. The concurrent testimony of all the Churches on the eastern side of the mountain, will go to show that this is not the case. True, there always is a declension in the excitement attendant on these meetings, and it is very proper that there should be. But it is said that many of those converted at these protracted meetings turn back to the world, and are even worse than before.

Well, grant that some of these so converted should apostatize, (which would be perfectly natural) would this prove that these measures were wrong? No! Now I ask any gentleman in this house if he can put his hand to his heart, and say he ever witnessed a revival where there was not something of this kind. It is to be expected. There is not a single instance recorded in Scripture, except in Philippians, but that there are rebukes to the professors for their lukewarmness, but where can you find them rebuked for admitting converts to the church too soon, as we have been? The churches of Laodicea, and Pergamus and Corinth to which Saul frequently wrote, are blamed for want of zeal, not because of their admitting members to the Church too soon. Now, if it is not right to admit them as we do, it is strange that Jesus Christ and the apostles said nothing about it. There may be even more apostates here than in other places, where there are so many counteracting currents, and where everyone must work as for his life, to keep himself in the path of duty. There was a revival at Windsor, some years ago. I don't know who preached there; whether it was the President of your College up here, or not. Well, about sixty were converted in the *still good old way*. Now, out of that number, six, I am told, were excommunicated. – *Ten per cent*. Well, now, does this prove anything? Certainly, I would not be so uncharitable as to suppose that all these conversions were spurious because a part of the number was excommunicated. Now, down here in Dartmouth, there was a powerful effort made. Dr. Taylor was there, and there was much feeling on the subject of religion. The result was that in the *good old way* – *the still old way* – the way people are so very much attached to – some were converted and out of the number nine men apostatized. And I found this one of the greatest barriers when I labored there. Well, should I consequently, say that the still old way was all wrong, and that the Doctor was wrong? No – No. I make these remarks that people may know our views of

the matter. In some places there are more apostates than in others – and sometimes those who appear at first the best, turn out the worst, and *vice versa*.

I shall take five hours to address the young converts, and the rest of the Church tomorrow, and meanwhile I want to guard the Church especially against a disposition which sometimes springs up after protracted meetings, to find fault. Because the preaching is not of the same kind after the revival is over – we sometimes, I say, find a disposition to find fault. But, my beloved friends, the preaching should be different to produce a revival, and after the meeting it should be more pungent. The pastor is to instruct you and to train you up for God, giving you the sincere milk of the word and nourish you as the lambs of the fold. I want you to understand this. You are not to have the same preaching, that you have had during this meeting, neither ought you to have. The preaching should be adapted to the occasion. Were I a settled minister, I should alter my course very materially. A man is best instructed by his own pastor. Some think that in bringing things new and old out of the armory of the Lord, we should always aim to keep up the excitement, and that the evangelist does all the work in converting souls. But no! The evangelist is nothing but one who helps the pastor get his wheat into the garner, as Jesus Christ says in the beautiful parable of the sower. A man asks his neighbour to come and help him get in his grain; just so it is in the spiritual field. The evangelist comes to work under the direction of the minister. But some say these evangelists come into a Church and dictate, and the minister is a mere *cipher*. Well, I don't know but it is so, but I would ask if it has been so here? To be sure, we have been invited to preach, and consider ourselves bound to do so. As I said before, I came to work under the direction of the minister. Where we do not agree, concerning any measure – it has always been left to the minister. This has been the course here in every instance. Now,

my beloved friends, it is the business of an evangelist to leave a Church better than he finds it, and more attached to their minister. Yet, we frequently hear it asserted, that they divide the people. We hold that he has no right to do this. We expected to hear such statements and wish now to say we calculate to take the maledictions and curses of the wicked; and like the scape goats who bore away the sins of the people, we are willing to take it in God's name; so that when we leave Burlington, we leave the place better than we found it. This is a diadem we should rejoice to wear – the maledictions and curses of the wicked, and the friendship of the righteous. I say this is what we wish, and though I say it, we have received it heretofore.

In relation to the statements that the evangelists have caused the ministers to be dismissed – I know of the kind, and certainly I ought to know, if any one. I am not aware of anyone being dismissed as the result of my preaching, in any place where I have laboured. And when my enemies will put their finger upon a single instance of the kind, it will be time enough for me to refute their statements. I say the statement is false, and I admonish the people here in Burlington to beware how they make it true in Burlington.

As I said before, you will not have the same kind of preaching after I am gone; but my friends you must not be divided among yourselves, because some will like one way of preaching and some another. When the evangelist has done his work, it remains for your minister to instruct you in the articles of belief, and the relative duties you owe to each other. Young converts, the results you have seen here have been produced in a great measure by the prayers of your pastor. The ground has been productive for he has watered it with his tears. He has broken up the fallow ground of righteousness and sown the seed; we have only come to assist him in gathering the wheat into the garner. Now, who would think of helping a farmer get in his

grain, unless he had previously sown the seed? Would anyone deserve great praise for doing this? Certainly not. I wish you to bear it in mind, young converts, it is the pastor who has done the work – it is he who has prepared the field for the reaper. Never mention the poor evangelist except in your prayers, but rally round your pastor and never leave him alone in the work of the Lord. Stand fast in the faith, and if in future years I should be permitted to hear from you, God grant that you may still be ardent in the cause of your divine Master. May you be held up as a pattern to others. Saul held up his Church at Philippi to the world – they were a pillow for his weary head. Hear how he writes to them, ‘My joy, my crown - stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved!’ What language! They had run well, and gave a clear and steady light. What joy did it give this zealous apostle to hear this. What joy will fill the heart of the poor evangelist to hear that the converts at Middlebury, and Woodstock, and Burlington still stand fast in the Lord. The tidings would be as grateful as the odor from the fields of heaven! It makes the poor man’s heart leap within him. And now young converts, will you deny me? Shall I ever hear of a single wry look or a murmur? God forbid? If ever a man needed help, it is the poor evangelist; buffeted and his name bandied about. As I have once before said, the good opinion of the whole world is nothing to me, only as it gives me influence; but God forbid that ever I should hear that those who have united with the Church have become again joined to their idols.

But I pass on. I wish to guard young converts against letting any man speak what is not true in your presence, without answering him. Don’t permit a man to come to you once or twice a week and tell you that which you know is not true. A story is related of Edmund Burke in which he says that any one who will permit his servant to tell him a story *once a day*, will, in a short time, make that man his master. Not any of you who will

let a man say what he pleases, without disputing him, can keep in the path of duty. He will gradually infuse his principles into your minds, - you will get prejudiced, and you will turn right around against the very things you now approve. The only course for you is to say, Sir, I cant hear that – I will not listen to such statements. ‘Well,’ but he is not opposed to revivals in the *abstract*.’ Well, how’s this? An individual is not opposed to revivals in the *abstract*, yet he is opposed to the very means the Church have provided to produce one. Now these are the very individuals I wish you to beware of. Many a one has been prejudiced by such men as these to such a degree that they wouldn’t even take an anxious seat, and thus the truth has been prevented from acting on their minds. Listen to no statements which are in opposition to your belief, without rebuking him who offers them. Stand on the defensive and say, I can’t hear this. Try this, my friends, and in a short time you will find no trouble, when the world observes the change which has taken place in your feelings.

Again. I wish to exhort you not to be ashamed. I know how it is with young converts. – They get among their young worldly companions and are ashamed to own that they were ever at the anxious seats. But, my young friends, this will never do. You must proclaim it both by words and actions. Now, should any of you ever do this – I say, if you should ever be ashamed of the service of Christ and fall back into the world, do not blame the poor evangelist. He has told you your duty, it is for you to perform it.

Another thing I wish to warn you against, is this. – The introduction of anything which is not contained in the Bible. When salvation is flowing as it has been for years past, the devil always makes a counterfeit, as he did in Egypt. The magicians did the same miracles, - turned rods into serpents, and for a while deceived the people, but when the time came, Moses’ serpent

swallowed them up. When the devil cannot prevent the waters of life from flowing under the throne, he will try to muddy the stream. Hence we find after a revival, there will be something of this kind. Mormonism or the perfectionists will generally be along in a fortnight after a revival. You know who the perfectionists are. Strange that there are such beings, but it is so. In the judgment of charity there are many who are sincere in this error. Now, my young friends, I wish particularly to guard you against everything of this kind. Don't take everything that comes along. 'Prove all things – hold fast that which is good.' If a man comes with a 'Thus saith the Lord,' no matter what his dignity is, - if he brings any other authority than the good old New England Bible Divinity, examine him narrowly before you give him credit.

As for myself, I believe I am properly orthodox, my enemies being judges. So say some of the writers in the periodicals of the day. I believe in the great doctrines of the Trinity, and atonement; and he who believes on them, I consider safe.

Again – watch against lifting up your hands against any man who has the Bible for his guide. Because he don't cast out devils, just as you expected – don't accuse him of casting them out through Beelzebub, the prince of devils. I say, if he don't cast out devils just as you expected, don't forbid him.

There have been some very important changes in the religious world within a few years past. I remember the time when it was considered almost miraculous, if thirty or forty were converted in six months' time, in the *old way*, but I have lived to see the day when four or five hundred have been converted in a week: and I hope to live to see God rise in majesty and power and glory as we have never seen. The other remarks which I have to make will be tomorrow.

I have only a word to say to the impenitent men and women in this place. We feel ourselves bound to return thanks for the good order which has been kept during the progress of this meeting. In other places there has frequently been noise and confusion: but here, there has been the very reverse. Every one has acted like a gentleman. We have nothing to give you but our thanks, which are yours most heartily. – To the Church I would wish that you may be built up in the most holy faith. As I believe there are some here tonight who wish to come forward, they are now invited. Sinner! You know you must be born again. – You know this is the blessed acceptable day of God. Then come while you can and say each one of you, ‘I will be one of those who will come in on the last day of the feast.’ O sinner, come forward and give your hearts right up to Christ. If there is a hell to be avoided, why not do it now? Come forward then you are welcome! Come and let us pray once more together before we part, never to meet again till we stand at the judgment seat of Christ. Ah, my friends, things will be seen in a vastly different light on the judgment day. You will be weighed in the unerring balance of Omnipotence – and may you not be found wanting” but when we hear the vivifying blast of the archangel, may we meet to part no more.⁵⁴

RUSSELL STREETER.

It was at the Woodstock meetings that Burchard found the main opposition from the Universalists, although it had also occurred elsewhere. That is where Russell Streeter lived.

“The weather held out, the sleighing was excellent and people continued to come in good number. For many it meant

⁵⁴ Eastman. pages 56 – 75.

the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, lives to be shaped anew under divine influence; for others, it was nothing more than Calvinistic fanaticism with its conversions wrenched out of the unwily who submitted to the intimidation of the ‘anxious seats’ up front under the preacher’s desk or who allowed themselves to be browbeaten into submission in the privacy of the inquiry room.”⁵⁵

The Universalists published reports on Burchard’s meetings also, and were ready to print the worst they could find about them. The following comment was about Burchard’s meetings in Perkinsville:

“The first thing after he enters the house is to brush up his long hair, and go into the pulpit. He then calls on all who would continue their prayers or put up new ones. For awhile the house is all in confusion. He never closes his sermons, but comes down from the desk talking, calling all who wished to be prayed for to come forward into the anxious seats. He goes around the house inviting, urging, threatening, pulling everyone to come forward. He then makes them promise before God, to ‘make an unconditional surrender of their souls, bodies, and the world, to God,’ and signify it by rising up. ‘Rise up! Rise up there! Rise up!’ he bawls out. ‘There down with your heads upon the panels of the pews. Deacon – pray mightily to God.’ All this is done as fast as words can be put together. He then marches them off to another side of the house, and then protrudes his bristly head into every ladies’ face to whisper in her ear. He then prays for them himself. Then selects out the best finished and seats them in another spot and completes the salvation of their souls.”⁵⁶

“F. A. Cox, a more impartial observer, traveling in America as a member of a deputation of the Baptist Union in England, was appalled by the aftereffects of Burchard’s preaching

⁵⁵ Donal Ward. Thesis. Page 138.

⁵⁶ Donal Ward. Page 139.

in Vermont which in his judgment left communities spiritually cold and apathetic to religion. Cox gave a firsthand account of Jedediah Burchard threatening and cajoling his congregation in Montpelier, a community where disputes over the ‘new measures’ had given rise to the schismatic Free Churches of Montpelier and Berlin.”

“Do you not love God? Will you not say you love God?” Then taking out his watch, - “There now, I give you a quarter of an hour. If not brought in fifteen minutes to love God, there will be no hope for you – you will be lost –you will be damned.” A pause – no response. “Ten minutes has elapsed: five minutes only for salvation! If you do not love God in five minutes, you are lost forever.” The terrified candidates confess – the record is made – a hundred candidates are reported.

An Example of Streeter’s “Objectivity,” and Hostility.

To provide just one glimpse of the lop-sidedness of Streeter’s portrayal of Burchard, and of his work, here are examples of statements that we can find in other documents about Mrs. Burchard and her evangelistic work amongst the children. We can compare that with Streeter’s evaluation. This is a good representation of the quality of Streeter’s views about Burchard more generally.

The official historian of Presbyterianism in Central New York was the Rev. Philemon Fowler.⁵⁷ Fowler had a good personal knowledge of Burchard, his wife, and their work. He wrote:- “Mrs. Burchard was a ‘help-meet’ for her husband, - a woman of great dignity of character and bearing, feminine but unshrinking. She conducted services for women and children,

⁵⁷ Philemon Fowler. *Historical Sketch of Presbyterianism within the Bounds of the Synod of Central New York.* Utica, N.Y. Curtiss and Childs. 1877.

and precluding criticism of them by her management of them, she achieved memorable good.”

In relation to children’s work in a protracted meeting in Rochester, New York, in 1833, the Rev. William Wisner wrote:- “In this work, Mrs. Burchard, who had her attention called to the subject by the early death of an only child, has been a distinguished instrument. She with the aid of a number of the ‘mothers in Israel,’ had these tender lambs committed to their care; and the result has been as before stated in the narrative – between two and three hundred children of Sabbath Schools are indulging hopes.” Regarding the Sunday School in his own church, Wisner said that “out of one hundred and ninety-five belonging to this school, more than one hundred are indulging a hope in Christ, and the work of salvation is constantly going on.”⁵⁸

In relation to a protracted meeting in Brockport, Monroe County, New York, also in 1833, the Rev. Joel Byington wrote:- “Saturday of the same week, Mrs. Burchard commenced her course of religious instruction with the children – with the assistance of a few mothers. These religious efforts were remarkably blessed; and on examination mothers obtained comfortable evidence for more than sixty of these children that they are born of the Spirit of God, most of whom were members of the Sunday School. We fix our seal of approbation to Mrs. Burchard’s course of moral and religious instruction as salutary.”⁵⁹

Other similar testimonies could be given.

On the other hand, Streeter’s first reference to Mrs. Burchard was to say that she, along with her husband, were

⁵⁸ *Religious Intelligencer*. Volume 18. June 1st, 1833. pages 13- 15.

⁵⁹ *Religious Intelligencer*. Volume 18. 20th July, 1833. pages 125 – 127.

primarily interested in the large payments which he claimed they received.⁶⁰

Under the heading of “Mrs. Burchard’s Department,” Streeter says, “This is a School (or gull-trap) for the *conversion* [?] of little children, from *three* or *four* years old and upward; and should not be encouraged in the least, by those who are not the dupes of the imposter. Everybody ought to understand, distinctly, that Burchard manages the whole concern. He employs the fascinating manners of his ‘better half,’ to enlist unsuspecting females in his wily measures. Mrs. B. wins the affections of the ‘little ones,’ and then delivers them over to the captain-general of the farce.” So, the conversions of the children were not real, and Mrs. Burchard was simply a tool under her husband’s control in his effort to dominate the whole proceedings.⁶¹

The School was “that nursery of fanaticism.” Streeter was further appalled by the fact that both Burchard and his wife believed that small children were sinners, and that they were “naturally totally depraved” in the Calvinistic sense.

Streeter quoted one of the children who attended Mrs. Burchard’s school. She was asked whether she liked Mrs. Burchard. “O, very well indeed; she is the prettiest woman you ever see.” What did she ask you? “My dear, will you give your heart to God?” How did the girl reply to Mrs. Burchard? “I told her yes, but then I didn’t; I only told her so, because she said so pretty.” After that, Streeter went on to discuss whether either Burchard or his wife ever explained to anyone what ‘to give the heart to God’ actually meant.⁶²

Perhaps, from Eastman’s versions of Burchard’s sermons, we can make some kind of a judgment about this last question.

⁶⁰ Streeter, page vi.

⁶¹ Streeter, page 137 – 138.

⁶² Streeter, pages 139 – 140.

The main comment that needs to be made about Streeter's book is that what he said actually tells us more about Streeter himself than it tells us about Burchard.

It is vitriolic abuse, based upon an understanding of Christianity quite different from the one being advocated by Burchard.

On the other hand, Burchard himself did use rough language to a degree when talking about people like Streeter, and this was not charitable, nor was it appreciated by the people he was criticizing. Such language probably succeeded mainly in ridiculing his opponents in the eyes of the public, which cannot be classed as a rational or Christian approach, and could well have been counter-productive in the minds of more fair-minded people.

A Local Editor Who Openly Supported Burchard.

The following is an example of open support for Burchard in view of the opposition which he faced. It came from the editor of the *State Journal*, published in Montpelier, Vermont, and was re-published in the *New York Evangelist*.

“It is known to most readers that this gentleman has been laboring in this State as an evangelist, since about the 1st of October last. The peculiarities of his method of conducting meetings, and his style of preaching, as well as his eminent talents, have given him so much celebrity, that crowds attend him wherever he goes. He has held meetings usually for 2 or 3 weeks in a town.

Judging from what acquaintance we have had with the man and his performances, here and elsewhere, we are free to say that his whole method of operation, singular as it may at first blush appear, strikes us as approximating nearer to the simplicity and power of primitive Christianity than that of any preacher we

have heard. We say this, well knowing that others differ from us in opinion; but the gentleman having been rather prematurely assailed from certain quarters, we thought it no more than an act of justice to a stranger, to advance the above remark. Mr. Burchard's meeting in this place is still continued, and we would embrace the present occasion to invite our readers particularly in this county to hear and judge for themselves.⁶³

PART FIVE

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Withington's Review and Leavitt's Reply

It will be noted in the "Review" which follows – that Leonard Withington makes a number of attacks upon Burchard, as he is portrayed in the apparent words of his sermons, which were recorded by Eastman, or by someone he employed to do it. However, the main point of criticism which he spends most of the article talking about is that men like Bates and Merrill would associate their names in support of Burchard's soul-saving meetings.

It is very likely that Burchard did not ask their permission to use their names on the back of leaflets advertising his meetings. He simply used their names for advertising without

⁶³ Montpelier, Vermont. *State Journal*. Cited in the *New York Evangelist*, 6 June, 1835. page 89.

asking permission. This kind of thing was fairly common with men like Burchard. Withington wanted them to protect their reputations as men of eminence and reason; as men who were examples of the cream of intellectual society, and therefore to protect their reputations as educated leaders, and refuse to allow their names to be sullied by being associated with intellectual riff-raff and rubbish like Burchard.

Leavitt's reply is not concerned about this side of the argument so much, but pays most attention to Withington's attacks of a more personal nature upon Burchard. He seems often to use Withington's own expressions – repeating some of them – in order to show that Withington's own words have back-fired upon himself; that Withington's action in publishing the review, and Woods's editorial action by including it in his publication, were completely immoral; were a use of stolen material; represented unethical standards of authorship, and were totally un-Christian in nature. – unworthy of a Christian minister.

Article 5. Review of Burchard's Sermons. By Rev. Leonard Withington, Newburyport.

Sermons, Addresses, and Exhortations, by the Rev. Jedediah Burchard, with an Appendix containing some Account of Proceedings during Protracted Meetings, held under his direction in Burlington, Williston and Hinesburgh, Vt., December, 1835, and January, 1836. By C.G, Eastman. Burlington, Chauncey Goodrich, 1836. pp. 120.

We have read this book with unbounded astonishment: not, however, at the extravagance and folly of the man whose

effusions are the principal subject of it; for we fear it is no new thing, in our miserable world, for buffoonery to creep within the railings of the altar, and play its antic tricks in the robe of religion: Nor yet at the success of Mr. Burchard with the multitude; for we have long been impressed with the conviction, that it would be impossible to present to mankind any form of delusion, any compound of error (sic) and extravagance, without making a goodly number of proselytes:- but the matter of astonishment is, that the names of some whom we have been accustomed to respect should be found on the back of a note of which *Jedediah Burchard* is signor and respondee. Is it possible? Do we read true? Or do our senses deceive us? In these bankrupt times it becomes the endorser to look well to his security. Thousands have been ruined by having their names on bad paper. It is therefore with solicitude that we see the names of men high in office and character associated with one so wholly bankrupt in reputation. It is not in the commercial world alone, that men have been destroyed by confidence, when poverty was concealed under the appearance of profusion.

The manner in which this book was got up, is somewhat singular. A bookseller in Burlington, with what motive we have no occasion to enquire, employed a couple of stenographers to follow Burchard, and take down the words of his wisdom, as they fell immediately from his lips. It must be confessed, it was the most effectual way to destroy the man's influence. For, as Dr. Johnson observes that *no man was ever written down but by himself*, so the best way to confute an imposter is, to let him shew himself in his own colours.

That eloquence, which had filled houses, enraptured multitudes, and charmed even doctors, professors, and scholars; that skill which touched the human heart on its most opposite chords, which was equal master of smiles and tears; which fired the imagination, chained the attention, and subdued the heart, is

here printed in a book, and presented to the world. A precious specimen it is of our genius, our piety, and our taste! When the foreigner comes to our shores, moved by the wonders of our age, and enquires which are the instruments which are to bring in the new millennium, we are to put this little book into his hands, and say – *behold our wisdom!* Behold the giants which now fill the earth.

It is due, however, to truth, and even to those who have outraged her most, to say, that this book is the work of no friendly hands. It is the work of those, who, if they would not falsify, would be as likely, (to say the least,) to omit beauties, as to record faults. In short, if Burchard is not the handsomest of men (as he says of one to whom we should shudder to apply such epithets with such levity) in his own native beauty; it is not likely that his attractions have been increased in the hands of the painters who have taken his portrait.

But while justice requires that this should be said, we have substantial reasons for believing, that this book is not an exaggerated representation of Burchard's extravagance and folly. Indeed, we are informed by eye-witnesses of the most credible character, that it fails chiefly in coming short of the truth. Its authenticity is also clear from internal evidence! There is indescribably something in each man's mental progeny which mark their sire, and preclude the possibility of any false foundlings being laid to his charge with hope of success. This book most exquisitely corresponds to all the representations we have heard of Burchardism; and we have no doubt is a faithful picture, though perhaps a faint one, of the thing itself. There is something in the worst as well as the best sounds in nature – the grunt of a swine, as well as the tune of a nightingale – which renders them almost inimitable.

The affair, however, is no trifle. The matter is brought to this alternative; either this book is an abominable libel, or

Jedediah Burchard is something worse than a mountebank. It expressly charges him with gravely proposing to the stenographers to tell a lie, - a series of lies, - to the publisher who employed them, in order to save himself from the disgrace of publication. Here the matter rests. Our evangelist is brought into a condition, in which silence is inevitable ruin. We wait with calmness the birth of that *Truth*, which is said to be the daughter of *Time*.

But as we remarked before, we are not surprised at the existence or the currency of such a man in our age. If wonder were not the most innate of our passions, we should almost cease to wonder at any thing. It has been remarked by Cardinal de Retz, that if the feats [feasts?] of Caligula should be revived, and a *horse* should be made a *consul*, in our own times, we should not be so much astonished as we imagine. No, indeed, it would only be one of the passing bubbles on life's common stream.

But enough of Burchard and his contemptible popularity; it is with his compurgators that at present our remarks are to be employed. We wish to speak one word respecting this *moral* endorsing, which is so prevalent among us.

No farce can be acted, no absurdity can be proposed, no harlequin can step forward to act his tricks on the political or religious stage, but some grave man is to be found, (some honourable member of the house, some president of a college, some doctor of laws or of divinity,) to clap him on the back, and make the piece pass with a roar of applause.

There is, indeed, no disputing about tastes, as the proverb has long since informed us; and if one likes such vulgar cant, such irreverent boldness, such incoherent ravings, as appear in these notes, he must be allowed to have his choice, however much it may be wondered at. But when it comes to a subject of a moral nature, the case is different. In the moral world, if a man

owes something to his taste, he owes more to the community, and still more to his duty and his God.

The truth is, men lend their names too easily to the support of doubtful characters. This is one of the crying sins of the time. Men high in office, (presidents, judges, counsellors, doctors of law and divinity,) all are in fault. There has recently been prowling through the region where the writer of this article resides, a wretched imposter, without talent or virtue, belonging to all religions but possessing none, by the name of John Hancock Slack, who is supposed to have procured large sums from the people, under the pretence of founding a college at Montreal. The man is the grossest compound of ignorance and knavery, whose sin blushes in his face. And yet this man procured a long list of most respectable vouchers, presidents of colleges, judges and statesmen, who virtually recommended him to the charity of the public. It is true, some of their testimonials were so ambiguously expressed, that it was obvious they were either laughing at the man, or gratifying their own indolence in getting rid of him. But what does this avail, when half of the community look only at the form and the name of a letter of recommendation? We earnestly hope, that our great men, who feel they have a name to lend, will hereafter be more careful to lend it with discretion. It is a very serious injunction of the Apostle, *not to be partakers of other men's sins*.

The causes which have led some good men to give their countenance to doubtful characters, deserve carefully to be considered.

In the first place, we live in a rank democracy; and the effects of popular commotion reach the highest men in the highest institutions. We have no rock, which is above the reach of the rolling waves. It is true not only of our civil bodies, but also of our colleges, in the multitude of their number, the eagerness of their competition, and the smallness of their funds,

that they are obliged to follow – they seldom dare to lead, or presume to modify – the prevailing sentiments of the people. They are no longer hulks, as Lord Bacon called them, anchored in the stream, to shew, by their stationary slumbers, how fast the current sets; but they go on the fastest velocity of the stream itself. To this remark, to be sure, there are commendable exceptions. But in general, with respect to our smaller colleges, a popular preacher may shake them to their foundation. If Peter the Hermit should arise from the dead, he would send them on a crusade. The recent history of our country has been afforded but too many examples of superstition, which has been defined as that, in which *wise men follow fools*. We write this in sorrow, not in anger. In view of the mournful, farcical scenes which have been enacted, our pity suppresses our indignation.

But there is another reason for this moral endorsing, of which we are speaking. Extravagance and fanaticism are always gradual in their rise. They steal on the mind like the gloom of a summer twilight, - shade after shade, - so that the victim is in midnight darkness, before he is aware that the day has begun to decline. This remark will be found to be true, by one who is accustomed to attend our popular religious meetings. He enters them with some portion of reason, - a plain sober Christian, honestly believing that two and two makes four. But soon the excitement begins; one speech follows another, and each successively soars over the top of the last; hyperbole follows hyperbole; every thing *tells* in proportion as it is new and extravagant; one excites another; reason and religion retire, and the sway of passion begins. The current rolls; and each happy auditor glides on its surface. Every eye kindles, and every bosom heaves; and the soberest men step up to a sublimity of excitation, to which it would have been impossible to reach by a single bound.

In no one thing is the adage more true, *Nemo repente turpissimus*, than in the progress by which enthusiasm enters the mind. How can a man follow such a preacher as - some who are now on the stage, (without confining the remark to one) for forty days and preserve the balance of his judgment? How can a man exist in a phalanx, and not follow their motions? He that is moving noon and night in the crowd, will have no time for his closet; he that always consults his passions, must lose his reason. To the universality of this remark, the stronger and more enlightened minds hardly form an exception. Our great want is, of some master spirits, who can reason and think *alone*. We want solid thoughts freshly from the solitary spiritual world.

But the great difficulty is, *want of independence of mind*. This is a virtue which republicanism has a great tendency to break down. How few are the men in this republican country, who act from the individuality of their own conceptions? Like pebbles on the shore, we are daily rolled together by the concussions of the tide; all our original angles are worn off; and the same round form and smooth surface presents itself on every side.

This is at least true of the members of a compacted party, led on by some leader, popular in proportion to his superficiality. Such a party reminds us of the appearance which the host of the first crusaders must have made, in their pilgrimage to the Holy Land. There were warriors, lords, ladies and dukes, knights and squires; doctors and scholars; monks and friars, black, white and grey, with all their trumpery, forming the train; while the whole was led on by an emblem, the most expressive possible of their character and object, *the figure of a goose*.

Hence you hear the same cant repeated from all the members of the same party, unvaried by times, circumstances, or individuals. It is really amusing to mark the chorus of Mr. Burchard's sermons. It returns as regularly as the jingling stanza

of a cantata. Let the text be what it will, and the subject what it may, the close of every discourse, instead of inviting sinners to repentance, is – “Now, I want you to take these front seats” – “I want you to commit yourselves;” “I want every man, woman and child to come forward.” &c., &c. This is the regular inference from the modern gospel. The wonder is, that this harsh and monotonous, and unvaried jargon, should form music in the ears of venerable men, accustomed to the silence of study, the refinement of letters, the amplitude of books, the rich variety of nature and revelation. Who could have believed, that any of the fathers of the Church, and the lights of our institutions, could have been carried away by preaching and measures so offensive to all the natural and religious sensibilities of the heart, and adapted to the tastes and passions of the very lowest order of intellect?

It is high time that the public should awake to this subject, when the law of popularity, the dread of reproach, or other motives, lead those in whom trust has been reposed, to lend their influence to such pernicious doctrines and measures. Immense injury is done to the cause of religion and virtue, when the sanction of respected persons is afforded, on whatever pretext, to undeserving men. It is expected of those who have been called to eminent stations, that they will be the first to observe and point out existing errors, and the firmest in resisting the evil tendencies of the times. And when they are found countenancing these errors, and complying with these tendencies, what is it but a dereliction of their duty, and a forfeiture of the trust reposed in them, for which they should be held responsible to the public? Good feelings, kindness to an individual, and fidelity to a party, even the exalted virtue of charity, are no excuse for such a course. Men in these stations do virtually commit the wrong which they sanction, or even forbear to condemn.

Indeed, we are afraid, that a strict scrutiny into most of our public evils, would trace them to distant and un-thought of sources. It has been generally remarked, that this is an age of insubordination; that the organ of reverence in the human scull [soul?] is daily diminishing; and that even the laws themselves, before whose invincible majesty, vice once trembled, and virtue bowed, are in danger of being overthrown, or committed, for their execution, to the multitude. In our great cities, a breath produces an excitement. The statues of justice and mercy tremble on their pedestals. But who is to blame? The poor radical, goaded on by passion and poverty; who acts with the mob, in the actual work of pulling down houses, and establishing a community of goods? Is he alone to blame, and deserving of punishment? No; the lawyer is to blame, who makes the court a scene of chicanery, and thus shakes the public confidence in the legal execution of justice. The judge is to blame, who, through pedantry or corruption, loses the elements of rectitude, in the mazes of his artificial forms. The political demagogue is to blame, who is ready to shake the pillars of the state that his party may reign over its ruins; adopting the infernal maxim –

“Better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven.”

The rich man is to blame, who defrauds the poor of his stipulated price. And even the idealist is to blame, who is forever tearing up foundations in the intellectual world, trampling on past wisdom, to bring in their own innovations, and who set men afloat in their speculations as well as their practices: for it will always be found, that reckless speculation will lead to reckless conduct; and, as an invisible power of heat or cold, hardens or softens the surface of the northern seas, congeals them to ice, or bids the water flow, - so the ideal of the mind will shape the course of life. Those revolutionary storms, in which religion and liberty have perished, may not unfrequently be traced back to the visionary speculations of idealists and reformers.

We cannot allow this opportunity to pass, without expressing the pleasure we have felt, in seeing the public and decided stand which has been taken by some individuals and associations in Vermont, in opposition to that disorderly system which has recently been introduced among them. In the disclosures of this little volume, we find an ample justification, if any were needed, of the course they have pursued. This course was, no doubt, unwelcome, and adopted with reluctance, but was obviously required by fidelity to the great interests committed to their hands, and will be sustained by the judgment of the great body of American Christians. Were a little stand promptly and resolutely taken by ministers and churches similarly situated with regard to this widespread fanaticism, the dreadful evils which it occasions might be, in a great measure prevented.

And as for those venerable men, who are extensively quoted as the apologists and supporters of this system, we trust it will be found, that their wisdom *is not dead but sleepeth*. To think of such men being led by a modern evangelist, would almost force a smile on the cheek of austerity itself. If the subject were not so serious, we would recommend them a speech from Mrs. Boswell to her husband, when she was indignant at his fawning on Dr. Johnson. "My dear," said she, "I have often seen a bear led by a man, but I never saw before a MAN LED BY A BEAR."

But, no! the subject is too serious for irony; and we would rather say, in words of serious and respectful expostulation, to those wise men, who have countenanced this folly; to those sober men, who have followed this extravagance, and to those good men, who have promoted this corruption, - *come out, and be ye separate*, and TOUCH NOT THE UNCLEAN THING. They have made work for repentance; and they *will* repent, as surely as there is truth, for contemplative piety, in the revelations of time.

These remarks, we are well aware, will not meet the approbation of *all* whom they are intended to benefit; and the writer will, perhaps, be denounced by some, as the enemy of revivals of religion. Such is the sophism now employed! Truth means *our creed*; and religion is *our measures*; and if you do not approve of *our* measures, and adopt *our* creed, you are like the enemy of truth and religion! This is, indeed, a short road to infallibility. In answer to all this, we must be permitted to say – not wishing to wound any man’s feelings, but for the sake of that religion and truth which we have been charged with opposing – that we know of no greater enemy of revivals of religion, than a genuine *ultraist*. He throws suspicion on all zeal, and retards thousands from moving forward. Nothing is more certain, in religion, than that the excessive kills the true; just as a tree, that luxuriates in leaves and branches, seldom bears fruit. Where men see such appearances fail, they lose their confidence in all pretensions of piety. A general distrust seizes the public mind. The zealot becomes a hypocrite. The revival ends in spurious excitement, and, for a moment’s triumph, the long season of reverse and reaction comes. To use our old comparison, taken from king Pyrrhus, we gain the battle, but are ruined in the war.⁶⁴

The Rev. Joshua Leavitt’s Reply.

Review of an article in the “Literary and Theological Review,” (Ed. Leonard Woods.)

Article 5. Review of Burchard’s Sermons; by Rev. Leonard Withington of Newburyport.

⁶⁴ Leonard Withington. “Review of Burchard’s Sermons,” in *The Literary and Theological Review*., Conducted by Leonard Woods, Jr. Volume 3. New York, Ezra Collier. 1836. pages 228 – 236.

The manner in which this book was got up, is somewhat singular. A bookseller in Burlington, with what motive we have no occasion to inquire, employed a couple of stenographers to follow Burchard, and take down the words of his wisdom, as they fell immediately from his lips. It must be confessed, it was the most effectual way to destroy the man's influence. For, as Dr. Johnson observes, that *no man was ever written down but by himself*, so the best way to confute an imposter is, to let him shew himself in his own colors.

It is due, however, to truth, and even to those who have outraged her most, to say, that this book is the work of no friendly hands. It is the work of those who, if they would not falsify, would be as likely, (to say the least) to omit beauties, as to record faults.

But while justice requires that this should be said, we have substantial reasons for believing, that this book is not an exaggerated representation of Burchard's extravagance and folly. Indeed, we are informed by eyewitnesses of the most credible character, that it fails chiefly in coming short of the truth. Its authenticity is also clear from internal evidence! There is an indescribable something in each man's mental progeny which marks their sire, and preclude the possibility of any false foundlings being laid to his charge with hope of success. This book most exquisitely corresponds to all the representations we have heard of Burchardism; and we have no doubt is a faithful picture, though perhaps a faint one, of the thing itself. There is something in the worst as well as the best sounds in nature – the grunt of a swine, as well as the tune of a nightingale, - which renders them almost inimitable.

The affair, however, is no trifle. The matter is brought to this alternative; either this book is an abominable libel, or Jedediah Burchard is something worse than a mountebank.

In what words shall we express our astonishment, that the Rev. Leonard Withington, a gentleman, a scholar, an author, and an evangelical minister, should be found dabbling in these dirty waters? After virtually admitting, that the book, as the work of an enemy, is not entitled to credit, and knowing that the notes from which the book was prepared, were taken in the face of a direct prohibition from the preacher, Mr. W. comes forward in a theological quarterly review, and in writing a review of this base caricature, endorses the lie, and makes use of the stolen goods. He exults in the idea, that the preacher is written down in this way, thus giving the sanction of his approval to this way of writing down ministers in good standing, viz., by employing irresponsible young men to write caricature reports of his sermons, and then getting learned divines to certify to the “authenticity” of the picture, “from internal evidence.” Had such a thing been done by a Unitarian bookseller, towards Mr. W. himself, while he was engaged, as he once was, in the work of carrying on revivals, and had Dr. Channing or Professor Ware thus attested the “authenticity,” on the grounds of “internal evidence,” that such is the manner of dealing with “the orthodox,” would he have thought it right?

Fortunately, the devil has overreached himself this time, by going too far – a very dangerous course in doing wrong, though of little risk in doing right. The book carries on its face such sure marks of exaggeration, that it has fallen from the press, still-born and harmless. The review may be set down as an unsuccessful effort at resuscitation. “The people” will not be persuaded, that the man who has not only gained, *but retained*, the affectionate confidence and cooperation of a large number of the most learned, able, wise and prudent men in the land, does it by preaching according to that book; although they will doubtless think it possible that Mr. B., in the ardor and freedom and rapidity of his utterance, does occasionally clip his words and use

some of the homely but pointed phraseology which distinguishes the vernacular dialect of New England. The picture may have likeness enough to be a caricature, and that is all. And yet this "Literary and Theological Review," a religious quarterly, edited by a professor of the Theological Seminary, takes up this paltry volume, and reviews it as "Burchard's Sermons," and lends itself to make the inconsiderate and prejudiced believe, that it is a "faithful picture." If any one thing contributes more than another to secure to Mr. B. the respect of those who do not know him, it is the truly desperate expedients to which they are driven who oppose him.

"But," says this reviewer, who sets up to lecture the religious public on the duty of refinement and taste, "but enough of Burchard and his contemptible popularity; it is with his compurgators that at present our remarks are to be employed. We wish to speak one word respecting this *moral* endorsing, which is so prevalent among us." And so he proceeds to give what he calls the causes which have led some good men to give their countenance to doubtful characters:

In the first place, we live in a rank democracy; and the effects of popular commotion reach the highest men in the highest institutions. We have no rock, which is above the rolling waves. It is true not only of our civil bodies, but also of our colleges, in the multitude of their number, the eagerness of their competition, and the smallness of their funds, that they are obliged to follow – they seldom dare to lead, or presume to modify, - the prevailing sentiments of the people. They are no longer hulks, as Lord Bacon called them, anchored in the stream, to show, by their stationary slumbers, how fast the current sets; but they go on the fastest velocity of the stream itself. To this remark, to be sure, there are honorable exceptions. But in general, with respect to our smaller colleges, a popular preacher may shake them to their foundations.

And this is the style in which a party, professing to be engaged as the conservator of the public peace, order and decorum, think proper to treat a regularly ordained minister of the gospel, of good standing in the Presbyteries, in whose eyes their orthodoxy in doctrine and morality of life are not impeached, and therefore we rationally conclude it to be unimpeachable. For when there is a spirit abroad, which will sustain such a review, we may be sure the only reason why they have not impeached him is that they dare not. How long will the peace of the churches, and even the order and beauty of the society remain, if the lights of the age are leading the way in personal abuse and slander.

And this is to be understood as the reason why men who stand in the community where President Bates and President Lord stand, are among the grateful friends of Mr. B. And then, when he has laid them all in the mud together, only see how condescendingly this reviewer stoops from his carriage to console them, that their degradation (!) is not absolutely irretrievable! If they will only come over and “endorse” the Literary and Theological Review, all will be well.

And as for those venerable men, who are extensively quoted as the apologists and supporters of this system, we trust it will be found that their wisdom *is not dead but sleepeth*. To think of such men being led by a modern evangelist, would almost force a smile of the face of austerity herself. If the subject were not so serious, we would commend to them a speech of Mrs. Boswell to her husband, when she was indignant at his fawning on Dr. Johnson. “My dear,” she said, “I have often seen a bear led by a man, but I never before saw *a man led by a bear*.”

But, no! the subject is too serious for irony; and we would rather say, in words of serious and respectful expostulation, to those wise men, who have countenanced this folly; to those sober men who have followed this extravagance, and to those good men

who have promoted this corruption – Come out, and be ye separate, and *touch not the unclean thing*. They have made work for repentance; and they *will* repent, as surely as there is truth for contemplative piety in the revelations of time.⁶⁵

PART SIX

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO Burchard's exclusion by Congregational Ministers in Vermont, and all New England.

The main opposition to Burchard occurred after the meetings in Burlington. This was created by the Rev. Dr. James Marsh. This opposition was decisive, and brought Burchard's ability to work in Vermont to a fairly rapid stop.

As Donal Ward says, "In the end, the Burlington protracted meeting proved to be Burchard's undoing. Once having heard the New York revivalist, the distinguished former president of the University of Vermont, James Marsh, felt compelled in the name of reason over emotion and in the defense of good religion to enter the lists. Marsh's reaction to Burchard is only thinly veiled in his comments on the dangers of evangelism made to a gathering of the clergy early in 1836:-

⁶⁵ Joshua Leavitt (editor.) *New York Evangelist*. Saturday, 20 August, 1836. page 137

“From the nature of the case, where the church is thus seduced from its confidence in the established clergy, we are exposed to the incursion of evangelists who are themselves wandering stars, undeserving of personal confidence, and from their erratic character irresponsible to any ecclesiastical body: ignorant, conceited and fanatical. Such as one, with his petty scheme of empiricism, with a boastful proclamation of his numberless conversions and testimonies to their genuineness... will yet find admittance into our churches, break up all established order, degrade and disgrace the services of the sanctuary, and of contemptuous infidelity without, and then leave the tumult of disorder to settle as it may, while he practices the same arts in other regions, with the same lamentable and disastrous results.”⁶⁶

The University faculty and students supported Marsh in these attacks. The main method Marsh used was to present his complaint to the local ministers’ Association, which deliberated on the matter on a number of occasions.

Congregational ministers had to be careful about how they reacted to this situation. Congregationalism is based upon the belief that local congregations, and ministers, were free to act according to their consciences, and should not be bound by rules or regulations invented by anyone else. So these Associations could not direct their congregations or their ministers to follow a certain instruction, and must not appear to be trying to do this. They could not pass a regulation banning Burchard, or anyone else, from their pulpits. The result was that each Association passed a unanimous decision that the ministers in the Association

⁶⁶ Donal Ward. Page 142.

would not use evangelists in congregations where a settled minister had been installed.

Each Association of ministers in Vermont discussed the same issue, and made the same commitment. The same thing happened throughout Connecticut, and also through Massachusetts.

Although this decision not to use evangelists in churches where settled ministers existed sounds like a good reaction to threats posed by preachers like Burchard, In fact it created a situation where any settled minister could not easily make his own decision about what he believed to be the best course of action in his own church. If a minister decided that it was in the best interests of the work of God in his own church, he would have to act contrary to strong feelings in his Association. So he would be under pressure. It would not be easy for him to make his own free decision. Whatever Congregationalism stood for, it stood for people being able to make free decisions according to their own conscience. So, in a sense, the stand taken by these Associations counteracted their own basic beliefs to some degree.

This stance also seemed to contradict the teaching of the New Testament which made clear that the role of evangelists was a definite calling from God which was for the benefit of the Church. No doubt some evangelists could be self-appointed, or could act in ways which were not in the best interests of settled ministers, or could introduce unsafe practices or heretical doctrines. But it was still a calling which could come from God, and which would greatly benefit the churches when rightly and wisely used. Of course, men like Marsh would protest that they were not trying to deny or act against what the New Testament said. But it did tend to produce this result.

Another obvious result was a strong decline in the use of evangelists in the Congregational churches of Vermont, and a long-term decline in the membership of those churches. This

long-term decline in church membership amongst orthodox Congregational churches in New England is well documented following these events reacting to Burchard's ministry. It is seen in the following book.

The Rev. Henry Clay Fish published a book in 1874 entitled *Handbook of Revivals*, in which he argued that powerful and prolonged revivals were needed in order to fulfil the great commission, and to keep the churches in good spiritual condition.

Under the sub-heading "The present slow progress of religion..." he says:-

"From the statistical report of the American Orthodox Congregational churches for 1862, it is seen that out of the fourteen hundred and eighteen churches in New England, seven hundred and thirty eight, or more than one half, had not a single conversion, or addition by profession, during the year. One hundred and eighty-two other churches had but one conversion each. Excepting the churches with which evangelists had labored, there was an average of less than two conversions to a minister for the year; and for all the United States and Canada probably not over two. The results for the last four years do not vary greatly from these numbers. Many of these churches have not been blessed with a revival for periods of fifteen, twenty, and even thirty years together; and some of them not with a single conversion. It further appears that the whole number of converts gathered at home and abroad, under the entire auspices of the American Orthodox Congregational churches, over the number of deaths and excommunications, was but two thousand and sixteen; which, divided amongst the thousand and fifty-six churches of the denomination, gives an average gain of less than three-fourth of one to a church for the year.

Or, otherwise stated, two thousand and sixteen churches had a net gain of one soul each for the year, and one thousand and forty churches had not one addition.”⁶⁷

The year 1862, it must be remembered, is only a short time after the great revival of 1857 had occurred throughout many parts of the United States of America.

So I think it is clear that the abandonment of the use of evangelists by the Congregational churches of New England had a long-term crippling effect upon the denomination as a whole, and upon a great many of the churches individually.

Because of the bad odour which was created around the ministry of Jedediah Burchard, the evangelist himself was fairly easily able to go somewhere else to carry on his work. After a few more missions in Vermont, he traveled north into Canada, where he ministered for a period, and then he returned to upstate New York. There was one minister, however, who was not able to do this, and who suffered badly as a result. This was the Rev. Dr. Joshua Bates, the president of Middlebury College. Up to that time the College had been doing well, attracted a steady stream of students who wanted to study there, and benefited from a good supply of financial support. Because Bates had supported Burchard’s work, and had conducted protracted meetings on his own account in a number of churches, the negative decisions of the various Congregational Associations rebounded on him. The number of students applying to attend the College fell by half, and the financial donations dried up. In order to save the College from collapse, Bates had to resign, and leave the leadership of the College to others.

⁶⁷ Henry C. Fish. *Handbook of Revivals*. (First published 1874.) Gano Books. 1988.

Another Possible Option.

Another possible course of action which appears not to have been considered sufficiently was an idea which had appeared in the literature over ten years previously. This was for ministerial Associations to have in mind specially suitable people who could come to the aid of a minister who was faced with the beginnings of a revival in his church. As it was normally, the local minister had to cope with the work-load of an ongoing revival in his area by himself, perhaps calling for the help of neighbouring ministers or friends, who were themselves already busy.

In the period 1814 – 1820, the evangelist Asahel Nettleton had played this roll at times, with wonderful effect. Perhaps this idea could have been developed. It is indeed Nettleton himself who had put forward the suggestion. The reason for this suggestion was that Nettleton said he had received fifty requests to come and help a parish minister for every one request that he had been able actually to comply with. So, there was obviously a need for someone extra to perform this role.

This idea had been discussed in the *Connecticut Observer*, ten years before and a long article about it had also appeared in the *Religious Intelligencer*.⁶⁸

We have already noted that Burchard's best results, both in New York and in Vermont, occurred when he came to a church after a revival had already started there.

⁶⁸ *Religious Intelligencer*. Volume Nine. 5 March, 1825. pages 637 – 638.

1. Rev. James Marsh.

From the MEMOIR, edited by Joseph Torrey.

In all efforts for the promotion of the great interests of humanity, for the increase of true religion, and piety among ourselves, and for the general spread of Christianity through the world, Dr. Marsh took a deep and lively interest. He looked upon such efforts as the glory of the age, and felt it a privilege to cooperate in them as far as his means and opportunities would allow. But while he heartily approved of all the great objects which in these latter days have enlisted the feelings and called forth the activity of Christian benevolence, he could not always approve of the measures resorted to for promoting them. He had little faith in the efficacy of any other means to reform the world, than the simple power of Gospel truth. Expedients of mere human cunning and contrivance, whatever might be their immediate effects, appeared to him rather an injury to the cause they pretended to advance, and the more so in the same proportion as they departed from the noble simplicity of the Gospel. He was astonished at the ease with which even good men sometimes allowed themselves to be deceived in this matter; and he could no longer be still, when he observed whole communities rushing thoughtlessly into innovations, wrong in principle and unsafe in practice, which, whatever they might promise at first, could scarcely fail to result otherwise than in injury to the cause of true religion, and destruction to the peace and order of the churches.

On one occasion in particular, he felt himself called upon to take an open and determined stand against an innovation of this sort, which, under the sanction and patronage of influential men, in and out of the State, was threatening to become the

universal order of the day. Sometime in the year 1836, an itinerant minister, or evangelist, by the name of Burchard, came on a visit to the State of Vermont, and was employed to preach in some of the churches. He was a man of considerable address and power over the passions, with a quick perception of individual character, and great tact in adapting a set of measures to bring the community into a certain state of feeling, and then make the public feeling react upon the minds of individuals.

The seeming success that attended his labours inspired a very general confidence both in the man and in his measures; and the new system of making converts by rudeness of language, joined with a certain tactical skill, threatened to supplant, at least for a time, the more orderly and quiet means of winning souls to Christ by the power of the truth. Dr. Marsh looked upon the whole movement with suspicion from the first; but when the scenes came to be enacted before his own eyes, he felt compelled to employ his pen and the whole force of his personal influence in opposition to a system so palpably mischievous and absurd. Its friends and advocates were in the habit of appealing to experience, and thought the propriety of the measures, revolting as they might be to the unbiased sensibilities of the pious heart, was still sufficiently confirmed by their surprising results. He could not listen to such language; his great objection to the whole system was its confessedly empirical character.

“Are we to be told,” said he, “when a novel system of measures for the promotion of religion is proposed, that with the Bible in our hands, and all that we know, or ought to know, of the principles of the Gospel in their application to the conscience, we must not pass our judgment upon it *till we have tried it*; and whatever may be our objections to it beforehand, its apparent good results must silence them? But who is to judge the nature of the results, and how long a time is to be allowed for proving that what appears to be good, is truly so? If immediate

appearances of good are to be taken as an unanswerable argument in favour of a novel system of doctrines and measures, and the majorities in our churches are to judge and decide on those appearances, uncontrolled by that knowledge and insight into the deeper principles of religious truth, which can be expected only as the result of mature reflection in those who are set for the defense of the Gospel, what limit can there be to new experiments, and how long will our churches sustain themselves under influences so radically subversive of whatever is fixed and permanent, whether in doctrine or the institutions of religion?"

The representations and remonstrances of Dr. Marsh, through the press, before associations of ministers, and wherever he could get access to the public mind, were not without their effect; and the evil which threatened to deluge the religious community, and against which he was the first to set up a standard, gradually subsided and died away from this part of the land.⁶⁹

Marsh's TRACT ON EVANGELISM.

(Read before an Association of Ministers, 1837.)

Is it Expedient to Employ Evangelists in Churches Furnished with the Stated and Ordinary Means of Religious Instruction?

In treating of this question, I shall inquire, to some extent, into the purpose of the stated ministry, and its relation to the church and the community; and then point out some of the effects to be apprehended from the introduction of a distinct class of

⁶⁹ Joseph.Torrey. pages 125 - 128

religious teachers, such as we understand by the term Evangelists in the question before us.

1. What, then, in the first place, is the proper function of the established and regular ministry, in its relation to the church and to the community at large?

The general answer, of course, is, that they are appointed to preach the gospel and administer the ordinances of the gospel. They are set apart as a distinct body of men, necessary to the ends which God in his word and in his providence prescribes. But why necessary; and what are the qualifications which are to distinguish them from other Christians, and on account of which the necessity of them exists? Obviously, they are required to have a knowledge of divine truth, an intellectual insight into spiritual things, a systematic and comprehensive acquaintance with all that is necessary for the right and the effectual teaching of divine truth and the application of the word and power of the gospel to the minds of men, which does not belong and is not expected to belong to other men. They are the appointed, and, if they are what they ought to be, the divinely appointed and authorized spiritual guides of the flock. It is their business and their duty to be thoroughly instructed in the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and able to teach others whatever is necessary to their salvation. There is a kind of knowledge requisite to fit them for their duty, which is not necessary to the private Christian in order for his salvation. They must have a theoretical and speculative and a systematic knowledge of those truths which need only be known practically and in their immediate relation to the individual conscience, in order to have a saving efficacy for the individual. Take, for example, the doctrine of original sin. It is only necessary for the individual, in order to its practical effect on himself, to admit, with an inward undoubting conviction of its truth, the fact that he is a guilty, self-ruined and helpless sinner, all whose thoughts and purposes are

evil; and that in Christ alone is his help and the power to overcome evil. The more simplicity, the more immediate and unquestioning assurance there is in the reception of this fact on the simple authority of conscience, the less of speculation and of speculative doubt about it, the better for the ends of the gospel in the application of all its truths. So, generally, the more the minds of those whom we would save by the word and spirit of the gospel are kept to the plain and simple practical application of the truth to the conscience, the more they can feel that it is purely a matter between God and their own hearts, and their mind kept free from doubting and agitating questions, either about essential truths or duties or about matters in themselves indifferent, the better is the opportunity of the preacher to bring home the gospel to the heart and conscience of the private individual, to be secured? By the supposition, and from the nature of the case, it cannot be the result of speculation in the great mass of the people. It must be from the immediate agency of reason and conscience, enlightened and actuated by the Word and Spirit of God; and it is the business of the ministry to know how to apply the rightly understood and interpreted words of divine truth so as to produce this result; and instead of goading the people into speculative difficulties and doubts, to aid their consciences, and be co-workers with the Spirit of God in bringing them into practical obedience to the truth. But what will be the result, if there be no settled and consistent system of instruction on the part of those who are looked to as spiritual guides; but if, on the contrary, the effect of their teaching is to turn away the minds of the people from the immediate truths of reason and conscience, - those, I mean, which the unsophisticated practical reason and conscience of all men will approve, - and to lead them into speculations beyond their depth, and the exercise of a faculty which they are unqualified to employ on subjects of a spiritual kind? Will it not tend to unsettle their conviction of essential and fundamental

truths which immediately and practically concern their own inward being, and unfit them for being benefited by the simple preaching of the gospel?

The clergy, then, the stated and established ministry, I maintain, must be, in order to the accomplishment of the purpose for which they are appointed, a body set apart by their knowledge and ministerial qualifications, and recognized and respected by the people, as guides and teachers in spiritual things. They must, as a body, respect and govern themselves, with all humility, indeed, as the servants of Christ, and with a deep sense of their responsibility as the guides of the flock and instructors of the ignorant, but without losing sight of their place and office in the church. It is their duty to be *guides*; to understand many things *speculatively*, which can be taught to the people at large only *practically*, and so far as they practically affect their hearts and consciences. How can they perform the duties for which they are set apart and ought to be qualified, if they yield, on all occasions, to those who are unqualified to act upon them, the decision of those very questions which they have themselves been specially qualified to act upon and decide? How can they shift off the responsibility which, by virtue of their office, devolves upon them, without a dereliction of their most solemn duty? As a distinct body holding this common relation to the church of which they are ministers, they ought to agree together in regard to the great and fundamental doctrines which they preach, and in regard to the measures which they adopt for the promotion of the interests of truth and the well-being of the church of God. They ought, as a body of qualified spiritual guides and teachers, to settle among themselves all those doubtful questions which they are supposed qualified to understand and decide, but which, from the nature of the case, the people at large cannot understand, and therefore cannot decide aright. They must be responsible to each other and to the ecclesiastical bodies in which they are united,

and must, I say, in order to the best practical effect of their ministrations, understand and maintain this common relation to the people of their care; nor is it possible for them in any other way to discharge the trust committed to their hands. Such was the purpose of ecclesiastical organization, in all the different denominations of Christians which would be regarded as of any authority here. What else is the proper end of our organization in this body, but to secure unity of action and agreement among ourselves in doctrine and in practice, so far as regards the relation we hold to the church and the modes we adopt for advancing the cause of truth? What can be expected as to the practical advancement of religion in the churches and among those who are to be taught and guided, when the guides are at variance, and lead in different and opposite directions? It is unquestionably a matter of the highest import that the clergy, at least of the same denomination, understand each other, and be responsible to each other for unity of action, in regard to all those matters which it is their proper business to examine and decide. It is important, and a part of their responsible and especial duty, to keep from the people all those agitating questions which the people cannot act upon intelligently, and leave their hands, as far as possible, unexcited by them. In this case, a body of clergy, such as they ought to be, truly *reverend* for their upright and holy conversation, their sound knowledge and wisdom, standing forth as the ministers, and speaking as becomes the oracle of God, will be revered by the great body of the people, and will have with them that spiritual authority which will prepare their minds to receive with simplicity and meekness the ingrafted word; to apply it practically and immediately to their own consciences, with all its renovating and redeeming power.

Now let us suppose a body of clergy aiming at or having attained this position in relation to the churches and people of their care; responsible to and watchful over each other, as

brethren; understanding the principles upon which they act, and working together in the same spirit, for the same end. Suppose this as that which either is, or ought to be the fact; and then I am prepared to show, in part at least, in the second place, my views of the probable, or at least possible, effect of the present mode of employing evangelists.

1. They may come into their sphere of action from a distance, authorized to preach by they know not whom, and wholly irresponsible to them as a body. In this case, so far as they have any settled and understood principles of action for the promotion of religion, they are likely to be broken in upon, and the minds of the people turned away from the practical application of truth to their own consciences, to the consideration of the changes made, and the debating of questions which belong not to them, and which they are unqualified to understand. All the advantages of union and consistency among themselves are lost, and the people are agitated by matters that belong to the clergy.

The whole purpose of ecclesiastical organisation is prostrated; the clergy appear before the people, at variance among themselves; and even supposing the diversity to be incidental, and of little moment in itself, it tends to direct the attention to other things than those which immediately and practically affect the heart.

2. They may more directly interfere with the relation subsisting between the established body of clergy and the people of their charge. I have said that this relation ought to be, and must be in order to its proper end, one of watchful superintendence and guidance and spiritual authority on the one side, and of confiding and reverential docility on the other. This is liable to be broken up, by a course that withdraws confidence from the established clergy in regard to those very questions which it is their business and duty to settle, and teaches the

people to judge and decide for themselves what they are wholly unqualified to determine. When this is done, it has precisely the same effect in the church, which the prevailing radicalism of the day has in politics. It puffs up the ignorant and inexperienced with a vain confidence in their own understandings or their own fancied experience in spiritual things, and leads them to undervalue, perhaps to censure and deride, those to whom they ought to look up with humility and reverence. It leads them to engage in speculations wholly beyond their reach, from want of discrimination to confound truth with falsehood, to unsettle all fixed principles in their minds, to make them regardless of the most sacred distinctions between truth and falsehood, and leave them the sport of every new doctrine, or the dupes of every new form of fanaticism. This is the case not only in regard to individuals, but to churches. They become broken off from the ministry which God has ordained, and heap to themselves teachers who will flatter their self-confidence and be governed by their ignorant and delusive notions. Again, by seducing the churches from their proper relation to their spiritual guides, it tends to seduce from the truth and from the plain path of duty the clergy themselves. It places them under the strongest temptation to yield up their own principles and those of the order to which they belong, to place knowledge under the control of ignorance, and to subject the established order of the gospel to the caprice of self-willed arrogance and presumption. It leads to the habit of referring to laymen, and to those necessarily ignorant of the matter, subjects and questions which belong properly to the clergy, and ought to be decided in ecclesiastical bodies. In a word, it tends directly and inevitably to strip the clergy of all their rightful prerogatives, held as they are, too, and delegated solely for the benefit of the church. In other words, the clergy are led to yield that which it is their solemn duty to retain, and responsibly

to exercise for the end for which they were qualified and put into the ministry.

3. From the nature of the case, where the church is thus seduced from its confidence in the established clergy, we are exposed to the incursion of evangelists who are themselves wandering stars, undeserving of personal confidence, and from their erratic character irresponsible to any ecclesiastical body; ignorant, conceited and fanatical. Such an one, with his petty scheme of empiricism, with his boastful proclamation of his numberless conversions and testimonies to their genuineness, like a medical empiric with his marvellous cures and long list of certificates, and with the same want of discrimination both as to the nature of the disease and the employment of the rightful remedies, with the same self-complacency as to the superiority and wonderful effects of his own petty inventions, the same contemptuous treatment of those who profess to have any other or better knowledge, and still further, with the same cautious avoidance of that inspection and publicity which might perchance expose his shallowness, will yet find admittance into our churches, break up all established order, degrade and disgrace the services of the sanctuary, diffuse a spirit of fanaticism within the church, and of contemptuous infidelity without, and then leave the tumult of disorder to settle as it may, while he practices the same arts in other regions, with the same lamentable and disastrous results.

How different is all this from the calm and silent, but laborious and persevering inculcation of the truth, by a learned, a wise, a holy and revered body of men, in whom the people confide, and from whom, with docility, with simplicity and meekness, they receive the ingrafted word, which is able to save their souls! And how vastly different is the result upon the intellectual, the moral and spiritual character of the community at

large; upon the order and decency, the dignity and propriety, the purity and sacredness, of all the ministrations of religion.

Yet, as evangelism is now conducted, it cannot consist with that relation between the people and the ministry of the Gospel which is essential to this state of things, and to the best interests of the church. Its tendency is to disorder and irregularity, to the discredit of sound and healthful instruction, to the dishonouring of the Word and Spirit of God, and to the substitution of the devices of the human understanding and of men; will-worship for that worship which is in spirit and in truth. I would not charge upon this alone, by any means, all the evils which exist in the moral and spiritual condition of our churches. But I maintain, that the more superficial, the more dead to spiritual things, the more in need our churches are of a true and genuine reviving of the power and graces of the Spirit, the more danger is to be apprehended from the employment in them of eccentric and self-confident and irresponsible men. The excitement so produced is not the awakening they need, and only aggravates the disease it is intended to cure. There is no cure for it, but the patient and laborious and persevering application of the truth, in its nakedness and simplicity, to the hearts and consciences of men, by a ministry whom they know; in whose simplicity and honesty and godly sincerity they confide; by men who have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth, commending themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. By such a ministry, as the appointed and authorised instruments of and co-workers with the Spirit of God, the churches may be truly revived, so as to become not revival but living churches, and be no longer exposed to that "sad mixture of fanaticism and knavish imposture" into which the "art of revival-making" is ready to degenerate, in the present mode of getting up and "conducting" and "managing" revivals.

From these considerations, it seems to me perfectly clear, that it will always be unsafe to employ evangelists at all in the way in which it is now done, out of the sphere of ecclesiastical bodies with which they are properly connected and to which they are responsible. If they are employed in any way, the nature of the case seems to dictate that it be only in correspondence and in unison with their own association or presbytery, and within their proper limits. Under such limitations, they may, perhaps, be employed in the destitute churches, and be occasional helpers of those who are in the more stated labours of a settled pastor, without danger of disruption and the many evils which attend the course of an erratic and transcendent evangelist.

These views I value chiefly as assigning, according to my humble estimate, their proper and rightful place and dignity and spiritual authority, in relation to the church and the world, to the regular and established clergy. This is the position, which, according to divine appointment, and in view of the best interests of the church, they unquestionably ought to hold; and whatever interferes with and dissolves this relation between them and the people, is both inexpedient and wrong. An established ministry, qualified for their place and performing their duties as becomes their sacred office, deserving the respect and confidence of the people by all those qualifications which belong to their high and responsible station, are entitled to that confidence, and may rightfully, nay, must, under the highest responsibility, exercise those prerogatives with which they are invested, as the shepherds of the flock. To what end are the schools of the prophets, and all that laborious discipline, by which, as a matter of duty, the minister of God prepares himself, with the aid of God's grace and the teachings of His Spirit, for the discharge of his high trust, if his judgment is to be yielded on all subjects to untaught ignorance or presumptuous folly? To what purpose are our associations and conventions, our ministerial intercourse and out

talk of the vast responsibility that rests upon us as having the care of souls, if, after all, every question that we are to decide, individually or collectively, may be decided for us by those who feel no responsibility, and have never qualified themselves for the task? No, brethren; we cannot divest ourselves of our responsibility. He who is ordained to the care of souls, is and must be responsible for the doctrines which are preached in his pulpit; for the measures, whether of order or confusion, that attend, under his charge, the ministrations of the sanctuary. He is bound to see that nothing be there taught or done, inconsistent with the established doctrines or orderly ministrations of the ministerial brotherhood to which he belongs, and with whom he is a co-worker, in the unity of the faith and in the order of the Gospel.

On this ground alone can there be any unity, or the existence and continuance of that relation of the ministry to the church, which is indispensably necessary to the performance of duty, on the one side, and the reception of the appointed blessing, on the other. The manifold blessings flowing to the church and the world, from a ministry thus qualified, thus organized, thus responsible, can never be secured by the labor of irresponsible and irregular dispensers of truth or error, as the case may be; and when its ends are frustrated by such men, no power on earth can remedy, no human wisdom foresee, the evils that must be the inevitable result.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ *The Remains of the Rev. James Marsh, D.D., late President and professor of moral and intellectual philosophy in the University of Vermont, with a Memoir of his life.* Compiled by Joseph Torrey. Kennikat Press. 1971 . 1st publ. 1843. Pages 629 – 642.

2. Documents relating to the exclusion of Burchard.

(a.) From Vermont.

RUTLAND ASSOCIATION.

At a meeting of the Rutland Association, holden at the house of Rev. Wm Mitchell, in East Rutland, Feb. 2, 1836 – their attention was called to a subject, which, after the most careful consideration, appeared to them of the highest importance to the churches under their care. The system of means for exciting and promoting revivals of religion, generally known to have been in operation during the year past among the churches of Vermont, was expected soon to be introduced within their own limits.

If they had regarded this system, therefore, with solicitude, in its relation to the general interests of religion, while employed at a distance, it became now a matter not only of more immediate concern, but of great responsibility, in its relation to their own unavoidable duty. The subject was not, indeed, in any of its important bearings, at this period, new to the several members of the Association. It could not have escaped their notice for months preceding, that they and the churches under their care might have a duty to perform in regard to it, and they had already endeavoured, as far as opportunity offered, to obtain all necessary information, that they might be prepared to act themselves, and to guide their several churches, with wisdom and discretion.

At this meeting the various facts and arguments, that had presented themselves to the minds of the brethren assembled, were fully discussed, with an earnest desire to know the path of duty, and to discharge their solemn obligations in the fear of God. They endeavoured to understand the essential character and necessary tendencies of the doctrines and measures relied upon in

this system for the promotion of religion, and to judge of them by the light of divine truth. The subject, they were well aware, involves important principles of Christian doctrine and experience; and, in its relation to the permanent interests of religion, might well demand the exercise of the highest qualifications which they can claim, as ministers of the gospel and stewards of the household of God. Situated as they are, they had no temptation to assume a responsibility that did not belong to them; and on the other hand they dared not shun the responsibility which was imposed upon them, as men allowed of God to be put in trust of the gospel. As authorized spiritual guides, in duty bound not only to be well instructed themselves in things pertaining to the kingdom of God, but able to teach others also, a necessity was laid upon them, not only to form, but to express to the churches under their care, a deliberate and decided judgement. If in doing so they shall be found to differ from some of their brethren in other Associations, and from some even, to whom they hold the sacred relation of pastors and teachers, they trust it will still be believed, that they have not acted either rashly or ignorantly, nor without a sacred regard to the feelings of others, as well as to their own conscientious views of truth and duty.

They are happy in saying, that in this expression of their views, in an unusually full meeting of Association, there was great unanimity, and entire harmony of feeling; and they earnestly pray, that the same harmony may prevail among those for whose spiritual welfare it is their privilege to labour in the gospel of Christ.

In the following paragraphs they have aimed to exhibit briefly some positions relative to this subject, which they fully believe warranted by facts, and by the word of God. They entreat their brethren in the ministry, as well as the churches and people of their charge, to consider them, and the grounds on

which they rest, with candour; and, in judging of the course pursued by the Association, to yield a suitable regard to their solemn responsibilities in reference to the public ministrations of the gospel.

1. It cannot but be seen and felt by every careful observer, that the system of operations now in progress among the churches of this state, strongly tends to interfere with the responsibilities of established pastors, and the sacred relation which they sustain to the church and to the world. It diverts the hopes and the confidence of the community from those, who, in the word and ordinary providence of God, are made responsible for their spiritual instruction, and from the appointed institutions and ministrations of the gospel, to irregular and less responsible teachers. It tends to withdraw attention from the truth in its nakedness and simplicity, and direct it to novel and strange doctrines and measures. And the employment of these means is often determined, not by those whose special and most solemn duty it is to judge in regard to such things, and who by their office must be responsible, but by those, who, from their different relations to the church, cannot be so well qualified to decide, and who cannot feel the same responsibility.

By cherishing delusive expectations, and thus enlisting public feeling in its favor, this system tends rashly to subvert principles and practices long established, and hastily to introduce other principles and practices, such as the regular ministry, in the exercise of their unbiased judgment, could never approve. Yet they are set for the defense of the gospel; and, as they must take heed to themselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers, to feed the church of God; so it is their duty to guard the church, and the ministrations of the sanctuary, from whatever would corrupt the simplicity of the Gospel. Without a violation of the most solemn obligations, they cannot resort to human devices for promoting the work of God,

nor employ either doctrines or measures, that are not in accordance with the *word* and the *spirit* of God. They equally violate their obligations as ministers of Christ, if, from want of firmness in following their own convictions of duty, they countenance others in teaching doctrines or adopting measures among the people of their charge, which they could not themselves conscientiously teach and adopt.

2. The views of religious truth which characterize this system of operations, and those, too, on points of vital importance, cannot be approved, as discriminating and evangelical. They are obviously not such, so far as they relate to the character and the condition of the sinner, as tend to awaken solemn reflection, to enlighten the conscience, to produce a deep and effectual conviction of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, of the self-ruined, lost, and helpless state of man by nature, and his need of the grace that is in Christ Jesus, in order to obedience of a law that is holy and spiritual. The notions of submission as separate from regeneration, of faith, of prayer, and of the influences of the Spirit of God, taught and acted upon in connexion with these measures, cannot be regarded as scriptural, or in accordance with the faith of the gospel. The same views and consequent practices have before appeared in the history of the church, but by the great and good men of the times, were condemned, as delusive and fanatical.

Under the show of humility, they ever have tended, and ever will tend to nourish spiritual pride and self-confidence, to lead men away from the true faith and the simplicity of the Gospel, and to prepare them for still more gross and dangerous delusions. There is withal in the whole system, as carried into effect among the churches of this state, as well as in its previous history, an unwarrantable indifference to clear and distinguishing exhibitions of divine truth. The whole system is characterized so much by vague conceptions of truth, fallacious illustrations, and

incoherent argument, that it cannot be approved by reflecting minds, as fitted to reclaim men from error, or to guide them into a knowledge of the truth.

3. But while there is too little to enlighten the mind, to awaken and invigorate the conscience, a system of measures is adopted, and a variety of motives urged, for the purpose of exciting the mind to immediate action. These measures, some of them at least avowedly empirical, and defended on the sole ground of their apparent results, requiring men to “commit themselves” on the subject of religion, and “to give their hearts to God” while as yet they have no just sense of the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of their hearts, cannot commend themselves to the sober reflection of men acquainted with the truths of spiritual religion. The motives urged, also, it cannot be denied, are almost exclusively such as address themselves to the selfish principles of our nature, and impel to immediate action for a selfish end, instead of co-operating with the word and Spirit of God to produce a true denial of self, a genuine repentance for sin, and a principle of holy obedience.

Those who know the deceitfulness of the heart, and have any just apprehensions of the strength of that radical principle of evil which rules within it, cannot but fear, that these measures and these motives are but too often only apparently successful, while yet there is no true sense of the evil of sin, no deep-felt need of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, and none of that drawing of the Father, without which our Saviour assures us we cannot come to him. Such crafty devices obviously tend to cheat the heart into a denial of its own inmost principle of action; and, where their tendency is not specially guarded against by previous knowledge of religious truth, there is sad reason to fear, that they produce self-deluding hopes, and an outward form of religion only, while that “cunning bosom sin,” still true to its character,

has but assumed a different dress, and acquired a more fatal because more blinding sway.

4. The general aspect of the public assemblies, where this system of measures is put in operation, is not marked by that religious awe and reverence, by that solemn stillness, and that overpowering impression of truth upon the conscience, which evince the presence of the Spirit of God. The minds of the audience are manifestly not awed by the conviction, "this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." There is on the contrary but too obviously an unrestrained spirit of levity and disorder that does not become, but must inevitably degrade, the ministrations of the sanctuary. The peculiar movements which are a part of this system obviously tend to this disorder; and the language employed is often vulgar, personal, abusive, and irreverent; and must therefore be considered as wholly at variance with elevated Christian feeling and the spirit of the gospel. Such things cannot fail to expose to profane scoffing that religion which they so grievously misrepresent, and bring a reproach upon those religious truths and services, which, left to *their simplicity* and *sacredness*, command the reverence even of the ungodly. They cannot but tend directly and most deplorably to relax the hold of the church, and of the ordinary ministrations of the gospel, upon the sound sense and the enlightened conscience of the community, and give increased strength to every form of error.

5. The principles and practice of this system in regard to the reception of persons into the communion of the church, are deserving of very grave consideration. As they have been thus far carried into effect, they must tend very essentially, and very injuriously, to alter the character of the Congregational churches, and to affect their influence on the world around them. The precautions adopted by those churches in earlier times, and generally acted upon, both to guard individuals from the dangers

of self-deception, and the church from unworthy members, were sanctioned by principles that cannot now be violated without imminent danger. The enlightened friends of the Congregational church, and of evangelical religion, cannot but apprehend, from the course pursued, a relaxation of discipline, a decline of spirituality and of vital godliness, and an intrusion of the spirit of the world into the heart of the church, till it shall no longer be the light of the world. They cannot but deplore measures, which they regard as compromising and exposing to dishonour, the sound Congregationalism of New England, and as deeply injuring the best of all causes, the cause of truth and of God. The consequence will be, either that the churches must soon retrace their steps, with much attendant disorder, contention, and bitter sorrow, or, still following up the same course, sink into error and worldliness, and, as to any *spiritual* character, become lost in the world around them.

6. If these views be correct, then the results, so confidently appealed to, as the chief and the convincing argument in support of this system of measures, cannot be relied upon. The truth is, this system, like every other novel device for promoting the interests of spiritual religion, ought to be judged, especially by those who must be responsible for its introduction, not according to its apparent results, but by its own essential character, as compared with the spiritual and immutable principles of the word of God. Where there is so much of art and man's device, so much that is acceptable to the natural heart, and so little plain dealing with the consciences of men, it ought not to be expected, that the effect will be different from the cause; and the apparent results, however fair at first, must be looked upon with suspicious forebodings. When the principle itself is wrong, its influence cannot be right; nor can any human skill ever be competent so to manage a system like this, as to secure from it the uncorrupted and genuine fruits of truth and righteousness.

From other causes, indeed, and the influences of truth otherwise brought to bear upon individual minds and always more or less operative in a well instructed Christian community, there may be, and it is earnestly to be hoped there are, souls truly converted to God in connexion with these strange proceedings; yet this does not change their proper character, nor is it a compensation for their legitimate and bitter fruits.

Such being the views which the Association entertain of this system of measures, in its essential character and tendencies, they are constrained to take their stand upon the fixed principles of the word of God, and say to the churches under their care, and to their brethren in the ministry, that they dare not sanction its employment by consenting to introduce it into the churches over which the Holy Ghost has made them overseers. They cannot permit themselves, by any hope of partial good, to tolerate what they solemnly disapprove, and cannot but consider as hazardous to the souls of men. They must not hold fellowship with what seems at least too much like walking in craftiness, and handling the word of God deceitfully; but would still seek the great and glorious ends of their calling, and of the gospel which they preach, by manifestation of the truth, and endeavouring to commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. So only dare they sustain the weight of responsibility that they have assumed, as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

Yet, while their own views of duty are thus decided, they would by no means be considered as judging the motives of their brethren who have adopted different views of this subject and pursued a different practice. They yield to them the same right of judgment, which they claim for themselves; and though they cannot but believe, that such as have connected themselves with this system of proceedings, have been misled to the injury of the cause of truth, they would not doubt the purity of their intentions,

and would leave them to the teachings of that Spirit of truth, which Christ has promised to his disciples, earnestly praying, that he may guide their brethren, and the members of this Association, and the churches for whom they labour, into all truth.

Willard Child, Moderator.
Chauncey Taylor, Scribe.⁷¹

PAWLET ASSOCIATION.

At a meeting of Pawlet Association, held at Manchester, Feb. 16, 1836, an official communication was received from the Rutland Association, disclosing their views of the new system of means for the promotion of religion recently introduced into some of the churches of Vermont. This Association, having also had this subject under examination, and having before them numerous facts, from different and authentic sources, illustrating the evil tendencies and consequences of said system, -

Voted. That they cordially approve of the views expressed by their brethren of Rutland Association, and do adopt them as their own.

David Wilson, Moderator.
E. W. Hooker, Scribe.

⁷¹ *Vermont Chronicle*. Volume 20. 3rd March, 1836. Page 34.

WINDSOR ASSOCIATION.

At a meeting of Windsor Association, held at Hartland, Feb. 18, 1836, the following Preamble and Resolutions were unanimously adopted:-

Whereas a communication from the Rutland Association was presented to the Windsor Association, at their meeting at Hartland, Feb. 18, 1836, - in which are discussed certain measures in use the year past in Vermont for the promotion of revivals;-

And whereas the Windsor Association feel bound in conscience, in view of the relation which they sustain to the churches and the community, and of their responsibility to God, to reciprocate the labours of the Rutland Association;- therefore,

Resolved, After an examination and discussion of the measures in question, that we accord with and adopt the communication of the Rutland Association, in its spirit, and in the views expressed on the subject therein discussed.

Austin Hazen, Moderator.
Geo. S. Wilson, Scribe.⁷²

REMARKS BY THE EDITORS.

It is now some fifteen months since it became our duty to warn the churches on the subject of the above proceedings. The objectionable doings had then just made their appearance in the state. It so happened that we had the best possible opportunities for becoming acquainted with them, at the very outset. We protested against them, with a frank statement of reasons. We pursued the subject as long as there seemed, in the then existing state of the public mind, any purpose of usefulness in so doing;

⁷² *Vermont Chronicle*. 3rd March, 1836. Page 35.

and then dropped it, to wait till it should be taken up by the Pastors of Churches, or till in some other way we should be encouraged to hope that what we might publish would not at least be worse than useless.

Our silence has of course been regarded as a proof that no essential change had taken place in our views. Had we become converts to the novel system, we should not have failed to make a public recantation. Instead of that, what we have been able to learn during the year, has not only confirmed the unfavourable opinions that we then expressed, but has led us sometimes to consider seriously the question, whether there was not due from us an acknowledgement that the opinions we had expressed were on some points too favourable.

In publishing the above documents and making these remarks, we must not be understood as opening the columns of the *Chronicle* to controversy on the subject. More will doubtless be published, and circumstances must determine what. The state of our churches and the conflicting views of Pastors, call for an abundant measure of the grace of charity, and require *us* to beware of being instrumental in stirring up unholy strife.

We shall therefore consider ourselves at liberty,- nay, shall feel ourselves bound by the most solemn obligations, to watch over the communications that may be made to us on this subject with the greatest care; and to refuse admittance to any article, from whatever source, the publication of which we may think calculated to do harm. In the independent and conscientious discharge of this duty we claim the support and charitable judgment of our brethren of all parties. We shall doubtless commit errors; but shall anxiously endeavour to avoid them. It is our wish and prayer, that we and all concerned may have such a spirit and be so guided in this matter, that, by the blessing of God, the churches of our State may not only avoid the evils of strife and harsh contention, but speedily shine in greater

purity, be united together in warmer love, be inspired with a new zeal, and display an activity and devotedness worthy of our privileges, in every good work.

We would beware of any disposition to speak unkindly of our brethren who differ from us. And in regard to those whose attention has been called to serious things by the proceedings to which we object, we entreat – we WARN them, not to let any considerations relating to the means by which they have been brought to feel the power of Divine truth, prejudice the influence of that truth on their hearts.

The brethren who have differed from us have published their views in the *Chronicle*, during the year, at great length, and advocated them in the most effectual way. We have respected their motives, and our columns have been perfectly open to them. Their communications have contained many things that have given great pain to ourselves and others. Nothing else can be expected than that *they* should suffer in their turn. If they remember and respect the rights of their brethren as they ought to do, they will be able to bear it. Those who disapprove the proceedings in question, not only have a right to state through our columns, the fact of their disapprobation and the reasons for it; but such a statement, it appears to us, is due to themselves – to their own character as friends of pure and undefiled religion and of revivals of religion – and to the truth of God.⁷³

THE RUTLAND STATEMENT, &c.

Our readers have now had time to examine and consider well the document from the Rutland Association published two weeks ago. We hope they have done it seriously, candidly,

⁷³ *Vermont Chronicle*. 3rd March, 1836. Page 35.

prayerfully. Rash decisions in relation to subjects of such momentous interest to the souls of men, are to be avoided in the fear of God.

While it is under consideration, it seems proper and desirable that the whole subject should be laid before the churches, so far at least that all will be able to understand why it is that, while some are exceedingly pleased with the proceedings in question, so many others are decidedly and strongly opposed to them. –

In the document from Rutland, the question is argued on general principles. As the friends of the novel system appeal to facts, we shall now look at the subject in that aspect also. - And in doing it we shall not appeal to common report, to statements that have come through two or three hands, to men unknown here, or to men known as opponents of the system in question.

We shall rely on what is said by the very men who have given these measures more currency in the churches than any other individuals.

We name in the first place,

Rev. Josiah Hopkins.

Mr. Hopkins was formerly pastor of the Congregational Church in New Haven, in this State, and is extensively known and very highly respected in our churches. These circumstances, together with the fact that Mr. Burchard, very soon after his arrival in the State, appealed to Mr. Hopkins as a man who approved the preaching and the measures to which objections were made, induced one of the Editors of this paper to write to him on the subject. We know that Mr. Hopkins, who has been for some years pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Auburn, was reckoned among the leading “new measure” men in Western New York. We knew that Mr. Burchard had been with him during a protracted meeting in February, 1833. We knew that, under date of March 10, 1833, he had published an account of that meeting,

in which the labours of Mr. and Mrs. Burchard were mentioned in terms of approbation, and which could not be construed otherwise than as a very strong recommendation of Mr. Burchard as an evangelist. (See the account, *Vermont Chronicle*, April 5, 1833.) We wished to know whether his views were unchanged, and whether he was willing to have his name appealed to in order to secure for Mr. B. the confidence of the Vermont churches. A letter was accordingly addressed to him. His answer was published at the time; but, for obvious reasons, is here again submitted to the reader's attention. It is as follows:-

Letter from Rev. Josiah Hopkins.

Auburn, Nov. 10, 1834.

Very Dear Brother, - Yours of Nov. 2d I received on Saturday night, and being under the necessity of leaving home tomorrow to attend a meeting of the Presbytery, I cannot reply so fully as I otherwise should, unless I wait till my return.

The contents of your letter, dear brother, greatly distress me, because I find it so difficult to satisfy my own mind with regard to the path of duty. There is so universal and so fearful an inclination to neglect to use the appointed means for the conversion and salvation of men, and to make use of trifling indiscretions as an excuse, not only to neglect ourselves, but to hinder such as are guilty of them, whatever may be their labours and their success, that I tremble when I think of doing anything that shall throw a straw in the way of any man who is apparently endeavouring to do good. On the other hand, there are men who are apparently zealous to promote the cause of God, whose labours only rend the churches, and who, while their labours are sometimes blessed, carry the incendiary's torch wherever they go.

Mr. Burchard came among us an entire stranger. We applied to him in consequence of seeing a notice of his labours at Binghamton, which was very much to his credit as an evangelist.

He laboured with us near forty days, and during the whole time performed an astonishing amount of labour. The church and congregation, at his commencement, it was generally thought, were remarkably prepared for a revival. *He was the means, I have no doubt, of doing much good.* By his eccentricities and a kind of wit that he indulges, he drew in many that other and more sober means could never reach. In this he supposed his forte to consist, and therefore attempted to justify it when I gave him my views concerning it. He exhibited no doctrines, while with us, that I deemed unsound. He had some views of regeneration and free-agency that savoured, as I thought, of Antinomianism. He sometimes presented the conditions of life in a very improper manner, - in a manner that seemed to exclude all ideas of self-denial or of unreserved submission. At other times he would present very clear and impressive views upon the subject.

You ask my opinion concerning "his use of the anxious seats." I differed from him on that subject. I supposed, as most of my brethren do around me, that it ought to be viewed as a means of conversion for those that are convicted. He used it as a means of conviction. I consented, however, that he might pursue his own course. I differed with him, in some respects, concerning his manner of treating the anxious in the inquiry meeting. In this also, after several days, at his request, I gave my consent for him to pursue his own way.

You ask if he did not overrate the number of converts, &c. He supposed that there were about four hundred: and the meeting continued so long and so great a proportion of them lived at a distance, that it was impossible to determine accurately their number. I however have fears that he is not sufficiently careful in keeping his list. According to the list that was kept by the elders, there were more than three hundred. About one hundred united with our church, and many went to the other Presbyterian and the

Baptist and Methodist churches, besides the numbers that lived in the neighbouring towns.

You ask whether I am willing that he should use my name, &c. Bros Wisner of Rochester, and Keep of Homer, and myself, drew up a paper containing what we felt were faults in Br. B., and these brethren saw him and laboured with him at length, and he gave them assurance that in all the respects mentioned in that paper he would reform. We were anxious to save him for the cause of truth and revivals, if possible. In this paper we assured him, among other things that we wholly disapproved of his using our names, because we ascertained that he often did not remember correctly.

You ask concerning his practice, and the opinion of my brethren in the ministry, on the subject of early admissions to the church. The above named Brethren agreed with him, and differed from me and most of my brethren, on this point. The converts were not admitted to our communion when he laboured with us till 10 or 12 weeks after the meeting. It was different at Homer and at Rochester.

You ask whether such as were converted under his labours continue to give evidence, &c. Those who have united with us appear as well as the converts of any eastern revival that I ever witnessed. There are many complaints against Mr. B. in reference to this point, but I am unable to tell whether there is any just occasion for them or not.

You ask about the effects of his labours upon the *Churches*, &c. The effects with us have not been to divide or in any way to injure us, unless the length of the meeting wore upon the moral excitability of the church, and led to a state of languor and death. – This however is not to be charged to his account.

You ask what the opinion of ministers in this region is concerning him, &c. Most of the brethren in this region do not approve of his course. – As it respects my own opinion, I doubt

whether I am not in circumstances where the consequences of giving it are too great, considering the difficulty of forming a correct one, to justify my giving it. After reminding you that my opinion is only that of an individual, I am willing it should be understood, as it doubtless will be from what I have already written, that I do not consider him a safe man to conduct a protracted meeting. Where a people are united and determined to be united,, and where there is a population like ours, many of whom stand entirely aloof, he may do good. I have stated to him, and uniformly, that where churches were divided in opinion concerning him, which is the fact in most cases, he ought not to go. – Several ministers have been dismissed where he has laboured; but with the exception of one or two cases about which I am uncertain, to charge it to him would be doing him great injustice.

And now, Br. ----, do any thing you shall think the cause requires with this, only let me be heard fairly. I have written in haste. I could not do otherwise. I have my fears about the peace of your churches if Br. B. is permitted to take his own course in the meetings he may hold. – I have written my views to another Brother, and I would only say, it is my prayer that the Lord will direct you.

Yours affectionately,
J. Hopkins.

Remarks by the Editors.

While reading this letter, it should be remembered that Mr. Hopkins had availed himself of Mr. Burchard's assistance at a protracted meeting, and had *published* in his favour. Says a venerable clergyman of Auburn, in a letter to one of the Editors, March 21, 1835, "If your Vermonters will not hear brother Hopkins, after what he has said of Mr. Burchard in your paper, and in another, west of the mountains, I am sure they will not

hear me. He speaks what he knows; and has the strongest motives in the world not to say things to the prejudice of this individual without the most urgent reasons.” Yet, Mr. Hopkins is not willing that Mr. B. should use his name, (nor are Mr. Wisner or Mr. Keep); he does “not consider him a safe man to conduct a protracted meeting;” thinks he is such a man as ought not to go where churches are divided in opinion concerning him; and expresses fears for the peace of the churches, should Mr. B. be permitted to take his own course, &c. It will be noticed that the hopeful converts were not admitted to the communion, at Auburn, on Mr. Burchard’s plan. – Something more respecting the views of Mr. Hopkins will be found below.

Our second witness is,

Rev. William Wisner.

Mr. Wisner is still, we believe, Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church in Rochester, N. Y. In March, 1833, a protracted meeting was held there, which Mr. Burchard attended. A narrative of the state of religion in his church was published by Mr. Wisner, dated May 6, 1833, which is now before us. (See *Vermont Chronicle*, July 5, 1833.) In this document he says of Mr. B., “He has been a beloved fellow labourer and helper in the Lord, and will leave us with the undissembled love of the whole church, and with the blessings of many hundreds, who previous to his coming among us, were ready to perish.” The whole tenor of the narrative is in accordance with this language. Throughout the whole there is not a word intimating the least want of confidence in Mr. Burchard in any respect.

In the autumn of the same year, Mr. Wisner published under date of Oct. 24, 1833, a communication addressed “to the Presbyterian Churches of Western New York,” on the subject of

Evangelists, in which he says:- “Having been informed that my name is mentioned in connection with the character and proceedings of certain itinerant preachers, as recommending them and approving of their measures, I would avail myself of this opportunity to inform my brethren in Christ, that I hold myself responsible for no man’s character or proceedings.”

“In regard to the labours of evangelists, though I have never, except in one instance, found it necessary to call in such aid, I am among those who believe that humble, judicious, and godly men of this class may be and have been highly useful in the church. But while I say this, I ought to add that rash, indiscreet, and unsound men will necessarily be a curse, instead of a blessing. The office of an evangelist is one of immense responsibility; and I know of no class who need more of that wisdom and meekness, which come down from above, than they. They were never intended to supersede the office of a pastor, or to interfere with his prerogative; and when they are called to aid him in his responsible office, they should consider themselves, and be viewed by others, as only his assistants, and must be entirely subservient to his wishes.”

“I cannot forbear saying, in conclusion, that nothing should be tolerated, either in evangelists or settled pastors, which is unnecessarily calculated to wound the feelings of either Christians or Christian ministers. The system of denunciation and proscription which prevails to an alarming extent among both new and old measure men, as they are unhappily called, cannot be met with too much disapprobation. This course, if not speedily checked, threatens not only another unseemly division in the body of Christ, but must unavoidably throw a formidable obstacle in the way of those glorious revivals of religion,” &c. &c. See the whole document in the *Vermont Chronicle* of November 22, 1833.

Mr. Wisner being generally known as a leading “new measure” man, and having thus recommended Mr. Burchard, as an Evangelist, in his Narrative; and it having been suggested that, notwithstanding what he had said in Mr. B’s favour, the communication just quoted was published to caution the churches against him, - a letter was written making the proper inquiries.

Mr. Wisner replied as follows:-

Letter from Rev. W. Wisner.

Rochester, Nov. 19, 1836.

Dear Sir;- My being from home at the time your letter arrived is my only apology for not answering it sooner.

In replying to your inquiries, I would remark, at the outset, that I have never yet found myself at liberty to bear extra-judicial testimony against any minister of the gospel who was in good standing in any ecclesiastical judicatory with which I was in fellowship.

I can only say in regard to Br. Burchard, that my first acquaintance with him was in Rochester, in the revival to which you allude in your letter. That work was in progress when he came among us, and as I was the pastor of the church he laboured as my assistant, and his labours were greatly blessed. Of his conduct, after he left me, I know nothing, except from those newspaper recommendations and criminations to which I do not feel at liberty to give heed, except when they appear over a responsible name.

In regard to my communication addressed to the churches, under date of Oct. 24, 1833, it contained my views of what an evangelist must be, if he would do good to the churches in which he may be called to labour. I wrote that document and gave it to the public, for the purpose of preventing anyone from availing himself of the fact that he had preached for me, or laboured with me, and I had not spoken evil of him, or published his faults to

the world, to recommend himself, or his measures. I had still another view in publishing that document; I wished, if possible, to convince our brethren abroad, that the sober friends of revivals in this region of country, did not hold themselves at all responsible for the doings of those indiscreet and rash men, who, like the seven sons of Sceva, would avail themselves of the names of others, to gain a brief reputation in the world.

In answer to your questions, I would say;

1st. There were about 250 of the converts in 1833 who joined my church.

2nd. I am unable to say how many of them have not yet united any where, because many were from abroad.

3rd. In answer to the question whether all who were admitted to my church, sustain a good Christian character, I can say that they have worn as well as usual. There have been some five or six with whom we have had trouble.

4th. In regard to my opinion of receiving converts immediately into the church, I adopted that course more than 20 years ago, because I supposed it scriptural, I have practiced it ever since, and have never seen any evil resulting from it.

I have only now to say in conclusion, that the churches in Vermont may rest assured that the friends of revivals in this region, with whom I have long acted, will not give their countenance to any minister, who, instead of preaching CHRIST, shall denounce and condemn others, or who will introduce any measures which are calculated to detract from the solemnity and order, which should prevail in the house of God. They will hold themselves responsible for no man's proceedings among you. They love revivals of religion; and though they cannot come out in the newspapers and publish the faults of their brethren, they still mourn over their faults before god, and take the course recommended by the Saviour to correct them.

I am, Sir, with Christian affections, Yours,
Wm. Wisner.

P.S. You are at liberty to use this letter as you may think best, but if you publish any part of it, I wish you to publish it entire.
W. W.

Notes by the Editors.

In the letter of Mr. W. several inquiries were made with a view to elicit his *present* views of the fitness of Mr. Burchard to act as an Evangelist. We knew what he thought in May, 1833. We wished to know whether his views were unaltered.

It was mentioned, in the letter to Mr. W. that this communication had been spoken of as having particular reference to Mr. Burchard, and Mr. W. was asked whether the supposition of its having such a reference was correct. To this very explicit and reasonable inquiry, no direct answer is given. It will be seen, however, by the passages quoted above, from the communication referred to, that Mr. W. had never had the assistance of an Evangelist, except in one instance. In the letter before us he mentions that Mr. B. did once assist him in that capacity. Mr. Burchard, therefore, is the man, or one of the men (if indeed the plural number ought to be used,) to whom this communication and this paragraph of Mr. W.'s letter have reference. We shall send this to Mr. W.; and if we misrepresent his language in the least, he will correct us.

We appeal to one more witness, viz:

Rev. John Keep.

Mr. Keep had been pastor of the Congregational Church in Homer, N.Y. about twelve years, when a protracted meeting was held there by Mr. Burchard in June, 1833. Mr. K. published

a Narrative of the meeting, which has been extensively circulated, and which has been used by Mr. Burchard in this State to recommend his proceedings. In that Narrative, pp. 7, 8, Mr. Keep says:- "Mr. Burchard is the only evangelist whose aid I have enjoyed; and if other evangelists are like him, as he was while in Homer at this meeting, the churches may well greet them as happy coadjutors, and ministers may expect to be strengthened in their pastoral relations, rather than weakened, by their influence. I deem it an act of justice to this brother, and a duty to the cause of truth, to say, that I consider him as uncommonly skillful in directing sinners to Christ, and in instructing young converts; and that when a church will follow divine truth and engage in duty in the manner he advises, and will hold up his hands in the proper *co-operation*, the conversion of the sinner may be expected with *entire certainty and in vast numbers.*" Mr. Keep has since been dismissed from Homer, and is now Agent for the Oberlin Institute. One of the Editors, having occasion to write to him on another subject, added a few questions respecting Mr. Burchard, &c. Mr. K's reply is as follows.

Extract of a Letter from Rev. John Keep.

"You desire my views of Mr. Burchard, and to know whether my confidence in him has diminished, since I published my narrative. With not a little hesitancy, I have concluded to reply; but in this reply, you will probably find nothing which will exonerate you from the responsibility of forming your opinion of the man, and of his measures, from what is before you in your own vicinity.

From what you say of him, and from what I have read of his movements as given in the *Chronicle* and the *Boston Recorder*, I presume he is in most respects, what he was in Northern and Western N. York; and there, as with you, some

were very much interested and benefited, and highly approved; while others averred their displeasure, and denounced both the man and his measures, as mischievous.

I am willing that you should know my views, and that you should make any use of them you please. I conjecture that, while you participate in what you approve, you are also a “looker-on,” not with an evil but a good intent, that you may collect materials, and by and by lay them before the Churches for their benefit; perhaps for their admonition. While we have confidence in your judgment, allow me to say, that you need no ordinary discrimination and candour, to lay this matter before the public, in a manner which shall do good; and that, unless you have been familiarly conversant with fact in detail, and have so mingled in with their occurrence as to observe the shade, and actually to catch the tints and hues, your description will not be entirely accurate; and while you are remote, indeed, from any such *design*, the result will be, a deep wound upon the cause of Revivals, and a fresh occasion for boasting on the part of their opponents.

I am induced to say this by the remarks from the *Vt. Ch.* in the *Boston Recorder* of Nov. 21, 1834, under the three objections against Mr. Burchard’s proceedings. While I consider most of these remarks to be just, yet some of them do certainly mislead the reader both in respect to the object being aimed at by Mr. B. – his *method* of attaining it – and result of the effort, unless his course in Windsor was different from what it was when he was with me in Homer. And probably he did vary somewhat, and it is needful that he should, or he could not avail himself skillfully of existing circumstances. It is easy to find fault; and to say that *we* should do the thing differently. In this whole matter, the main question is – is the thing *done* – are sinners converted, and are the children of God brought up to a more consistent and vigorous action. If known facts require you to say

yes, then why *discuss*, and speculate, and worse than waste the time in telling the world how much better it would be to have done it in some other way. The mischief is wide spread and appalling, which has resulted from opposition to special effort for the conversion of sinners, from men who have stood aloof from the scene, men who would not themselves labour, and who have thrown before the public very incorrect statements respecting it. Oh, how deeply have good men, and wise men erred in this matter! I have been more than astonished at some views and sentiments which have appeared in some N. England papers on Revivals, and revival measures. It should be our constant prayer that the Holy Spirit need not be grieved from our ungrateful churches. So much discussion about the manner, and at the same time so little *done* – whilst souls are going down to the pit! Should you give to the public your expose of Mr. B.'s movements in your region, and it may be your duty to do it, and the state of things there may be such as to promise you much good in the doing of it, pray so guide your pen, that the sluggish minister, and the cold-hearted professor, shall not plead your authority for withholding special effort to save souls; and that the devil may not reckon you as a coadjutor in putting down revivals.

In judging of Mr. Burchard, justice requires that we should distinctly notice and admit facts in proof of his usefulness. Has he done good in your region? See the statement of Br. Morton of the revival in Springfield, also the account of the work in Weathersfield, Perkinsville, and several other places. Has he been used as the agent of good in these places? Very many, I have no doubt, will testify that God has made his labours a great blessing to them – to result in their conversion from a state of impenitence or wicked declension. The same testimony you find in most of the places where he has laboured. It is then undeniable that good has been done. Some of the most efficient men in the churches, have been converted in connection with his

labours. Mr. Hopkins of Auburn testifies “*he was the means, I have no doubt, of doing much good.*” That he did good in Homer, I as much believe. Here then are undeniable facts. Now, Sir, is it not a proper question, would this same amount of good have been done, but for his labours? Had he not visited your churches, would there have been an equal number who give evidence of a genuine conversion?

But it is said he does immense injury – and that he is the means of ruining more than he saves, and that to encourage such a man is to save a few at the fearful cost of destroying more. So far as I have known, this has been said by professing Christians mainly, who have disapproved of his measures, and to sustain themselves in their opposition, have deemed it proper to magnify his foibles. Now had these men joined in the effort with that portion of the church who sustain Mr. B. in his measures, and really given themselves to prayer, instead of cavilling, it is believed that the clamour of the wicked would be very much diminished, and the number of real converts greatly multiplied, and at the same time the objectionable features of Mr. B.’s movements, to a happy extent, prevented.

Then who is it who ruins souls? the Preacher, or those members of the church behind whom, in fact, the impenitent hide themselves in scores? Both in reference to Mr. B. and to other ministers who have laboured in protracted meetings, I have seen prominent members of the Church take upon themselves a fearful responsibility, by opposing the work, and thus strengthening the hands of the wicked – members who, I have no doubt, have prevented the conversion of sinners.

I consider Mr. B. as possessing *some* prominent qualifications for usefulness as a Preacher, and for conducting a special effort of the Church for the salvation of men. At the same time *he has prominent defects, and defects which have exceedingly distressed me, which his friends have urged him to*

abandon, and for the retaining of which, I deem him to be very much in the fault; for these defects are of that kind which he might easily avoid.

To what extent they are prominent in his labours in Vermont I know not. My mind is so much affected by them, that, unless he would give me his assurance that he would lay them aside, I WOULD NOT AGAIN REQUEST HIM TO AID ME IN A SERIES OF RELIGIOUS MEETINGS. I include in these defects, the levity which he produces in a congregation – his want of punctuality in commencing his meetings at the time appointed – his reproachful remarks upon those who oppose him – his too hastily pronouncing those to be converts who have merely professed to have given their hearts to God, and then, in the inquiry room and elsewhere speaking of them positively as converts – and his continuing his meetings often to a very late and unseasonable hour in the night.

While he is bold in declaring the truth and inflexible in duty, he should always tenderly regard the feelings of the minister with whom he labours, and respect the feelings of the church which employs him. Would he but take this course, he might have the confidence of the ministers, and the affectionate support of the churches, and his labours, I believe, be much more extensively effectual, *and the reaction, which is now often so dreadful*, might be avoided.

Your ministers may learn from him some very valuable things, connected with the upbuilding of Zion, and your churches receive a fresh and a happy impulse from his presentations of truth. His good qualities should, if practicable, be saved for the church. But how far it is the duty of ministers in N. E. to sustain him, they, in view of the man and his measures on the ground, can best judge.

Permit me to add, that I have increasing confidence in the utility and necessity of special effort for the conversion of

sinner; and I would entreat the churches, in a firm reliance upon the arm of the Lord to work for his own glory, not to fall out by the way, in respect to any measures which do not obviously contravene the general principles of the Bible.

With affection and esteem, your brother in Christ.

John Keep

P.S. should you publish any part of my letter respecting Mr. B. publish all – the whole or *none*. J. K.⁷⁴

Notes by the Editors.

We regret that Mr. Keep has not specified the errors that he supposes to exist in our account. As no errors have ever been pointed out to us by those acquainted with the facts, we presume that Mr. K. has not *guessed* so correctly as we *saw* and *heard*.

We say nothing of Mr. Keep's argument from the reported *results* of Mr. Burchard's labours. We only ask the reader to place this confession by the side of that argument. Mr. Keep has had a far better opportunity than we or any other individuals in Vermont, to become acquainted with the results of Mr. B.'s labours; and notwithstanding all that he has seen and heard and is ready to say in their favour, *he* would not invite him to assist in a series of religious meetings! Let this confession be pondered. If Mr. Keep, with all his knowledge and experience, with all that is seen and heard and read and published, in favour of Mr. B.'s proceedings, - and after years have passed away in which to review, and consider, and correct his published opinions, - is ready to make to the public such a retraction and acknowledgement, and to say that *the reaction is often dreadful*,

⁷⁴ It seems that these editors did NOT publish all of the letter, as John Keep had asked for, as a condition of his agreement for it to be published.

- what minister in Vermont is warranted, from what has occurred here, and from a regard to such considerations as Mr. K. urges, in countenancing Mr. Burchard's movements? Here we have the whole subject in a nut-shell. Mr. K. has presented the arguments used in favour of the novel system in all their force. He evidently feels the whole force of them himself. Yet he knows something on the other side, which makes it his duty to acknowledge, that notwithstanding all he has said and can say, he would not again employ Mr. B. i.e. – he would not employ him to pursue the course that every body knows he has pursued among us.

In view of these letters, we ask the following questions; and we request for them very particular attention:

1. Could we have applied to any three men in Western New York, who were so well and favourably known to the churches in Vermont, and at the same time so likely to give a favourable account of the results of Mr. Burchard's labours? They have been personal witnesses of those labours; they have published in his favour; they have known him long, and under the most favourable circumstances.

2. Are not these letters sufficient to justify us and those who think with us, in withholding countenance from Mr. B.'s proceedings, and in kindly remonstrating with our good brethren who employ him? Messrs. Hopkins, Wisner and Keep were once ready to appear before the public in his favour. With further opportunities for becoming acquainted with the ultimate results of his meetings, their views have been altered.

3. Is there a single pastor, in the wide world, with whose church Mr. Burchard held a protracted meeting as much as two years ago, who still remains pastor of that church, and who is

ready to say that he would again employ him? With all our inquiries we have not been able to hear from one. We find enough who will speak in high terms of praise after the lapse of a few weeks or months, or, it may be, a year. But where is the pastor whose faith in the system has remained for two years so strong that he would give him a second invitation? We have heard of many who, like Messrs. Hopkins, Wisner and Keep, have acknowledged a change in their views; but to no one whose views remain unchanged. If there is such a man, let him be named.

To give a full view of this part of the argument, as it has long been before us, we must add one document more. It is a letter to the Editors, from the Rev. B. C. Smith, Chaplain of the State Prison at Auburn. We submit it without comment.

Letter from Rev. B. C. Smith.

Auburn, Nov. 29, 1834.

Dear Brethren, - In conversation a few days since with a venerable father in the ministry, who cordially approves of that system of "measures" which has *prevailed* in Western New York for the last few years, and which has been termed "new," I said to him, that, upon seeing your first short notice of the late protracted meeting in Windsor, I had thought of writing to you, denying what seemed to be assumed in that notice, viz. the identity of Mr. Burchard's measures and those which are prevalent in this quarter, - with the hope of influencing a little, perhaps, the course of your remarks in the more particular account which you proposed to give of the meeting in a future number - but that it was now too late, as your remarks upon it had come out. He

replied, with much earnestness, that I ought to do it still, and urged it so strenuously, that I promised I would.

Now, then, to redeem my pledge, let me assure you, that the measures pursued by Mr. B. are not such as are generally approved in this State, even by those who are called new-measure men. He did, it is true, succeed in introducing them into several important places in the Western District – he was countenanced, at one time, in our own village, by as staid and judicious a man as the Rev. Josiah Hopkins – but, you may rely upon it, he is now regarded, generally, (even in those places where he has been most successful,) as an unsafe man – as doing, on the whole, more mischief than good. I have had the means of knowing the views of our ministers pretty extensively, and I do not believe there are now three regular Presbyterian or Congregational ministers in this part of the State, who would be willing to have him come and set his machinery in operation in their congregations. To adopt the form of disclaimer dictated to me by the father in the ministry mentioned above, *“The measures in question are universally repudiated and condemned throughout this whole region; and if there are any seeming exceptions among our ministers, they are cases in which kindness of feeling towards Mr. B. in view of the good he has done to some souls, prevails over their deliberate convictions respecting the propriety and general tendency of his measures.”*

From frequent conversations with Mr. Hopkins on the subject, I am persuaded that he himself would be willing to subscribe to every word of this, had he not in a measure committed himself, by having yielded, before he knew Mr. B., to the importunities of some of his warm-hearted members to employ him in a protracted meeting. *He would not consent to it again* – and he, as well as many other warm friends of the *right sort* of “new measures,” if they must be called so, watches with deep concern the operations of Mr. B. at the east. We all regret

very much that he has found his way thither – both because of the discredit it will bring upon genuine revivals here, (those of which the *main instrument* is *truth*.) and because of the disastrous consequences to your churches, if he remain long among them. Divisions and contentions, and, it is to be feared, a great proportion of unsound conversions, will be the inevitable results.

Yours respectfully and truly,
B. C. Smith.⁷⁵

(b.) From Connecticut.

NARRATIVE of the STATE of RELIGION within the Bounds of the General Association of Connecticut.

The report on the state of religion from the several District Associations, are of a character to excite pain, and cause deep humiliation in the bosoms of all who sympathize in the prosperity of the church. They do not speak of divisions in the churches. Peace and harmony are very generally prevalent. Errors do not prevail to a greater extent; the advocates of error are not more active than in former years. The number in attendance upon the ministrations of the Sabbath, is not diminished, though in many places this number is lamentably small in proportion to the whole population. The system of Sabbath school and Bible class instruction is sustained with equal, if not increased vigor. The various objects of benevolence have been more liberally

⁷⁵ *Vermont Chronicle*. 17 March, 1836. Pages 42 – 43.

patronized. The cause of temperance, though in many places stationary, and in all advancing with too tardy progress, is represented, on the whole, as extending its influence, and taking a deeper hold on the convictions of the community. The venerable institution of Yale College, in all its departments, continues to flourish. More than half the undergraduate students are hopefully pious. Twelve, during the last college term, are reported to have been brought under the influence of experimental religion. A spirit of Christian activity, and diligence, and missionary zeal, is manifested among the students of the Theological Department in a degree cheering to the friends of Zion. The Theological Seminary at East Windsor is in a state of prosperity which greatly encourages the hope of its future usefulness. It is a gratifying fact, that several of the members have devoted themselves to the service of Christ, in labors among the heathen.

Middlesex Association report six congregations in which very interesting revivals have been enjoyed during the year. The same number of congregations in Litchfield South Association is mentioned as having been visited, to a greater or less extent, by special Divine influence. In Hartford south and Hartford North Associations, there have been a few places which have experienced tokens of special favor. In other Associations, there have been single congregations which have been revived to a limited extent. These are cheering facts, and we would not fail to recognize them as such, and express our obligations of unfeigned gratitude to a God of mercy, on account of them.

But at the present time there appears, from the several reports, to be an almost universal suspension of special Divine influence. Of the 230 churches in connection with this General Association, there are very few which are animated by the tokens of special Divine favor. Spiritual apathy prevails to an extent, almost, if not wholly unparalleled. Christians, and the most active and energetic members of the churches, are deeply affected

by the spirit of the times. Worldliness, an eagerness to monopolize their full share of earthly gain, which the present conditions of our country promises, engrosses their thoughts and their affections, and disciplines and disqualifies them for uniting their efforts to advance the spiritual interests of the churches. Seasons of social prayer, and especially the monthly concerts for the conversion of the world, and the blessing of God upon Sabbath schools, are in too many places attended by a very small proportion of those who by their covenant vows, stand pledged never to forget Zion in any of her interests. In this state of the churches, the sanctity of the Sabbath is evidently losing its hold upon the community at large. The profanations of this day are manifestly increasing, and demand imperiously of every friend of Zion, and every friend of his country, that he look to his own practice on this point, and unite his prayers and his efforts with those of his brethren, to redeem this sacred institution from the neglect and contempt which are cast upon it.

It is painful to contemplate such a picture of our spiritual condition. It would be far more pleasant to send forth to our churches and to the world a glowing report of our prosperity. But truth must guide us. We must speak as she compels us to speak. The state of religion in our churches at the present moment is such as ought to cause unfeigned humiliation, and lead to deep self-abasement in every one who feels for their prosperity and the salvation of immortal minds.

To the ministers of this Association the providences of God, the last year, say, Do with thy might whatsoever thy hand findeth to do. Four of our fathers and brethren, who have often mingled in the deliberations of this body, and who were loved and respected, Lyman, of Windham Association, Rowland, of Hartford North, and Perry and Talcott, of Litchfield North, have been summoned to their reward in heaven.

The delegate from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church states that of the 2,800 churches in that connection, not more than one hundred have the past year received the promised presence of the Spirit! Some of the causes which operate to prevent the spiritual prosperity of our own churches, affect them equally, if not to a greater extent. Besides these, there are others from which we are happily in a great measure exempt. In 26 of the Presbyteries connected with the Assembly, the cause of temperance is reported to be declining; and in 25 advancing. There is an advance in the receipts of benevolent societies, and of the missionary spirit in their colleges and theological schools. The sin of Sabbath profanation is one which awakes deep concern in the bosoms of the members of that church. Still, with all that is discouraging in their circumstances, they feel that there is sufficient reason for the belief that God has not forsaken that numerous and widely extended branch of his church.

The Congregational Association of the State of New York report no special tokens of the Divine favor to the churches in its connection. This Association is still in its infancy, but promises to be of eminent service in combining the efforts and strengthening the hands of the numerous insulated and feeble Congregational churches in that State.

From the General Convention of Vermont the report is, in many respects, similar to those from our own Associations, and from the General Assembly. While the churches generally enjoy internal peace, and are prosecuting the various religious enterprises of the day with their usual vigor, revivals have not been as numerous as in former years. The Sabbath, by a very large portion of the community, is disregarded, and the ministrations of the sanctuary very little prized and greatly neglected.

The delegates from the General Association of New Hampshire, state that the reports at their meeting in September last were of a highly gratifying character. The period which has since elapsed, has been less distinguished by numerous and powerful revivals. Yet they are not left without some precious tokens of Divine favor. Several churches have been refreshed. Among these is that in Plymouth, where the last meeting of the Association was held, which blessing to that church stands immediately connected with the influence of that meeting. The benevolent enterprises, and the efforts to promote temperance, are in a healthful and vigorous state.

The report from the General Association of Massachusetts, is highly animating. During the year, there have been, in some parts of the commonwealth, precious revivals. Revivals of a most interesting character are now in progress in some parts of that State. In some places these revivals are now in their incipient stages. The delegate says: "As a general fact, our Zion, the past year, has made more than ordinary progress in knowledge and vital godliness. In Amherst College there have been a few conversions. The Theological Seminary at Andover continues to prosper. The benevolent objects of the day are sustained with increasing interest. The cause of Sabbath schools is receiving more and more attention. The Temperance reform has gone forward in some places, while in others, to say the least, it has been stationary. Efforts are made to promote a reformation of morals in regard to the Seventh Commandment.

To close this narrative, whether we limit our view to our own State, or extend it over the whole country, there is much, very much in the condition of the churches to humble us and excite alarm. Never were those on the watch-towers of Zion, and never were Christians generally more loudly called upon to weep

between the porch and the altar, and say, “Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach”⁷⁶

PASTORAL LETTER

Of the General Association of Connecticut.

The General Association of Connecticut, convened at Norfolk, to their brethren in the ministry, and to the churches within their bounds, grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.

God, in the progress of his great designs, has permitted us to live in an age bright with the signals of his coming to accomplish his covenant with his Son, and to fill the earth with his glory. He is casting down thrones; he is breaking up old systems of darkness and spiritual domination; he is removing out of the way of the progress of his Gospel, obstacles that for long ages have stood, like impassable mountains, to hem in the efforts of his people, and to discourage their faith; he is providing new means of access to the minds of individuals, and new instruments of power to sway the public mind of nations; he is pouring knowledge, like a flood, over all the earth; he is binding the nations together more and more closely by ties of mutual dependence, and of commercial, political, and friendly intercourse; he is putting the conversion of the world, of the whole world, more and more into the hands of his people; he is pouring out his Spirit upon his churches, and multiplying the numbers of them that believe; he is stirring up his people, everywhere, to great undertakings for the salvation of men and for the glory of his name; and he is crowning their undertakings with a success that shows his readiness, as well as his might, to do exceeding abundantly above all that they can ask or think.

⁷⁶ *Religious Intelligencer*. Volume 21. July 9, 1836. Pages 90 – 92.

As we have been assembled at this time, our hearts have been warmed by our fraternal communion; and, standing upon these heights, and looking abroad upon the land of which the Lord God hath said that he will give it to his people, we have felt something of the responsibilities and dangers which we share in common with all the members of the churches in these days. Moved, as we trust, by the impulse of the Spirit of grace upon our hearts, we unite in this epistle, and entreat you to suffer the word of exhortation.

First, we beseech you, in the name of our common Saviour, to be watchful, every one of you over the state of his own soul in respect to communion with God by the indwelling of his Spirit. See to it well that you dwell continually as in the secret place of the Most High. There is a vital relation of intercourse, union and sympathy between the mind of the believer and the mind of Jesus Christ, the infinite mind of God. The Spirit which the Father giveth without measure to the only begotten of the Father, dwells with a secret, yet mighty influence in the soul of every believer, so that the believer hath within him, in this vital influence, a fountain purer and holier than the Sileo that gladdened the sanctuary, a fountain springing up to everlasting life; and out of him, as the Scripture hath said, shall flow rivers of living water. Se then, brethren, if indeed ye have received the Holy Ghost, and are become the temples of God, se that ye defile not God's temple; see that ye grieve not the Spirit; see that ye quench not the Spirit; see that ye live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit; see that ye maintain an intimate and constant communion with God in Christ, who hath given us the earnest of his Spirit, the seal of our purchased and promised inheritance. The first great temptation of our times is to worldliness, and thus to a worldly spirit in religion; to a stirring, bustling, showy religion, which finds not its home in the closet, in solitary meditation, in secret prayer, and which lives only by the impulses

of sympathy and of public excitement. Brethren, we must be men of prayer, of meditation, of heart-searching, of personal communion with God; or we cannot begin to meet our responsibility.

Next, we exhort you to seek and to cherish a humbling sense of your deficiencies. We pray that our own souls may ever be possessed with such a sentiment. How far do we come short, - O brethren, how far do we all come short of what we owe to our Redeemer, and to the world perishing in darkness and sin! Brethren, sinful men are dying within the sound even of our voices, and how little do we feel for them! How faintly do we pray! How feebly do we strive for their salvation! God is calling us as with the voice of seven thunders, to take possession of the world in the name of Jesus Christ, and O! what are we doing? Talk we of our self-denial; talk we of our zeal, of our contributions, of our labors? Alas! Alas! God be merciful to us sinners! Let not the great enemy of God get the advantage of us, by persuading us to look round upon *our* institutions, and *our* arrangements and combinations, and *our* half-hearted efforts, and to say, Behold our zeal for the Lord. Let us compare our efforts only with our obligations and our opportunities; let us think what God would have us to do, and we shall be ashamed of all that we have done; and no more shall we be tempted to say in our hearts, Is not this great Babylon which we have built?

Next, let us remember, brethren, that we are not straitened in the Lord. Nay, if we may speak it with due reverence, God is straitened in us. The boundlessness of his love, which is ready to flow forth in light and life over the moral chaos of this apostate world, is kept back by our unbelief, and slothfulness, and hardness of heart. When we have learned to be more holy; when we have attained to a deeper and more vital sympathy with the purity and love of God; when we are prepared by his Spirit for a more engrossing and manly, a more godlike participation in the

august designs of God's benevolence, then will joy and glory come down, like a river, from the highest heaven.

And here, brethren, let us call to your remembrance God's institutions and arrangements for the salvation of men, especially the family, the social relations and connections of individual men, the Sabbath, and the church with its stated ministry.

It is in your *families*, brethren, that a generation must be prepared which shall fill the earth with the kingdom of Jesus Christ. The influence of the father and the mother; the gentle, sacred, resistless influences that gather around the fireside, the domestic altar, and the family Bible, - these are the influences that are to save and purify the world. No associated energies for the accomplishment of schemes for the reformation of morals, no public excitements sweeping over the community, can accomplish any great and lasting good, save as they purify and quicken these influences. It is in the family, or nowhere, that men must learn to keep God's commandments, there purity, temperance, compassion, meekness, self-denial, and love must live and flourish; there heaven must come down to mingle with earth; or the world is still undone.

God designs to have men converted, and continually sanctified and enlightened, by the *action of friend upon friend, and of neighbor upon neighbor*. Till all shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest, every man must say to his brother, and every man to his neighbor: "Know the Lord; come thou with us, and we will do thee good." Who does not know that when one believer after another begins to weep in secret over his unconverted neighbors and friends and to pray for them, and to labor that all his intercourse with them may be profitable to salvation, then and there the work of God begins to be revived. The experience of every church in Connecticut, the experience of thousands of individuals converted to Christ by influence exerted upon them through the channels of social and friendly

intercourse, rebukes all those who expect the work of God to be revived without the effort by friends and neighbors to bring the gospel home to the minds of individuals.

We hear from all quarters the complaint that the *Sabbath* is dishonored, and that the *public worship* of God is treated with habitual neglect by thousands of the children of our fathers. Brethren, the Sabbath is the great pillar on which God's name is inscribed before the world. It is the remembrancer which God appointed from the date of the creation, to keep men in mind of him, and of his relations to them. Let the Sabbath be destroyed, and all is gone. God cannot be honored, Christ cannot be adored and loved, the Holy Spirit cannot be given to sanctify, where there is no Sabbath. Ministers and churches must unite everywhere to sustain the high honors of the holy Sabbath. All the efforts of the church, and of the pastor, must be concentrated upon the object of throwing into the Sabbath instructions of the family, of the school, and of the sanctuary, the greatest possible life, attractiveness and power. To this let every other effort of the congregation, - the Bible class, the conference, the lecture, the concerts of prayer, be made subordinate. The gospel, the church, the honor and fear of God among men, and the hope of the world's deliverance must stand or fall with the Sabbath.

To complete the system of divine arrangements for the conversion of men and the promotion of holiness, God has instituted *churches*, and has organized them by appointing a stated ministry. The local church, with its officers, and its means of instruction and edification, is God's organization for promoting, within its own boundaries, the kingdom which is righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; and the local church, when completely organized and arrayed for action, must rely upon itself, under God, to perform the work entrusted to it. If it looks away from itself, and from the array of means and influences with which God has endowed it; if it feels that little or

nothing is to be expected from the steady, stated administration of Gospel truth and Gospel ordinances, that church becomes unfaithful to its Head, and unfaithful to its chartered honors. The great principle of the communion and association of churches with their pastors for mutual watchfulness, defense and edification, is that by means of which the influence of particular churches is to be concentrated and augmented, and wielded over a wide community for the promotion of morals and of piety, for the illumination of the public mind by Christian truth, and for the sanctification of public sentiment. These are cardinal principles of our ecclesiastical order; and while these principles allow to every church the power of employing special efforts, at fit seasons, for the advancement of religion, and while they permit pastors and churches to aid each other in such special efforts, every encroachment on these principles, everything which tends to set aside the pastoral office, or to rob it of its spiritual honors, and its legitimate influence; everything which would divert the churches from their reliance on God's institutions, honored by his blessing through successive ages, to hazardous and reckless human experiments for the promotion of religion; everything which would set up over the churches any power other than that of our own consciences, enlightened by human consultation, and by the regular administration of the word of God, is to be avoided as fraught with boundless perils.

With these views we have been led, after full, free, and prayerful discussion, to the unanimous adoption of the following resolutions, which we commend to your serious attention, as expressing our most deliberate and unanimous views in relation to several important points of Christian duty, and ecclesiastical order.

1. **Resolved**, That while this General Association appreciate, and would maintain at all hazards, the unrestricted

liberty of speech, and the press, and while they fully recognize their own and every man's duty to prove all things, and their own and every man's responsibility to God in relation to the reception of the truth, they do not admit an obligation upon the community to hear or read all that associations or individuals may volunteer to speak or print, or an obligation on the pastors of the churches to admit into their pulpits all the preachers or speakers who may desire to address the people, or in any other ways, directly or indirectly, to facilitate the promulgation in the community of sentiments which are in their views of an erroneous or questionable character.

2. **Resolved.** That the operations of itinerant agents and lecturers attempting to enlighten the churches in respect to particular points of Christian doctrine and of Christian morals, and to control the religious sentiment of the community on topics which fall most appropriately within the sphere of pastoral instruction and of pastoral discretion, as to time and manner, without the advice and consent of the pastors and regular ecclesiastical bodies, is an unauthorized interference with the rights, duties, and discretion of the stated ministry; dangerous to the influence of the pastoral office, and fatal to the peace and good order of the churches.

3. **Resolved.** That the existence in the churches of an order of itinerating evangelists, devoted especially to the business of excitement, and to the promotion of revivals, cannot be reconciled with the respect and influence which are indispensable to the usefulness and stability of the stated ministry, to the harmony of ecclesiastical action in the churches, and to the steady and accumulating influence of the gospel and its institutions, and to purity in doctrine and discretion in action.

4. *Resolved.* That regarding the present as a critical period in relation to the peace, purity, and liberty of our churches, and the efficiency of the pastoral office, we do recommend to ministers and churches to discountenance such innovations as have been referred to in these resolutions, and we consider ourselves bound to sustain each other and the churches in standing against all these invasions on our ecclesiastical order.

In adopting these resolutions, we have been influenced, we trust, in no inconsiderable degree, by the love and fear of Him whose public ministers we are, and whom it is our heart's desire to serve effectually in the Gospel which has been committed to us in our unworthiness. We trust also that in this matter we have deeply felt our responsibility both to Christ and to those favored and beloved churches, over which he has made us overseers; and we know that we have been moved by a lively solicitude for the welfare of your souls, and for the souls of those of your children and neighbors who are yet strangers to the renewing grace of God. We have mingled our tears as we have set around the table of our Lord in this holy convocation; we have wept as we remembered our Zion in its present low estate, almost deserted of those special visitations of the Holy Spirit which, during all the past period of our personal ministrations, have been shed down from heaven upon some of these churches, or upon others, in an almost uninterrupted stream of mercy. We have been led with self-abasement and prayer to ask, Is there not a cause? And among other things, already referred to in this letter, which seem to have grieved the Spirit of God, we cannot but give a prominent place to that system of blind excitement, of rashly adventurous experiment, and of unadvised innovation, which has of late been so developed in many portions of our country, and which is beginning to touch upon us with its agitating influences.

In the mercy of God our churches have been saved, as yet, from the worst outbreakings of this evil; but you are not ignorant of the fact, which has been confirmed to us in these deliberations by brethren present from other portions of our country, that in some churches not far distant from our own, and between whom and us there must needs be, and ought to be, a close community of sympathy and experience, great disasters have been experienced from these invasions upon order. We have before us then, such illustrations of the evils referred to, of their origin, their course, and their consequences, as force upon us the conviction that we, in our turn, shall, sooner or later, be overrun, unless, by the blessing of God, upon our timely endeavors to obtain an enlightened and cordial agreement in sentiment and action among ourselves, as a body of pastors and churches, this heritage of the Lord may be saved from reproach. We ask then, brethren, that you give to this matter your serious and prayerful consideration; and not doubting that your general impressions in regard to it will harmonize with ours, we are confident that you will feel the importance of unanimously “standing against” every kind of teaching and operating in the cause of religion and morals which is contrary to the sound doctrine and established order of our churches as derived from the word of God.

And now, brethren in Jesus Christ, heirs with us of the grace of life, partakers with us of the blessedness of being co-workers with God, let us awake to appreciate more highly, and to use with more wisdom and diligence God’s institutions of mercy, God’s means of saving health to the souls of men. O’ let us all be awake – pastors and people - to realize with a more vivid and abiding apprehension, the grandeur of our position and spiritual relations, the vastness and minuteness of our responsibility; the guilt, the shame of our deficiencies and back-slidings; the preciousness of Christ the Saviour, and the awfulness of having our garments stained with the blood of souls, for whose eternal

life Christ died. And may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be glory for ever and ever.

Given at Norfolk, on the 23rd day of June, A. D. 1836, by the General Association of Connecticut.

GEORGE A. CALHOUN. Moderator.⁷⁷

THE GEN. ASSOC. of MASSACHUSETTS.

Assembled at Worthington on Tuesday, June 28th. [The first business was on the subject of the Sabbath, and resulted in four resolutions.]

The resolutions adopted by our General Association at Norfolk, respecting Agents and Evangelists, which we reported two weeks since, were introduced into the Massachusetts meeting and adopted as their own. [other business followed.]

The resolutions concerning agents and evangelists appeared to be adopted most heartily, not as an act of warfare against them and their friends, but from an increased sense and better understanding of the importance and duties of the pastoral office; giving reason to hope that they will be executed in such a spirit, that no man can quarrel with the execution of them without being manifestly in the wrong; that they will be carried into effect, mainly, by a more faithful and perfect performance of all pastoral duties, excluding any apparent need of such interference from abroad, and securing to the pastor, an influence over the hearts of the Christ-like, and the consciences of all, too firm to be shaken by any offers of such intrusion.

⁷⁷ *Religious Intelligencer*. Volume 21. July 9. 1836. Pages 90 – 92.

Finally, there have been, during the last year, more revivals of religion than usual, and of peculiarly gratifying character. The good spirit manifested at the Association seemed, in some measure, to grow out of them, or to be a part of that general movement, of which those revivals were another part. This strengthens the hope; that the association did fairly represent the state, not only of the clergy, but of the churches also, and that the expectations of good, thus raised, will not be disappointed.⁷⁸

REPLY to an article published in the *New York Evangelist* which attacked the “Resolutions” of the General Association of Connecticut about Agents and Evangelists.

[The complaint is not against the unknown article writer, or even against the criticisms that the article contains, but against the Editor of the *New York Evangelist*, the Rev. Joshua Leavitt, who published the article attacking the Congregational ministers of Connecticut in a manner which he “must have known” was not truthful. The latter part is reproduced here. The article did not provide the name of the author, nor did it provide any evidence or arguments which might be explained or rebutted.]

If the Lord Jesus Christ or any of his apostles were to move around in our State, we presume they would be welcomed by all the ministers and churches. If such men alone, as Whitefield and Nettleton were to be found in the order of Evangelists, we presume the resolution concerning them had never been thought of. But Evangelists are multiplying. Many conceive that greatness and glory lie in the order of Evangelism. Thinking they should become some great Knox or Whitefield,

⁷⁸ *Religious Intelligencer*. Volume 21. July 23. 1836. Pages 107 – 108.

they are applying, in considerable numbers, to be ordained as Evangelists. They are pretending to superior knowledge and power, - thrusting themselves in over the heads of other ministers, and teaching the churches that nothing can be done without their new light and new measures. Often do they make the impression on churches that *their* ministers are an inferior class of men, - fit only to be hewers of wood and drawers of water, - not competent to move in a revival of religion.

Your correspondent takes the same view of things. I cannot discover that he admits the existence of a stated ministry: or if he does, they bear the same relation to Evangelists that the Scribes and Pharisees sustained to Christ and the apostles. Evangelists, then, are the only men who go about and do good. If regular ministers are not set aside as unfit to preach the Gospel, Evangelists are exalted over them, like Episcopal Bishops, as the apostolic channel through which heaven's blessings come to men. Now this character which Evangelists have assumed is fictitious. It is not Scriptural. It is injurious, - injurious to themselves, the churches and the stated ministry. If allowed, ministerial purity is at an end; the corner-stone of the Presbyterian and Congregational churches is removed. This, Mr. Leavitt knows: he must, therefore, know that the constant teachings of his paper, which exalt Evangelists to the depreciation of the regular ministry, are contrary to truth.

You may think, Dear Sir, that serious charges are preferred against you. To give currency to falsehood is no small offense. You may endeavor to shake off responsibility by saying your columns are open for all - each is amenable to the bar of public opinion for what he writes. I admire your liberality, but you give it criminal indulgence. - No Editor has a right to publish what he knows to be false, come from whatever source it may. And surely, no Christian minister should take up and circulate an

evil report about his brethren, without the best of evidence, and the loudest calls of duty.

A Member of the Gen. Assoc. of Conn.⁷⁹

AGENTS and EVANGELISTS. (in favor of the “Resolutions”.)

The “Resolutions” of the last General Association, though assailed from one quarter in no very moderate terms, appear to us as nearly perfect as any thing human, so far as they go. Our objection to them is that they do not cover the whole ground which they ought to have embraced. Particularly is this true, as we think, with regard to Agents. Pleased as we were that so much was done, we should have been much more gratified if the Association had come out before the churches and the world, and confessed that it was through the fault of the Ministry and the churches that the labor of Agents has ever been needful to carry forward benevolent operations; and, humbled for the past, resolved that their brethren in the Ministry and the churches be earnestly invited to unite with them in doing away the necessity for their labors in future. We have long felt that the churches were in fault in this matter; and should be glad to say anything that should have a tendency to correct it.

Confining our remarks for the present to Agents, we take the liberty of stating very briefly our objections to their being employed.

1. The service required of them is a very uncomfortable service. We have had some little experience of this kind; quite enough to satisfy us that it is no very comfortable sort of life.

2. Agents are expensive.

⁷⁹ *Religious Intelligencer*. Volume 21. 13 August. 1836. Pages 169 – 170.

3. It is a waste of valuable ministerial talent.

4. They do the work imperfectly.

5. Ministers need do this to qualify them the better for every other part of their service. No minister is fitted for the office if he is not somewhat particularly informed on every subject of much importance to the church, and to the salvation of the world.

6. The minister will be more likely to give to every subject its relative importance. His mind is not like that of an agent, confined to one subject.

7. It is needful for the minister to do this labor, in order to retain the affections and confidence of his people, and his means of usefulness. For these subjects upon which agents go about to lecture, are subjects of exciting interest. [a longer explanation is given under each of these seven points.]

Such are some of the reasons why we would dispense with agencies. We regard them as an evil in the church. We suppose they are generally regarded as a *necessary* evil. It is the imperfection of the ministry and the churches that makes it so. It is a shame to the churches of Christ, if it be needful for scores of his best ministers to be taken off from their appropriate labors, and sustained from the Lord's treasury, to go among them, in the irksome business of urging them to their duty; nay, we should have said, of urging them to live up to their high privileges. It is a disgrace to the Christian name if this be needful. And yet, perhaps it is so. We should hardly dare take the responsibility of insisting upon dispensing with agencies. – We should hardly dare

stand pledged for the deficit in the treasuries of our various Boards, at their next Annual Reports. But if it be a *necessary* evil, let the churches consider well the reason.⁸⁰

AGENTS and EVANGELISTS.

We have objected to the ordinary employment of Agents, because we believe their labors to be needless, expensive and detrimental to the highest usefulness of the Ministry and of the churches:- this labor belongs appropriately to the Pastors and the churches; they most easily can perform it, and by so doing, the expense of agencies will be prevented, and the other labors of the ministry and of the churches will be rendered more efficient and powerful. The Resolutions adopted by the General Association are most excellent, and will be of incalculable benefit, if the churches will cordially adopt them and take the business into their hands, and do it, like faithful, responsible, covenanted disciples of their heavenly Master. But we have some fearful apprehensions about the result of these Resolutions, for two reasons. One is, lest some shall disregard them, encourage the labors of Agents as much as ever, and thus perpetuate the evil which the Resolutions were designed to remove. One of the men who voted for them, admitted an Agent into his pulpit, on the last Sabbath, to address his people upon a subject which he himself well understands, and might have presented to his people with quite as much good effect. We sincerely hoped that the Members of that Association possessed so much self respect as to act according to their own recommendations. Our other ground of fear is, that if these resolutions are carried into effect, and Agents are not employed, the labor, in some churches, and perhaps in many, will not be done. We are by no means confident that the

⁸⁰ *Religious Intelligencer*. Volume 21. 13 August, 1836. Page 171 – 172.

standard of piety in all our churches is so elevated, that they will, from principle, and love for the service, cheerfully do what is required of them. A few months' experience may convince us that we need the unnatural stimulant of Agencies to keep the system in action; and some future Association may recommend their use. If such be the result, it will be a deep disgrace to the churches through whose spiritual slothfulness it shall come. If these Agencies be needful, - if scores of our best ministers must be taken away from their parishes, in this time of urgent pleading for ministerial help, and be sustained at great expense while they perform this labor, the grounds of that necessity are sufficiently obvious.

The Resolutions apply to Evangelists with as much appropriateness as to Agents, and for similar reasons;- the labor which they do is the appropriate labor of Pastors, in connection with their churches; they can better do it than Evangelists; they need to do it to give power and success to their other ministrations.

While we say this, we hope not to be understood as denying that Evangelists have done any good. From the position we have taken, unfavorable as it may seem for viewing them to their advantage, still we can see, and do see, and are willing to admit, that their labors in most cases have been productive of good. We may even admit that in *all* cases, the immediate result of their labors may be in some degree good. Some souls, it may be, are saved in every season of such labor. Still, it may be that *all* the results of the system of Evangelism, may show a preponderance of evil. If the effect of the system is, to impair the confidence of the churches in their Ministers; and this is its certain tendency, and a tendency so powerful that it is seldom counteracted; if the effect of the system is, to lower our estimate of the Sabbath, and to make the churches regard it any otherwise

than as the day, of all others, when sinners are to be converted, and the saints sanctified, and Zion enlarged; if the effect of it is to make the churches look away from the means of God's ordaining, and which he has in all ages owned and blessed, and to make them depend on this extraneous aid, and to feel that prayer and labor for the conversion of men will be fruitless unless this aid is obtained; if such are the results of the system, it may prove in the end that it has stood in the way of the salvation of more souls than it has saved. Such are the tendencies of the system. Such, to some extent, are its effects. We believe they are quite extensive. We fear they are prevalent. When a church now begin to mourn over their low estate, and over the desolations around them, and enquire what can be done to effect a reformation, instead of looking at the Sabbath, and anticipating its approach, and going up to its holy convocations with large and strong expectations, their thoughts are turned at once to some "conference," or "protracted meeting," or other like expedient, and they have no expectation of a change till some such season is enjoyed. Instead of looking to the ministrations of their own pastor and expecting that the message from his lips will be made effectual to the conversion of sinners, they have learned to think that he is not a revival preacher, and they are looking away for someone of those whose exclusive privilege it is to be instrumental of such blessings, and all expectation of good is withheld until his services are obtained. Instead of looking to the ordinances and means of God's ordaining, and to His Spirit to render them efficacious, they are looking away to some means, to say the least, of questionable origin.

We do not deny that there is such an order of men as Evangelists recognized in the New Testament; and we suppose there is now a necessity for laborers of this order. But they have their appropriate fields of labor; not in places occupied by settled pastors, but, as Paul and Timothy, where Christ is not named, lest

they should build upon another man's foundation. There are fields unoccupied by any stated ministry, and which for the present are not in a situation to enjoy such privileges; and these are the appropriate fields for the labors of Evangelists. If, as is frequently the case, there is in any place for a season, need of more labor than the Minister who has charge of it can perform, who are so well prepared to assist him as his brethren of the churches around him? They are in some measure acquainted with his people; they know the necessities of their brother, and are happy to render every needed assistance. If in any instance a church should be deprived of the accustomed labors of their minister for a Sabbath or two, - an event which will seldom occur - the very fact that they forego this enjoyment, and make additional effort to sustain the services of the sanctuary themselves, may be the means of their greater sanctification.

We have adverted to some of the evils of the system of itinerancy, and they were brought to view with perhaps sufficient distinctness in our report of the doings of the General Association. If then, the good which itinerant Evangelists do, - for we have admitted that they have done good, - can as well be done by the stated Pastors, and these evils be avoided, is not the change most desirable? Let, then, the churches and the ministers feel that they have a labor to do, and daily look up to God for wisdom to guide them, and for strength to help them do it. If they use their best endeavors, in humble dependence upon Him, they will not labor in vain. Their own souls will be sanctified, and sinners through their instrumentality will be saved.⁸¹

Reply by Joshua Leavitt, Editor of the *New York Evangelist*.

⁸¹ *Religious Intelligencer*. Volume 21. 27 August, 1836. pages 199 - 200.

Protracted Meetings and Evangelists.

“It is worthy of note that during the last five years, there have been very few revivals of religion, except under the influence of protracted meetings, or some exercises substantially equivalent to them. And for the last four years, very few protracted meetings have been successful to a great degree, except those which have enjoyed the labors either of a professional evangelist, or of some distant pastor of a church who has been distinguished for his success in such labors, and who for the time performed the appropriate labor of an evangelist. The great question of revivals therefore becomes practically a question whether it is profitable to hold protracted meetings, and to employ an evangelist in conducting them.”

- *New York Evangelist.*

Reply to Joshua Leavitt.

We have, within a year, given notices, more or less extended, of revivals in more than 30 churches in Massachusetts. The greater part of them were without protracted meetings, and every one of them, we think, without the labor of an evangelist. These revivals, we know, are “very few,” compared with the want of the churches. Still, they show that the facts, so far as Massachusetts is concerned, are not in agreement with the impression made by Mr. Leavitt’s assertions. Nearly all the late revivals in this State, have occurred in the absence of his “special means;” and therefore, according to his logic, prove that the absence of these means is desirable.

Among ministers and churches in more intimate connection with the *N. Y. Evangelist*, the facts may be as he

stated. Revivals which have occurred among his readers, and accounts of which have been sent to him for publication, probably, have nearly all been accompanied by such "special means" as he describes. This being the case, it was very natural that he should suppose the facts to be similar everywhere else, and therefore make the statement which we have quoted, without any suspicion of its incorrectness. But to the point which we have mainly in view:-

What must be the state of religion among pastors and churches, to which Mr. Leavitt's description is applicable? What must be the character of that preaching and hearing, which does so little good? Can he be a "good minister of Jesus Christ," among whose people no revival can be expected, without a protracted meeting under the conduct of some evangelist or minister from a distance? Such a man ought, by all means, to set about the examination of himself and his ministry, without delay and in earnest. A minister who can be satisfied with himself and his labors, with such results, or rather, such a want of results, staring him in the face, cannot be a man of the right spirit. He who can make up his mind to labor on, indefinitely, expecting no better results, is guilty of entertaining very low views of the Christian ministry.

And what must be the state of religion in a church so situated? Can it be, that they are in the habit of offering the "prayer of faith?" Can they be so devoted to the service of Christ, that they may with propriety wear his name? What must be the character and value of their worship on the Sabbath? The minister preaches, and the people hear, - or are at least in the seat of hearers - some of them; but neither expects that God will bless that in which they are or appear to be engaged, in the conversion of souls. They expect such results, only when they have a protracted meeting, attended by a minister from a distance. Prayers are offered, - at least in form; but nobody expects that

they will be answered by the pouring out of God's Spirit upon the congregation; for that blessing is not to be enjoyed except at a protracted meeting, attended by a minister from a distance. Private labors of individual members of the church, for the conversion of the impenitent in their own families and neighborhoods, are either wholly neglected, or performed with an expectation of their inefficiency, grounded on experience and verified by the result.

But, we are told, much success cannot be expected, even at a protracted meeting, without the presence of a "professed evangelist, or of some distant pastor who has been *distinguished* for his success in such labors." These pastors, with whose presence success may be expected, are only "the distinguished," and of course but few. The greater part of them will prove inefficient, not only in their ordinary ministrations, but even at protracted meetings. Certainly, the religious condition of ministers and churches to whom this description is applied, must be most wretched.

In confirmation of his doctrine, Mr. Leavitt gives some account of three revivals in connection with the labors of Mr. Burchard. One of them relates to the revival in Weathersfield, Vt., in 1834. The fact is, Mr. Burchard commenced his labors in that town, Nov. 30, 1834. A revival had then been in progress in that place, for nearly or quite two months, as appears from an account by the Rev. James Converse, pastor of that church, published in the *Vt. Chronicle*, of March 12, 1835. The facts were similar in Springfield, Vt., and several other places, where Mr. Burchard labored about that time. Indeed, it seemed to be his main business, going from place to place, *finishing off* revivals that were already in progress. The true and full history of those transactions will by no means support the assertion, that revivals cannot be expected, unless they begin with a protracted meeting under the conduct of a "professed evangelist," or of a

“distinguished” “revival preacher” from a distance. We suspect that a thorough examination of “facts” in many other instances would lead to the same result – that the revival commenced first, and the evangelist came afterwards. Every such case proves that a revival may *begin*, and therefore may *exist*, without the aid of an evangelist, and that the question concerning the employment of evangelists by no means includes the question whether revivals shall exist. In neither of the three accounts of Mr. Burchard’s labors above referred to, is there any information that the revival did not commence before his arrival, and entirely independently of his influence. In one of the three, as above stated, we know that it did so commence. His “facts” so far, prove that an evangelist may go into a place where there is a revival, and, in the opinion of some persons, labor usefully: and they prove nothing more.

We hope, therefore, that Christians, lay or clerical, will not adopt the belief, that their prayers and labors for the conversion of sinners will be fruitless, except when they have a protracted meeting, under the care of a “revival preacher” from a distance.⁸²

⁸² *Religious Intelligencer*. Volume 21. 10 September, 1836. Pages 235 – 236.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Edward N. Kirk's Attempt at Wisdom.

Letter from the Rev. Edward N. Kirk, to the Editor of the *New York Evangelist*.

Albany, September 21, 1836.

Brother Leavitt, - I have for some time waited for an opportunity, as public and as important as the meeting of the ministers of Connecticut, to deny what many of my brethren are saying of my personal sentiments. And I should gladly have seized such an occasion for disabusing those who take sufficient interest in me to be aggrieved by what they deem to be my wrong actions. But I have, perhaps, waited too long already, and therefore I adopt the next best alternative of writing to you. ***I am not, and never have been, opposed to the order of preachers called evangelists.*** But, in connection with that remark, I want to make so many more, that some will consider me tedious, and others worse than that, a trimmer.

1. I have an increased aversion to "parties." But what has that to do with evangelists? Much, every way. For three years I have observed with pain, both in church and state, that the best men, and some of them the loudest in their censure of party spirit, have actually sacrificed their personal independence to party consistency. I see caucusing in every party, and I see in all its pernicious effects. To speak of it more particularly in the church: You form a new school party, a new measure party, an old school or an old measure, an abolition or a colonization party, and two things ensue: first, the competency of any bold or ardent spirit to do all the thinking of the party is fully, though tacitly admitted. His sentiments become the creed of the party; and woe to him

who reserves the right of agreeing with the party in some things and of differing in others. That woe, dear brother, I have experienced; and I expect some more of it, if God spares my unworthy life. The current drifting in that direction is powerful, and I expect not to see it greatly changed in my day. The second evil is, that the worst spirits in the party give tone to its documents and speeches, and make the gauge of emotion for the rest. And here is another woe upon the heartless compromiser that refuses to sympathize or to applaud, because he believes there is more of man's selfishness than of Christ's benevolence. That is my serious and painful objection to every party in the church, that I am now acquainted with, if I may except one or two; among which, as a specimen, is the "Barnes-supporting party," which may have fallen into the same evils, but if so, I have not observed it. It has come, so far as I can judge, the nearest to my idea of a Christian party. That is – men have united together on the specific point on which they are agreed – they allow wide differences in other things, and they act towards each other and their opponents with forbearance, moderation, dignity, courtesy, and firmness. On this point I want to say much – very much; and if needs be, to justify myself to all the brethren and societies and parties which are censured in this remark. But for the present let it suffice to have given this general view, which I do for the purpose of justifying myself in another thing, and to show under what circumstances I made the much censured speech at Norfolk. It has since that meeting been mentioned to me, that the question concerning the advantages or evils of evangelists was the dividing line of two great parties, on one side of which are arrayed certain eastern papers against all "western revivals." Believe me, dear sir, I have for two years been so far separated in my feelings from parties, except the great one that is trying to save men from error and sin and ruin, that I was as ignorant of that fact as an infant.

And if the Connecticut Association brought up that question for a party triumph, I was as innocent of participation, and as ignorant of their schemes, as the veriest stranger. So much for the object of my remarks. An interesting question was before them. I spoke then what I shall never be ashamed to repeat, all the facts which had come under my observation, with the inferences in which my mind inevitably ran. I wish it then understood, that in making these remarks, I deserted no party, I joined no party, I stood with no party. I spoke, in the fear of God, what I knew and thought, and now think.

2. I have been misrepresented by reporters. They have not attributed to me a remark which I did not make, but they have omitted some important qualifying remarks. Of their importance, as shewing my sentiments as then expressed you can judge. The purport of my speech was as follows: I speak of evangelists only from a limited observation. I have had many protracted meetings in my church. In all but one, pastors aided me. In that one an evangelist labored. In all but that one, we enjoyed a rich and permanent blessing. In that one, we had more than a failure. The meeting truly flatted out, as the musicians would say. And it made almost a schism in my church. From that one instance, I formed a judgment, not that evangelists were not necessary in the kingdom of Jesus Christ, but that there were very peculiar dangers surrounding that instrument of the church's power. That the danger implies a necessity of evil I do not believe, in this case nor any other. The very meaning of that word, in most instances, is – an evil which may be avoided by proper care, but which will almost certainly be met if caution is not exercised. That brother Finney accomplished a vast amount of good in that capacity, I cannot doubt. That others have, I also believe. And you may have observed that I am nowhere represented as saying that I thought they were a dangerous, or a bad, or an unnecessary order of men. But my complaint of the reporters is, that they omitted

all these observations, which were then made – that it would be better for the churches and ministers, in every case, if the pastors would awaken their own people, visit each others churches, and do just what evangelists have done, and which pastors have often done, under the smiles of the God of grace. I said that if these pastors were now going to vote evangelists out of their territory, they were assuming a very solemn responsibility; for they were bound to go home and be as much aroused, as if some faithful evangelist were among them, nay, that they were accountable to God for all the good which might be done by the evangelists, and which good they were then voting out. And I made one other remark, still more important in its present connections. It was – that I did not approve of the remarks of some speakers, nor should I approve of their vote, if it were based upon those views. My objection was to the form of the vote as referring to all time and space. I observed, fully and distinctly, that it would be as unavailing as it was arrogant for that body of men to tell all other men, in all parts of the church, and in all future time, that God would not employ evangelists. And under that remark was implied all that I now believe, and think, and avow, without hesitation. My impressions concerning the evangelists that have been on the field are such that I would prefer not to invite the greater part of them into my pulpit. But if any one should be willing to assist, concerning whose labors I had formed a favorable judgment, I should invite him, notwithstanding all that has been thought, and said, and voted, by other men.

Yours fraternally, Edward N. KIRK.⁸³

⁸³ *Religious Intelligencer*. Volume 21. 8 October, 1836. Pages 299 – 300.

Comments on the Rev. Edward N. Kirk's Reply.

We have seen, above, that there were problems with the attempts made by the Congregational ministerial Associations to cope with the fall-out from the ministry of the Rev. Jedediah Burchard in Vermont.

It seems to me that the wisest response came from the Rev. Edward N. Kirk. The letter he wrote to the editor of the *New York Evangelist* was reproduced in several other publications.

The first point Kirk emphasized was that he did not believe in party spirit. When two parties are in conflict, such as the parties for and against Burchard, it is always difficult to reach a wise conclusion, and parties tend to go to extremes. Certainly this had happened in the debates in the Congregational Ministers' Associations, and also in the vitriolic publications of the Universalists, Kirk believed.

The other main point was that Kirk had been involved in many protracted meetings in his own church. In all instances except one, he had been helped by other pastors as he requested of them, and had led the evangelizing work himself. In all these cases, there had been good and worthwhile spiritual results. In the one exception, he had used the services of a professional itinerant evangelist, and the results had been disastrous. There had even been the beginnings of a split in his church as a result. He concluded that – of the itinerant evangelists who were currently working in the churches, he would not choose many of them to work in his church. But Kirk was willing to invite other evangelists to work in his church, if he had formed a favorable opinion of that person. So, the sweeping decision of the Associations to exclude all evangelists from churches where settled ministers were working, was a mistake, in his opinion. Just as it was a mistake for the Association to try to tie the hands of other ministers everywhere.

The Associations had taken upon themselves the responsibility for espousing situations where loss might occur in the churches. If the work of an evangelist might have been a positive good in a church, more than what the settled minister could do, then the Association supported the poorer result. In this they had failed in their Christian responsibilities, and damaged the work of the Kingdom of God.

SOME CONCLUSIONS.

Burchard's Faults and Talents.

A little earlier in his letter, John Keep had said that he thought the accusations made against Burchard in the *Vermont Chronicle* were correct, but he still had some reservations about aspects of it. He was not so certain as others seemed to be.

Later in this letter, and applying primarily to his own experience of Burchard in Homer, New York, he said, "I include in these defects, the levity which he produces in a congregation – his want of punctuality in commencing his meetings at the time appointed – his reproachful remarks upon those who oppose him – his too hastily pronouncing those to be converted who have merely professed to give their hearts to God, and then, in the inquiry room and elsewhere speaking of them positively as converts – and his continuing his meetings often to a very late and unseasonable hour in the night.

While he is bold in declaring the truth and inflexible in duty, he should always tenderly regard the feelings of the minister with whom he labours, and respect the feelings of the church that employs him. Would he but take this course, he might have the confidence of the ministers, and the affectionate

support of the churches, and his labours, I believe, be much more extensively effectual, and the reaction, which is now often so dreadful, might be avoided.”

So there were many significant ways in which Jedediah Burchard did not manage to be wise, with the wisdom of God, and he suffered as a consequence, and others did too.

We should emphasize the point above, that, when his friends confronted Burchard with these problems in his presentation and work, and showed him the improvements he needed to make, he promised to avoid these mistakes. But he did not seem to succeed very well in doing this, if at all. He could not control his talent sufficiently.

Burchard had some notable talents which made him into a very useful preacher. Fowler said, “He cannot be judged by ordinary rules. Constitutionally eccentric, he was irresistibly erratic. A thorough Presbyterian and a hyper-Calvinist, he was of a mercurial disposition and a brilliant genius. His power of description has been seldom surpassed, and his fund of anecdote and fountain of humor were so overflowing that he could not seal them. Without culture, and often crude and coarse, his picturing was always vivid and occasionally beautiful, and his delivery, though too obviously acting, well befitted it. His preaching would have drawn crowds irrespective of its spiritual impression, but this did not by any means altogether fail in it, though disproportioned to the mere excitement it produced and not distinguished by him from that.” So, some of his talents were not always under his rational control, once he started to preach.

Burchard had a “nervous temperament and power of fancy and superabundant facetiousness and temptation to the histrionic.” Many people did not like some of these features. However, despite that, he was an entertaining speaker, with a

charismatic presence, and had no trouble drawing crowds wherever he went.

What made any attack upon him so undesirable was that God had apparently sent him, and was blessing his work in notable ways. The Lord of the Harvest was having a say as well. Herein we see the love of God bursting through the ocean of difficulties which human nature creates. There is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine others who do not think they need to repent.

The Viewpoint of Eternity.

What kind of standard of values must we use in judging this whole situation, and its details?

The work of spreading the Gospel around the world includes several parts. It includes the evangelistic work of converting as many people as possible to Christ. And it includes the Teaching ministry of bringing them all to a spiritual maturity in Christ. These ministries combine to produce many blessings for people living in the world, for future generations also, and they contribute to improving the foundations and quality of human civilization. Every aspect of this work has great value for time and for eternity, and every part has its own value, although some aspects of it are more valuable than others.

Ultimately it is the perspective provided by ETERNITY which shows us the most fundamental perspectives of all. This is because eternity will be forever, and not just for the short span of a human life, or the extent of human civilization.

Various statements by Christ, recorded in the four Gospels, reveal that the Final Judgment will have many aspects and strands to it, and will cover even the finest details.

Many of these details will fade into relative insignificance when we consider the importance or value of the division between those who love the Father and the Son, and those who do

not; those who are devoted to Christ, and those who are not; those who are “born again,” and those who are not; those who have “eternal life” and those who do not. Or, to put it into the words of the Book of the Revelation – those whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life, and those who are not.

The soul-saving evangelistic ministry of the Church of Jesus Christ, therefore, represents something of fundamental importance.

Anything which furthers this work must, therefore, be considered of great importance, and anything which destroys it, or limits it, must be considered as having strongly negative value.

In the light of these factors, the question as to what the Congregational churches of New York and of New England could do with an evangelist like Burchard, however peculiar he might be, is glaringly a matter of great importance

Generally, the Congregational Churches were individual, led by a pastor and elders or deacons. So when Burchard, or any other touring preacher, arrived in an area, pastors of the churches did not have the support of a higher body to help them negotiate with the visitor. The pastor had to assert his own authority, and deal with the visitor himself, or in league with any other local pastors, and cope with any peculiarities that he might have.

The Congregational churches were linked by local Associations, but these bodies had no authority which might give a local minister more “clout” in negotiating with someone like Burchard. No action or decision by an Association could alter a local pastor’s right to act according to his conscience, except “peer group pressure,” which was just as real then as it is today.

However, it was this very “peer group pressure” that was used by James Marsh, to achieve something that the Associations could not achieve by making laws or regulations. James Marsh’s campaigning eventually shut Burchard out of all the Congregational pulpits in Vermont, Connecticut and

Massachusetts, wherever a pastor was settled. There were, of course, many small churches, and Burchard could have set to work in some of them. That is what he had been doing in Jefferson county, and in Saint Lawrence county, up until 1831.

This effectively devolved an obligation upon the Associations. Whatever faults Burchard had, he was, nevertheless, an effective evangelist in many respects, especially when a revival had already started in a church. If they had negotiated an arrangement with him, or have found another way of modifying his most damaging faults, so that he could have continued in the work, many more souls could have been saved in their area of responsibility. However, this did not happen. So the Associations have a responsibility for all those who might ultimately be lost, because they forced Burchard to leave the area. They destroyed Burchard's ability to carry out his calling from God in their churches. Souls were not saved which might have been, had he continued.

John Keep raised this point. He emphasized that Burchard had done a great deal of good in most of the places where he had preached. This was undeniable. He then asked, "would this same amount of good have been done, but for his labours? Had he not visited your churches, would there have been an equal number who give evidence of a genuine conversion?"

It was in an effort to avoid answering this important question that people said, "But he does much injury!" And the speculation would be offered – "that he is the means of ruining more than he saves, and that to encourage such a man is to save a few at the fearful cost of destroying more." Keep added the comment to this – that this comment had mainly been uttered by professing Christians who disapproved of the measures that Burchard was using, "and to sustain themselves in their opposition, have deemed it proper to magnify his foibles."

Then Keep made the obvious comment – “Now had these men joined in the effort with that portion of the church who sustain Mr. B. in his measures, and really given themselves to prayer, instead of cavilling, it is believed that the clamour of the wicked would have been very much diminished, and the number of real converts greatly multiplied, and at the same time the objectionable features of Mr. B.’s movements, to a happy extent, prevented.”

“Then who is it who ruins souls? The Preacher, or those members of the church behind whom, in fact, the impenitent hide themselves in scores?”

In reference to many protracted meetings he had seen, Keep said, “I have seen prominent members of the Church take upon themselves a fearful responsibility, by opposing the work, and thus strengthening the hands of the wicked, - members who, I have no doubt, have prevented the conversion of sinners.”

It seems obvious to me that James Marsh was clearly guilty – big time – in this regard. And as a result of his campaigning he involved many others in the same way in many of the Congregational churches of New England. So he was guilty many times over.

No doubt some of the positive things that Marsh and his followers were hoping to achieve or work towards were worthy. But it was a very high price to pay for it.

But the price they paid had an additional dimension. This was referred to earlier. Although extra research is needed into this subject, this series of decisions made by Marsh and the Associations, seems to have marked a signpost in the history of churches in New England, which saw a decline in evangelism and revivals in that part of the country. This seems to have resulted in the decline of the churches and their membership, which went on for some decades. It seems as if these decisions somehow

grieved the Holy Spirit, and declension followed instead of successful evangelism.

The Scriptures indicate that the Lord is jealous concerning his prophets. First Chronicles 16, and Psalm 105, both reflect what David said in thanks to God:-

“A small number it was,
few in number, strangers in that land,
roaming from nation to nation,
from one kingdom to another;
but he let no man ill-treat them
for their sake he admonished kings:
‘Touch not my anointed servants,
do my prophets no harm.’”

Other examples of this principle could also be given. Another interesting instance that I came across some years ago when I was researching the life and ministry of Mrs. Emilia Baeyertz, an orthodox Jewess, born in North Wales, converted to Christ in Victoria, Australia, and who became a notable evangelist in Australia, and later in many parts of the British Isles.

In October, 1910, Mrs. Baeyertz conducted a seventeen days’ mission in the Dalry United Free Church in Edinburgh – Rev. Alex. Aitken, minister. The published report said that on the last night of the mission “a Jew came forward and confessed that he left home with the intention of disturbing the meeting, but on his way the Lord said to him, ‘Touch not Mine anointed, and do My prophets no harm.’”⁸⁴

⁸⁴ *The Christian*. 27 October, 1910, page 24. [London weekly evangelical newspaper, published by Morgan and Scott.] See also, Robert Evans, *Emilia Baeyertz – Evangelist*. Hazelbrook. N.S.W. Published by the Author. 2007. page 384.

Now, Burchard was not a Jew, so far as we know, but, with all his faults, he was a prophet of God in the spotlight in Vermont at that time. He was declaring the Gospel, and calling people to Christ. The people and the ministry in Vermont have suffered as a result of Burchard being sent packing by James Marsh and the Congregational ministerial Associations.

What James Marsh and his friends did, may have shown a good deal of wisdom in certain ways, but it was a very serious matter, and was *not wide enough* to reflect the wisdom of God.

James Marsh's Long-sighted Concern.

James Marsh was one of the many Congregational ministers who shared the concern about the major problems which James Davenport had introduced into New England at the end of the Great Awakening in 1740. They seriously did not want James Davenport to rise from the dead, or for any of these problems to re-appear.

One of Marsh's main criticisms about what he saw happening in Burlington swung around a complex group of factors in the situation, involving a weakening of the Pastor's place in the structure of the congregation in these churches. Not only was the Pastor weakened after the spectacular preacher left and the excitement died down. The Pastor could not continue to produce the same style of sermons which the evangelist preached, nor could he maintain the excitement.

Naturally, the Pastor wanted to see conversions, and his congregation strengthened, as did also the deacons and other leaders. So, when the evangelist arrived, the Pastor was not in a strong position to dictate what should be done, and what should not be done. The evangelist was in demand. So he could pick and choose with whom he worked. If a Pastor did not give the evangelist what he wanted, allowing measures to be used that perhaps Pastor and people did not really believe in, then the

evangelist might go somewhere else, and thus his church could miss out on much blessing. Some of his members might also leave, looking for other more satisfying and exciting church-life.

One of the factors which under-girded this whole situation was that the evangelist did not really belong to one of the denominations involved in any way which made him responsible to the denomination for what he did. So he was not really responsible to anyone or anything for the way he acted. Burchard had been ordained as a Congregational evangelist/minister, and no doubt had belonged to an Association and a Presbytery back in Saint Lawrence county. But these bodies did not have any say or control about what he did when he went to Vermont, or to other parts of New York State. He did not have to answer to anyone else for what he did.

Organizational structures of denominations vary from one to the other, and sometimes even from place to place. And these structures all have their strengths and weaknesses. One of the great weaknesses in this situation was that Burchard was not responsible to anyone for what he did. Obviously he could say that he was responsible to God for what he did. But this is not the same thing. Undoubtedly he will answer to God for what he did. But that is not something that will happen quickly enough to save this situation.

In the history of the United States of America, the problem of traveling preachers and evangelists who were not responsible to any organized body for their actions has been a continuing major problem for many evangelical churches, from the time of James Davenport to the Second World War – two hundred years – and they persist today.

It is very important that evangelists should belong to a denomination, or to something like that, which has well defined ethical standards in relation to other churches, and clear ethical respect for pastors of all the other churches.

This did not exist in Burchard's time or case, and we can see the results of it in what happened in Vermont. Twenty years before, the churches of Connecticut in particular had been very well treated by the evangelist, Asahel Nettleton, who always treated the Pastors with the greatest respect, and only acted within the pastor's desires.

The subject is discussed further in one of my previous books, *Fire From Heaven*.⁸⁵

In this book there is a study of the way "revival" became "revivalism," over the period from the 1831 revival, and for the next 100 years. The meanings of the words "revival" and "revivalism" went through a process of change. The practices of mass evangelism also went through a process of evolution. The gospel which these later evangelists preached became oversimplified, and lost its real spiritual depth.

From the days of Jonathan Edwards, there had been a great concern that the mistakes of James Davenport should never be repeated. The Congregationalists in Burchard's time were also very strong regarding this concern. But the evolutionary processes to which I have referred produced a situation soon after the First World War where one could say that James Davenport had risen from the dead, and revivals had come into disrepute.

The best analysis came originally through the writings and judgment of Dr. J. Edwin Orr in the 1940s, when he was still a young and unlettered man. He believed that the greatest damage was done by the foolishness of American freelance evangelists in the early twentieth century, even more than by the inroads of Modernist and Liberal Theology, or by the vastly overrated notice that was taken of Higher Criticism of the Bible,

⁸⁵ Robert Evans. *Fire From Heaven*. – A Description and Analysis of the Revivals of the 'Burned-Over District' of New York. 1800 – 1840, and Spiritual Deceptions. Hazelbrook. Published by the Author. 2005. Consult chapter 17 especially.

spreading from Germany. Real revival was now confused with mere revivalism. Counterfeit revivals were now mistaken for the real thing. Revivals had seriously come into disrepute.⁸⁶

In the first half of the twentieth century, freelance evangelism developed separately from the mainline churches, with shady financial practices, and pouring vitriolic criticism on the “dead” churches which did not support their evangelism. This caused breakaway churches to be hatched to cater for the converts of these evangelists. It was not until the rise of Dr. Oswald Smith, and later in the more ecumenical approach of Dr. Billy Graham, by which this split was overcome.

But the seeds of this can be seen in the activities of Jedediah Burchard, and many others like him, a century beforehand, who acted as evangelists who were not properly responsible to anyone for what they did, and for insisting upon the evangelistic measures that they imposed upon the local Pastors. In their turn, the pastors were not in a position to negotiate from a position of any strength. So the denominational structures had also let them down.

James Marsh could see the dangers in what Burchard was doing, and the dangers were real. That is why he fought against it, although his view of the situation was affected by the peculiarities of New England “State Church” Congregationalism. Obviously, he thought he was being very wise indeed. It was a difficult situation for everyone concerned. It was almost a situation where whatever one did, we would have results which were not properly wise according to the wisdom of God, although Marsh did not recognize this.

Thankfully, God is wise beyond human wisdom, and can providentially work His will, and His wisdom, through imperfect, mortal, limited, sinful people, and who are blinded at least in part

⁸⁶ J. Edwin Orr. *Always Abounding*. London. M.M. & S. 1940. page 89.

by the limitations of their world-views, experiences, and prejudices, and in very complicated situations.

The wisdom of God operates at a deeper level than what human negotiators can normally achieve, and is proved right by its results in the eyes of all who are her children.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Journals and Newspapers.

American Quarterly Register.

Boston. Journal of the American Education Society. (Quarterly.)
(various issues – hard copies. 1840 downloaded in part.)

New York Evangelist. 1828 to 1839. (weekly). Edited by the
Rev. Joshua Leavitt. New York.
Proquest microfilms, reels numbered. 1829 – 1830.

Religious Intelligencer. Volume One, 1st June, 1816 to Volume
22, October, 1837. New Haven, Connecticut. Generally edited
and published by Nathan Whiting. (weekly).
Seven volumes in hard copy. 21 volumes Sabin microfiches -
except volume 13. Parts of volume 13 were kindly obtained by
Andrew Chapman, from a microfilm in the Bodleian Library,
Oxford.

Vermont Chronicle. October 10, 1828 to December 31, 1839.
(weekly.) Windsor, Vermont. Microfilms - Library of Congress.

Books, Articles and Theses.

Bates Joshua, “Revivals of Religion in Middlebury College.” in
the *American Quarterly Register* for February, 1840. pages 305
– 323.

Burchard. Jedediah. *Sermons, Addresses, and Exhortations, by the Rev. Jedediah Burchard, with an Appendix containing some Account of Proceedings during Protracted Meetings, held under his direction in Burlington, Williston and Hinesburgh, Vt., December, 1835, and January, 1836.* By C.G, Eastman. Burlington, Chauncey Goodrich, 1836. pp. 120. [Prepared and published by Eastman without the consent of Burchard, and contrary to his wishes.]

Burton. Asa, *The Life of Asa Burton*, written by Himself. The First Congregational Church, Thetford. Vermont. 1973.

Bushnell. Jedediah, *A Farewell Sermon*. Preached to the Church and Society in Cornwall, Vermont. May 29, 1836, by their late Pastor. Middlebury. By request of the Church. 1836.

Comstock. John M., *The Congregational Churches of Vermont and Their Ministers. 1812-1914. Historical and Statistical.* St. Johnsbury, Vt. Caledonian Co. 1915.

Crocker. Henry, *History of the Baptists in Vermont.* Vermont Baptist State Convention. 1913.

Evans. Robert, *Emilia Baeyertz – Evangelist.* Her Career in Australia and Great Britain. Hazelbrook. N.S.W. Published by the Author. 2007.

Evans. Robert, *Fire From Heaven.* A Description and Analysis of the Revivals of the ‘Burned-Over District’ of New York. 1800 – 1840, and Spiritual Deceptions. Hazelbrook. Published by the Author. 2005.

Finney. Charles G., *Memoirs*. The complete restored text. Annotated Critical Edition. Garth M. Rosell and Richard A.G. Dupuis, editors. Grand Rapids. Academie Books (Zondervan.) 1989.

Fish. Henry C., *Handbook of Revivals*. (First published, 1874.) Gano Books 1988.

Foster. Frank H., *A Genetic History of the New England Theology*. New York. Russell and Russell. 1963. (Reprint of the first edition of 1907.)

Gale. George W., *Autobiography (to 1834) of George W. Gale*. (1789 – 1861.) Founder of Galesburg, Illinois, and Knox College. New York. 1964, (published privately by a family member.)

Goodhue. Josiah F., *A Sermon on the Character and Services of Rev. Thomas A. Merrill, D.D.* with a Memoir of His Life. Middlebury, Vt. Addison Association. 1856.

Kirk. Edward N., *Lectures on Revivals*. Boston. Congregational Publication Society. 1875.

Ludlum. D. M., *Social Ferment in Vermont*. New York. A.M.S. Press. 1966. (1st published 1939.)

Mears. David O., *Life of Edward N. Kirk*. Boston. Lockwood, Brooks and Co. 1878.

Orr J. Edwin, *Always Abounding*. An Intimate Sketch of Dr. Oswald J. Smith. London. Marshall, Morgan and Scott. 1940.

Orr. J. Edwin, *The Flaming Tongue*. The Impact of Twentieth Century Revivals. Chicago. Moody Press. 1975.

Potash, Jeffrey, *Vermont's Burned-Over District*. Patterns of Community Development and Religious Activity, 1761 - 1850. Brooklyn. Carlson Publishing Inc. 1991

Roth. Randolph A., *The Democratic Dilemma*. Religion, Reform, and the Social Order in the Connecticut Valley of Vermont. 1791 – 1850. New York. Cambridge University Press. 1987.

Sprague. William B., *Annals of the American Pulpit. Volume Two*. Trinitarian Congregational ministers. New York. Robert Carter. 1859. (Material on the Rev. James Marsh. pages 692 – 704.). Also Merrill and Bates. Modern reprint.

Streeter. Russell, *Mirror of Calvinistic Fanatical Revivals*; or Jedediah Burchard and Co. during a Protracted Meeting of Twenty-six Days, in Woodstock, Vermont; to which is added the “Preamble and Resolution” of the Town declaring said Burchard a Nuisance to Society. Woodstock, 1835. Modern reprint – Pranava Books. This edition, from New Delhi, India, is a clean, hard-covered and complete reproduction. Other modern reproductions from America, so far, are of poor quality and are incomplete.

Torrey. Joseph (Compiler), *The Remains of the Rev. James Marsh*. Port Washington. Kennikat Press. 1971. (First published, 1843.)

Walker. Williston, *A History of the Congregational Churches in the United States of America*. The American Church History Series. New York. The Christian Literature Co. 1894.

Ward. Donal, *Religious Enthusiasm in Vermont. 1761 – 1847*. Ph.D. thesis. University of Notre Dame, Indiana. 1980. University Microfilms International. A printed and bound copy was used.

Withington. Leonard, “Review of Burchard’s Sermons.” in *The Literary and Theological Review*, conducted by Leonard Woods Jr. Volume 3. Number 10. June, 1836. New York. Ezra Collier. 1836. [pages 228 – 236.]

INDEX

Adams. 25, 39.

Annsville. 47.

Associations:

Rutland Assoc. 292.

Pawlet Assoc. 300.

Windsor Assoc. 301.

Bates. Rev. Dr. Joshua, 113, 114, 134, 193.

Bates's suggested measures in special meetings. 114 – 118.

Bellville, 38.

Binghamton. 22, 53.

Brownville. 40.

Burchard:

Ability to illustrate sermons. 32, see also Fowler.

Biographical details. 11, 17, chap.2. 108.

Goes to Vermont. 121.

His gifts as a preacher. 110, Chap.2. 356.

His faults. 110 – 111, 355.

In Bergen Center. 106.

In Brockport. 66.

In Camden. 46.

In Jefferson county. 38.

In Lewis county. 52.

In Rochester. 57.

In Rome. 43.

In Windsor. 122, 131.

Measures used at Rochester. 61.

Measures used at Springfield. 142.

Measures used in Windsor. 123, 126, 128, 131.
 Neglected by historians. 10.
 Results of Burchard's missions. 14, 126, 156, 167, 177, 184,
 194, 201.
 Revivals before Burchard arrived. 134, 150, 163, 187,
 Sermons. 202 – 251.
Burchard. Mrs. 21, 30, 70, 145, 168, 179, 183, 195.
 Byington. Rev. Joel, 72.

Calvinism. 62, 146, 205.
 Circular Conferences. 186.
 Church membership, accepting people too early. 77, 138-9, 157,
 190, 297.

Depression following special meetings (or not). 131, 159, 247.
 Difficult personalities. 7, 354.
 Doctrines preached at Homer, 80.
 Doctrines preached at Montpelier. 179.
 Doctrines preached at Norwich, 175.
 Doctrines preached at Royalton. 183.
 Doctrines preached at Springfield. 140.
 Doctrines preached at Windsor. 127.

Eastman. Charles, 13, 202.
 Editors of the *Vermont Chronicle* explore the problem. 301 –
 322.
 “Errorists.” 214 – 231.

False conversions expected. 294.
 Finney. Rev. Charles G., 16, 34.
 Florence, N.Y. 50.
 Fowler. Rev. Dr. Philemon, 15, 19, 355.

General Associations:

Gen. Assoc of Connecticut. 323 – 339.

Gen. Assoc. of Massachusetts. 336.

Grafton. 159.

Gregory, Rev. D.D., 22, 56.

Healing the divisions at Grafton. 160.

Homer: 72, 313, 356.

Homer - Means used at H. 73, 83.

Homer - Opposition to New Measures at H. 83.

Homer - Previous Revivals at H. 73.

Hopkins. Rev. Josiah, 304.

Keep. Rev. John, 72-, 313, 355 – 360.

Kirk. Rev. Edward N., 350.

Leavitt, Rev. Joshua, 268, 345.

Lookwood. Rev. Peter, 54.

Marsh. Rev. Dr. James, 11, 16, 19, 273 – 291, 358, 362-.

Measures used at Perkinsville. 151.

Measures used at Rochester. 61.

Measures used at Royalton. 181.

Measures used at Shoreham. 188.

Measures used at Weathersfield. 154, 158.

Measures used at Woodstock. 171.

Merrill. Rev. Dr. Thomas A., 113.

Montpelier – harmony following the mission. 167, 180, 188.

Montpelier – previous revivals at- 176.

Nettleton. Asahel, 124, 278.

Norwich. 173.

Perkinsville. 149.
Previous revivals in Middlebury. 113.
Party spirit. 9.
Plan of Union churches. 23, 72.
Prayer of Faith. 39, 198, 213 – 215.

Relying too much on human effort at Grafton. 161.
Royalton. Results at R. 181 – 183.

Shoreham. 185.
Smith. Rev. B. C., 321.
Streeter. Russell, 13, 251.

Universalists. 12, 14, 251.
Using famous names as testimonials. 109, 261, 271.

Williston. 195.
Windsor. 122, 131.
Windsor – lack of harmony during the mission. 128.
Wisner. Rev. William, 57-, 309.
Withington. Rev. Leonard, 257.
Woodstock. 15, 162, 251.

