

CHAPTER IV.

1839.

REVIVAL SCENES.

THE subject of the revival of religion as the great want of the times had been already, and for a long time, much in the minds both of the pastor and the people of Kilsyth. The memorable scenes of the years 1742-3, when, under the ministry of the Rev. James Robe, this parish shared with that of Cambuslang in so remarkable an effusion of the Spirit of grace, still lived as a cherished tradition in the hearts of the people, and there were still here and there little companies of praying souls, “who spake one to another” of the good days of the past, and who “sighed and cried” over the subsequent times of declension and backsliding. There was, I believe, at least one society for religious fellowship which had survived, in the uninterrupted succession of its members, all through the intervening period, and whose lamp of faith and prayer was still found faintly burning, when the light of a new morning broke upon them, and the whole parish seemed to awake as “from a dream of a hundred years.” Into those sacred reminiscences and aspirations my father entered most profoundly from the first day of his ministry here in 1821, and laboured unceasingly thenceforward to keep them alive both in his own heart and in those of his people. In the words of his own biography, “his public instructions as well as private conversation, at visitations and elsewhere, abounded with allusions to those happy days of the past, and with expressions of ardent longing for their return; and to this point might the whole course of his ministry be said more or less to turn. In 1822, the second year of his ministry, we find him along with another congenial spirit, the humble and godly Dr. George Wright of Stirling, bending over the old records of the kirk-session bearing on the dates 1742-9, and with solemn interest deciphering the dim and fading lines that referred to the incidents of the work as then in progress. Towards the close of the same year (Dec. 1822), on two successive Sabbaths, he preached directly and fully on the subject, taking for his text those singularly appropriate and impressive words in Micah vii. 1.—‘Woe is me, for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape-gleanings of the vintage; there is no cluster to eat; my soul desired the first ripe fruit:’—bringing the whole case of past attainment and subsequent declension before the congregation, and calling upon them again to arise and seek the Lord. In 1830, in consequence of some unusual outbreaks of sin, in connection with drunken brawls, a parochial day of fasting and prayer, in the view of prevailing sins and back-

slidings, was appointed by the kirk-session, and observed with marked seriousness and solemnity. In 1832 the near approach of the cholera, which fell heavily on the neighbouring village of Kirkintilloch, but never actually entered Kilsyth, while sounding its own terrible peal, at the same time summoned the pastor to lift up his voice in another earnest call to repentance and newness of life. In 1836 he read an elaborate essay before a clerical society in Glasgow with the twofold object of calling more extensive attention to the subject, and of drawing forth the suggestions of his brethren in regard to some signs of awakening life which were even then appearing in his own parish. About the same time he sought by means of brief, but pointed pastoral addresses to “heads of families,” and on “family worship,” which he printed and presented to every household in his parish, to revive the spirit of personal and family religion amongst his people. Finally, on a Sabbath afternoon in August, 1838, standing on the grave of his revered predecessor Mr. Robe, on the anniversary of his death, and taking as his text the words inscribed in Hebrew letters on his tomb, Isaiah xxvi. 19, he pled before a vast assemblage of his people, in behalf of Christ and the new birth unto eternal life, in tones of unaccustomed earnestness, and which stirred the hearts of many in a manner never to be forgotten. By such means as these did he seek through successive years to strengthen the things that remained and were ready to die, and, if so it might be, fan the feeble spark once more into a flame. The result was seen in a growingly heightened tone of moral and religious life in the congregation and parish generally, as well as latterly in more specific tokens of the divine power and presence, which seemed the precursors of a still richer blessing yet to come. There was a marked increase of seriousness and devout earnestness in public worship. Prayer-meetings became at once more numerous and more fervent. One or two sermons at communion times, marked by a peculiar unction and power, had fallen with visibly solemnizing effect on the congregation—one in particular, by the Rev. A. N. Somerville of Anderston, Glasgow, on the words, “Behold I stand at the door and knock,” which imprinted itself on many hearts, and was afterwards often referred to as marking an era in the religious history of the parish. Conversions, in fine, of a more than usually striking kind, became more frequent, and contributed at once to arrest the attention of the careless, and to animate the hopes and quicken the prayers of those who were looking and longing for the heavenly shower.

Meanwhile influences of a concurrent kind were at work elsewhere, and tended still further to quicken the pulse of religious life in the place. Similar tokens of reviving earnestness were appearing more or less extensively amongst the members of the other Christian denominations around, and particularly in connection with a small but very fervent society of Wesleyan Methodists, whose distinctive teaching tended greatly to emphasize in the

minds of the people the great ideas of conversion, the new birth, and the conscious peace and life of God, and whose unwearied activity and zeal for the gathering in of souls spread by a happy infection to the hearts of others.

It was in these circumstances, and to a field thus prepared, that the young evangelist now came, bearing the precious seed which he had already sown with such hopeful promise in Dundee. The remarkable scene which followed has been already often described, and I should have almost shrunk from attempting any fresh account of it, did there not happily survive a full and deliberate statement from my brother's own hand, which will enable us to survey it from a new and deeply interesting point of view. It was written during a quiet interval in the manse of Kilsyth exactly a year after the occurrences to which it refers, and is couched in a tone of solemn thoughtfulness and utter self-abnegation, in the presence of Him whose wondrous works he records, which imparts a peculiar weight to every word, and the impression of which would be marred only, not helped, by any laboured description of ours:—

“Having a spare hour, it has occurred to my mind that it may be for the glory of God that I should at last record my recollections of the marvellous commencement of the Lord's glorious work in this place in the month of July, 1839, and I entreat the special aid of the Holy Ghost, that I may write according to his own will and for the divine glory regarding these wonders of the Lord Jehovah. During the first four months of my ministry, which were spent at Dundee, I enjoyed much of the Lord's presence in my own soul, and laid in large stores of divine knowledge in preparing from week to week for my pulpit services in St. Peter's Church. But though I endeavoured to speak the truth fully, and to press it earnestly on the souls of the people, there was still a defect in my preaching at that time which I have since learned to correct, viz. that, partly from unbelieving doubts regarding the truth in all its infinite magnitude, and partly from a tendency to shrink back from speaking in such a way as visibly and generally to alarm the people, I never came, as it were, to throw down the gauntlet to the enemy by the unreserved declaration and urgent application of the divine testimony regarding the state of fallen man and the necessity of an unreserved surrender to the Lord Jesus in all his offices in order that he may be saved. However, I was gradually approaching to this point, which I had had in my eye as the grand means of success in converting souls, from the first time I entered the pulpit, and even from the day of my own remarkable conversion, of which I trust the Lord may enable me to leave some record behind on this earth for the glory of his own infinite *sovereign* and everlasting love in Christ. During the last three Sabbaths that I was at Dundee, before coming to Kilsyth, I was led in a great measure to preach without writing, not because I neglected to study, but in order that I might study and pray for a longer time; and in

preaching on the subjects which I had thus prepared, I was more than usually sensible of the divine support. The people also seemed to feel more deeply solemnized, and I was told of some who were shedding silent tears under the word of the Lord. I was to have preached on the evening of the fast-day at Kilsyth, July 18th, but the burial of my dear brother-in-law, George Moody, at Paisley was fixed for that day and I was of course obliged to be present thereat. His death was accompanied with a blessing from Jehovah to my soul. I never enjoyed, I think, sweeter realizations of the glory and love of Jesus, and of the certainty and blessedness of his eternal kingdom, than when at Paisley on this solemn occasion. The beautifully consistent and holy walk of our dear departed brother, with the sweet divine serenity that marked the closing scene of his life, made his death very affecting, and eminently fitted to draw away the heart of the believer after him to Jesus in the heavenly glory. This was its effect on my soul through the Lord's power. On the way to the grave I wept with joy, and could have praised the Lord aloud for his love in allowing me to assist in carrying to the bed of rest a member of his 'own body, of his flesh, and of his bones;' and when I looked for the last time on the confined body in its narrow, low, solitary, cold resting-place, I had a glorious anticipation of the second coming of the Lord, when He would himself raise up in glory everlasting that dear body which he had appointed us to bury in its corruption and decay.

"I have taken this retrospect of circumstances in my own history previous to the time of my coming to Kilsyth, as they bore very powerfully upon my own state of mind, and were among the means by which the Lord finished my preparation—a preparation which he had begun even in my infancy—for being employed as his poor and despised but yet honoured instrument in beginning and in assisting to carry on the wonderful work that followed. I was appointed to preach at Kilsyth on Friday evening. I did so from Psalm cxxx. 1, 2, a subject I had lately handled in Dundee after studying Owen's treatise on this psalm. I believe I preached with considerable solemnity, and in a manner in some degree fitted to alarm unconverted sinners and sleeping saints. I remember that some of the people of God seemed to respond with great fulness of heart to many of my petitions in public prayer, that while I was preaching there was a deep solemnity upon the audience, and that some of the Lord's people met me as I retired apparently much affected and testifying that the Lord had been among us. On Saturday I preached at Banton from Psalm cxxx. 3, with considerable assistance, as far as I can recollect. My uncle Dr. Burns of Paisley seemed to feel as if the Lord was with me, and kindly asked me to take his place at Kilsyth on Sabbath evening, leaving him to fill mine on Monday forenoon. He spoke also, I remember, in the family of its not being my duty to go abroad as I was on the eve of doing, but that I should be a home missionary in Scotland. I myself did not specu-

late anxiously about the future, but desired to be an instrument of advancing his work at the present time. In the evening of Saturday I met with one or two persons under deep distress of soul; and one of these, who is now a consistent follower of Jesus, seemed to enter into the peace of God while I was praying with her. This brought the work of the Spirit before me in a more remarkable and glorious form than I had before witnessed it, and served at once to quicken my desires after, and encourage my anticipations of seeing some glorious manifestation of the Lord's saving strength. On Sabbath everything went on as usual until the conclusion of the third table service, if I remember right, when Dr. Burns kindly shortened his own address and introduced me to the people, that I might give a short address not only to the communicants but to all present in the church. I had no precise subject in view on which to speak, but when rising was led to John xx., if I mistake not, simply by its opening to me and appearing suitable. This subject I tried to generalize as depicting the experience of a saint in seeking communion with Jesus, and the manner in which Jesus often deals with such. I had much assistance, and was especially enabled to charge hundreds of the communicants with betraying Christ at his table. I heard afterwards of some that were much moved at this time, and in particular of one woman who was then first apprehended by the Spirit and has been to all appearance converted. In the evening I preached from Matthew xi. 28, but, as far as I can recollect, without remarkable assistance or remarkable effects. At the close, however, I felt such a yearning of heart over the poor people among whom I had spent so many of my youthful years in sin, that I intimated I would again address them before bidding them farewell—it might be never to meet again on earth; and that I would do so in the market-place, in order to reach the many who absented themselves from the house of God, and after whom I longed in the bowels of Jesus Christ. This meeting was fixed for. Tuesday at 10 A.M., as I intended that day to leave Kilsyth on my return to Dundee. On Monday evening we had a meeting of the Missionary Society—Dr. Burns preached an excellent sermon from Isaiah lii. 1, in which some things were said upon Christ's wedding-garment which touched my heart. In speaking I felt the case of the heathen lying nearer my heart than I think ever before or since, and was enabled, though without any previous idea of what I was to say, to speak with liberty and power of the Holy Ghost.

“This and all other similar facts I would testify as in the sight of Jehovah, and as being obliged to do so for his glory. May he enable me to give the glory all to him, and take none of it at all to my own cursed flesh! The people seemed much impressed. The meeting, however, was not very large. I can hardly recall the feelings with which I went to preach on Tuesday morning—a morning fixed from all eternity in Jehovah's counsels as an era in the history of redemption. May the Holy Ghost breathe upon my soul and revive

in my memory, too faithless, alas! to the records of the Lord's wondrous works, the recollection of the marvellous scene which was then displayed before the wondering eyes of many favoured sinners in this place. Though I cannot speak with precision of the frame of soul in which I went to the Lord's work on that memorable day, yet I remember in general that I had an intense longing for the conversion of souls and the glory of Emmanuel, that I mourned under a sense of the awful state of sinners without Christ, their guilt in rejecting him as freely offered to their acceptance, my own total inability to help them by anything that I could do, and my complete unfitness and unworthiness to be an instrument in the hands of the Holy Ghost in saving their souls; while at the same time my eyes were fixed on the Lord as the God of salvation with a sweet hope of his glorious appearing. I have since heard that some of the people of God in Kilsyth who had been longing and wrestling for a time of refreshing from the Lord's presence, and who had during much of the previous night been travailing in birth for souls, came to the meeting not only with the hope, but with well-nigh the certain anticipation of God's glorious appearing, from the impressions they had had upon their own souls of Jehovah's approaching glory and majesty, especially when pleading at his footstool. The morning proved very unfavourable for our assembling in the open air, and this seems to have been a wise providential arrangement; for while, on the one hand, it was necessary that our meeting should be intimated for the open air, in order to collect the great multitude; on the other hand, it was very needful, in order to the right management of so glorious a work as that which followed, that we should be assembled within doors. At ten o'clock I went down to the middle of the town, and with some others drove up before us some stragglers who were remaining behind the crowd. When I entered the pulpit, I saw before me an immense multitude from the town and neighbourhood filling the seats, stairs, passages, and porches, all in their ordinary clothes, and including many of the most abandoned of our population. I began, I think, by singing the 102d Psalm, and was affected deeply when in reading it I came to these lines:

“Her time for favour which was set,
Behold, is *now* come to an end.’

That word ‘*now*’ touched my heart as with divine power, and encouraged the sweet hope that the set time was really *now* at hand. I read without comment, but with solemn feelings, the account of the conversion of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost; and this account, I am told, affected some of the people considerably. When we had prayed a second time, specially imploring that the Lord would open on us the windows of heaven, I preached from the words (Psalm cx. 3): ‘Thy people shall be willing in the

day of thy power.’ This subject I had studied and preached on at Dundee without any remarkable effect; and though I was so much enlarged on this occasion in discoursing from it, I have not been able to treat it in the same manner, or with the same effects, at any subsequent time. The following was the plan of the remarks which I was led to make upon the words:—I. The persons spoken of—they are God’s elect—those given to Christ of the Father. II. The promise of the Father to Emmanuel regarding these persons—‘they shall be willing.’ 1. Willing to be saved by Christ’s righteousness alone. 2. Willing to take on his yoke. 3. Willing to bear his cross. III. The time of the promise—the day of Emmanuel’s power. 1. It is the day of his exaltation at the Father’s right hand (verse 1), *i.e.* the latter day. 2. It is the day of the free preaching of the Divine word. 3. It is the day in which Christ crucified is the centre and sum of the doctrine taught. 4. It is the day of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit—‘The Lord shall send,’ &c. I was led under this last particular to allude to some of the most remarkable outpourings of the Spirit that have been granted to the church, beginning from the day of Pentecost; and in surveying this galaxy of Divine wonders, I had come to notice the glorious revelation of Jehovah’s right hand which was given at the Kirk of Shotts in 1630, while John Livingstone was preaching from Ezekiel xxxvi. 26, 27, when it pleased the sovereign God of grace to make bare his holy arm in the midst of us, and to perform a work in many souls resembling that of which I had been speaking, in majesty and glory! In referring to this wonderful work of the Spirit, I mentioned the fact that when Mr. Livingstone was on the point of closing his discourse a few drops of rain began to fall, and that when the people began to put on their coverings, he asked them if they had any shelter from the drops of Divine wrath, and was thus led to enlarge for nearly another hour in exhorting them to flee to Christ, with so much of the power of God, that about five hundred persons were converted. And just when I was speaking of the occasion and the nature of this wonderful address, I felt my own soul moved in a manner so remarkable that I was led, like Mr. Livingstone, to plead with the unconverted before me *instantly* to close with God’s offers of mercy, and continued to do so until the power of the Lord’s Spirit became so mighty upon their souls as to carry all before it, like the rushing mighty wind of Pentecost! During the whole of the time that I was speaking, the people listened with the most riveted and solemn attention, and with many silent tears and inward groanings of the spirit; but at the last their feelings became too strong for all ordinary restraints, and broke forth simultaneously in weeping and wailing, tears and groans, intermingled with shouts of joy and praise from some of the people of God. The appearance of a great part of the people from the pulpit gave me an awfully vivid picture of the state of the ungodly in the day of Christ’s coming to judgment. Some were screaming out in agony; others, and among

these strong men, fell to the ground as if they had been dead; and such was the general commotion, that after repeating for some time the most free and urgent invitations of the Lord to sinners (as Isaiah lv., Revelation xxii. 7), I was obliged to give out a psalm, which was soon joined in by a considerable number, our voices being mingled with the mourning groans of many prisoners sighing for deliverance. After Dr. Burns and my father had spoken for a little and prayed, the meeting was closed at three o'clock, intimation having been given that we would meet again at six.

“To my own astonishment during the progress of this wonderful scene, when almost all present were overpowered, it pleased the Lord to keep my soul perfectly calm. Along with the awful and affecting realization which I obtained of the state of the unconverted, I had such a view of the glory surrounding to God, and the blessings conferred on poor sinners, by the work that was advancing, as to fill my soul with tranquil joy and praise. Indeed I was so composed, that when, with the view of recruiting my strength for the labours still in view, I stretched myself on my bed on going home, I enjoyed an hour of the most refreshing sleep, and rose as vigorous in mind and body as before.”

I have given in the Appendix the notes from his own manuscript of the sermon, the delivery of which was productive of so remarkable an effect; but it may well be conceived that in this case the written words convey but a very inadequate impression of the spoken address, to which they scarcely bore a greater resemblance than the black glistening fuel to the live coal glowing with bright furnace heat. His manner indeed at first, and through nearly one-half of the discourse, was, as usual, calm, deliberate, measured; nor did he, I think, greatly diverge either in words or in sequence of thought, from the line of the written discourse; but there was about him throughout an awful solemnity, as if his soul was overshadowed with the very presence of Him in whose name he spoke; and as he went on, that presence seemed more and more to pass within him, and to possess him, and to bear him along in a current of strong emotion, which was alike to himself and to his hearers irresistible. Appeal followed appeal in ever-increasing fervour and terrible energy, till at last, as he reached the climax of his argument, and vehemently urged his hearers to fight the battle that they might win the eternal prize, the words, “no cross, no crown,” pealed from his lips, not so much like a sentence of ordinary speech, as a shout in the thick of battle. Another moment of intense and incontrollable emotion I vividly remember. In urging sinners to an immediate dosing with Christ in the offers of his grace, he had made use of the obvious and very common figure of a life-boat bringing hope and deliverance to the side of a foundering vessel; when in developing the idea and dwelling on it, the whole scene seemed to pass in living reality before his eyes—the doomed bark rolling helplessly amid the wild waves,

and rapidly settling down; the crouching, trembling throng clinging to the gunwale, and the light buoyant skiff leaping up towards them amid the blinding spray, so near that they might almost touch it; and as he saw them still hesitating and wasting in fatal inaction the last moments of opportunity, he cried aloud as one might do from the summit of a neighbouring headland on the shore, "Are you in? are you in? Flee for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before you; now or never." There was in his whole style and manner at this moment, as frequently afterwards at similar times, a dramatic vividness and energy, which reminded one of what we read of in Whitfield;—a vividness and energy, however, which in my brother's case was not in any measure due to a graphic poetic fancy, but simply to an intense and awful realization of eternal truths. As to the scene itself which followed, I can think of no better description than the account of the day of Pentecost, in the second chapter of the Acts, of which both in its immediate features and in its after results, and in everything except the miraculous gift of tongues, it seems to me to have been an exact counterpart.

It is from this time that we must date a remarkable change in my brother's manner of preaching, which Mr. Moody Stuart has described in a manner so admirable, that I am tempted to transcribe his words: "At Kilsyth there was fulfilled in him the promise, 'The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant whom ye delight in.' For weeks before he was full of prayer; he seemed to care for nothing but to pray. In the day-time, alone or with others, it was his chief delight, and in the night watches he might be overheard praying aloud. Yet during this time the power that rested upon himself did not affect his preaching; it was sensible, clear, orthodox, unobjectionable; and in that indeed he never altered; for in the midst of whatever excitement, there was never any eccentricity or extravagance of doctrine, or even the extreme pressing of any one point; but a steadfast keeping within lines of received truth, as not expecting conversion by any special way of stating the gospel, but by the power of the Spirit accompanying it. For a season, however, before the Kilsyth communion, he seemed two different men in private and public—his own spiritual strength so far exceeding what appeared in the pulpit. But then the Lord, who had strengthened David to slay the lion and the bear in the recesses of the mountains, sent him forth to triumph over Goliath before the hosts of Israel. He had been asking, seeking, knocking, for the Holy Spirit; that Spirit came upon him with power; and the Lord added unto the church daily such as should be saved, multitudes both of men and women."

The movement thus begun in a manner so remarkable, went on steadily, and for weeks thereafter seemed only to grow in solidity and depth. Meetings for prayer and preaching of the gospel were held every successive night, generally in the church, and occasionally, when the weather favoured,

in the market-place or in the churchyard. Crowds of inquirers flocked at every invitation to the vestry or the manse to seek spiritual counsel from the minister and his assistants. Prayer-meetings both of the old and young sprang up everywhere in the village and the surrounding hamlets. The neighbouring extension church of Banton, erected through my father's exertions a short time before, and then under the pastoral care of the Rev. John Lyon, now of Broughty-Ferry, became the scene of a similar work of awakening and spiritual blessing. Ministers from all parts of the country, and especially from the neighbouring city of Glasgow, came to the help of the overtaxed pastor, and greatly contributed by the richness and variety of their instructions to impart stability and spiritual substance to a movement which might otherwise have largely evaporated in mere excitement. The mountain glen, the solitary haugh, even the noisy loomshop, became vocal often with the sounds of prayer and praise, or witnessed the solemn converse of brethren who, at eventide, talked with burning hearts of the things that had come to pass in those days. The whole tone and spirit of the place seemed for the moment changed, and an air almost Sabbathic brooded over it, which strangers recognized as with instinctive reverence they approached the spot. In the words of a statement read at the time by the minister of the parish to the presbytery of the bounds, "The waiting on of young and older people at the close of each meeting, and the anxious asking of so many 'What to do;' the lively singing of the praises of God, which every visitor remarks; the complete desuetude of swearing and of foolish talking in our streets; the order and solemnity at all hours prevailing; the voice of praise and prayer almost in every house; the cessation of the tumults of the people; the consignment to the flames of volumes of infidelity and impurity; the coming together for Divine worship of such a multitude of our population day after day; the large catalogue of new intending communicants giving in their names, and conversing in the most interesting manner on the most important subjects; not a few of the old careless sinners and frozen formalists awakened and made alive to God; the conversion of several poor colliers, who have come to me and given the most satisfactory account of their change of mind and heart,—are truly wonderful proofs of a most surprising and delightful revival. The public-houses, the coal-pits, the harvest reaping fields, the weaving loomsteads, the recesses of our glens, and the sequestered haughs around, all may be called to witness that there is a mighty change in this place for the better."

The subject of this memoir had been obliged to leave a few days after the commencement of the remarkable scenes just described, in order to resume his duties at Dundee, where his work was becoming every day more interesting; but on the 21st of September he was again at Kilsyth, taking part in the services of a second communion, which the new birth of so many souls,

and the fresh baptism and abounding joy of others, had rendered necessary. It was a season long to be remembered, alike for the solemnity and sacred sweetness of its services, and for the rich tokens of blessing which both accompanied and followed it. To use again the grave words of the pastor, "Having been preceded, accompanied, and followed by a very unusual copiousness of prayer, the showers in answer were very copious and refreshing. We are daily hearing of good done to strangers who came Zaccheus-like to see what it was, who have been pierced in heart and have gone away new men. Our own people of Christian spirit have been greatly enlivened and strengthened, and some very hopeful cases of apparently real beginnings of new life have been brought to our knowledge. I feel grateful to the God of grace and God of order in the churches, that there has been such a concurrence of what is true, venerable, pure, just, lovely and of good report, and that little indeed has escaped from any of us which can justly cause regret. . . . The solemn appearance of the communion' tables, and the delightful manner in which they were exhorted—the presence of not a few unusually young disciples at the tables—the seriousness of aspect in all, and the softening and melting look of others—made upon every rightly disposed witness a very delightful impression. . . . For ninety years, doubtless, there has not been in this parish such a season of prayer and holy communings and conferences, nor at any period such a number of precious sermons delivered. The spiritual awakenings and genuine conversions at this time are not few, and it is hoped will come forth to victory; but the annals of eternity only will divulge the whole." At this point my brother's personal journal, which the exciting and absorbing labours of the last month had almost wholly interrupted, becomes again available, and I gladly return to it, as furnishing at once the most authentic and most impressive account both of the work in which he was engaged and of the part which he himself bore in it.

"Saturday, 21st September, 1839.—I stayed at Mr. Guthrie's¹ all night, and started at seven A.M. by the boat for Kilsyth. The boat was nearly filled in the cabin by dear brothers and sisters in Christ, going to the communion at Kilsyth. We had much blessed converse together, and engaged twice in prayer and once in praise. We arrived at a quarter to one, and found that I was expected to officiate at half-past two o'clock. I accordingly preached to about a thousand from Romans x. 4, with much assistance. On Sabbath, after Mr. Rose had preached at the tent, I was called on to follow him; and accordingly preached for about two hours from Isaiah liv. 5, to a congregation which, according to a calculation founded on the extent of the ground which it occupied, is thought to have been little short of ten thousand. They were very solemn and attentive, hardly one removing during the sermon; and though I did not notice many under visi-

¹ The Rev. Dr. Thomas Guthrie, then of St. John's Parish, afterwards of St. John's Free Church, Edinburgh.

ble impression, I was told that not a few were in tears, young men as well as others. After leaving the tent I went to the communion table, which was addressed in a most interesting way upon the love of Christ by Mr. Rose. I did not, however, experience much near communion with my blessed Lord and Saviour, but had to complain of much blindness and deadness, while my soul was not altogether unmoved through his free and infinite grace. After Dr. Dewar,² Mr. Middleton of Strathmiglo, and Mr. Somerville,³ had preached at the tent, I was called again to preach the evening sermon there at seven o'clock, while Mr. Rose did so in the church. The subject was Isaiah liv. to, 'The mountains shall depart,' &c.; and I was so much assisted both in exposition and exhortation, that there was visible among the people a far greater awakening than during any part of the day. We continued together till between nine and ten, the moon being full and the sky unclouded, though the mist began to settle in the hollow in which the tent was placed. After we had gone home, my father and Mr. Rose not having yet come in, it struck me, while at tea, that we ought to have a meeting still in the church, and continue all night in prayer to God for the outpouring of the Spirit. Some objected, but Charles Brown⁴ was completely on my side, saying that he was put in mind of that occasion on which the friends of Jesus sought to lay hold of him, saying 'He is beside himself;' and accordingly we again repaired to the church, where many were already assembled joining in prayer with Mr. Martin of Bathgate and Mr. Middleton, and after the bell had been rung and the church was filled, Charles J. Brown sang and spoke upon a part of Psalm lxxii., and then prayed. When he had concluded, Mr. Martin spoke on Psalm xiv. to those still unawakened, and engaged in prayer according to concert specially for the same class. Mr. Somerville then addressed the awakened, but not yet converted, from the account of the conversion of Saul, and afterwards prayed for them as Mr. Martin had before done for the others. I was then called in conclusion to speak more generally to all, and did so at considerable length and very calmly from the first four verses of the 116th Psalm, which having been sung the whole was concluded with prayer. We separated from this most precious meeting, in which not a few were awakened, at three A.M. of Monday, and after leaving the church Mr. Somerville and I were forced to remain in the session-house with the distressed, instructing and praying till between five and six o'clock, when we went home to rest. The cases in the session-house were numerous and very interesting.

September 23d—Having risen from a refreshing sleep at twelve noon, I was told that I was expected to preach the second sermon about two at the tent. I was counselled by my mother to beware of harsh expressions in preaching and prayer, and told by J. that she thought there was a danger of my losing the former sweetness, as she said, of my manner in preaching for an unpleasant sternness. I thanked the Lord for this counsel, and was told by her afterwards that I had been enabled to correct the fault. There were an immense number of ministers and preachers at the tent on Monday, and I went down under some anxiety, as I had no special preparation. However, I was enabled in private and public prayer to cast myself on the Lord, and he did not prove a wilderness to me, a land of darkness, but aided me beyond all my expectations. The text from which I spoke was Ezekiel xxxvi. 26, 'A new heart also will I give you,' and I found so much laid to my hand, both in expounding and applying the subject, that I could hardly

² Principal of Marischal College, Aberdeen.

³ Of Anderston Church, Glasgow.

⁴ The Rev. Dr. C. J. Brown, then of New North Parish, now of New North Free Church, Edinburgh.

get done. There was great attention among the audience, which might amount to two thousand, and blessed be God, some of the ministers present seemed to be convinced that the Lord had helped me to be faithful; Charles J. Brown and John Duncan spoke particularly in this way. In the evening Charles J. Brown preached a most excellent discourse in the church at eight o'clock, from the words in Matthew, 'What do ye more than others?' showing 1st. *Why* Christians might be expected to do more than others, and 2nd. *What* more they were expected to do. After he had concluded I felt deeply impressed with the desirableness of continuing in prayer to God, especially with and for the unconverted, whom we were, alas! to leave at the close of this blessed season farther in many cases from Jesus than before. I accordingly proposed to Charles J. Brown that I should ask the unconverted to stay behind, not excluding others who might also desire to do so. He said I should do as I thought best, and accordingly after the praise was ended, I asked those who knew that they were still unconverted to remain, coming down into the front seats below to be addressed and prayed for. My thus assigning them particular seats rather alarmed and staggered Mr. Brown, and, as I afterwards found, my father also and many other of the ministers present; but as no remonstrance was at the time made, and after so many had come forward that the seats were fully occupied, and even — (a young gentleman from Glasgow whom I had been conversing with a little before under considerable concern about his soul) went into them with a younger brother also much affected, as I noticed, during the sermon, when the love of Christ was spoken of, Mr. Brown's doubts appeared to vanish, and I proceeded, after singing and long-continued prayer, to exhort at great length those in the seats and also the congregation at large to an immediate closing with Christ. In this work I was assisted, I think, as much as ever before in my life, having a degree of tenderness and affection which my hard, hard heart is rarely privileged to feel, and in prayer I was favoured with peculiar nearness to God, in so much that at one time I felt as if really in contact with the Divine presence, and could hardly go on; while at the same blessed season there seemed to be a general and sweet melting of heart among the audience, and many of the unconverted were weeping bitterly aloud, though I spoke throughout with *perfect calmness* and solemnity. We separated between one and two o'clock from this the last, and I think, without doubt, the most eminently blessed part of the whole communion season, at least in as far as I was a witness to it. After the meeting had broken up many went to the session-house, where my father had been with not a few in distress during the greater part of the meeting, and then he and Mr. Rose continued for several hours longer, witnessing, as they told us when they came home, the most wonderful displays of the Holy Spirit's work."

"So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." The rest of the history, so far as it can be written or read in this world, is soon told. The high spring-tide of exalted feeling, necessarily mingled more or less with mere sympathetic excitement, gradually passed away, and the currents alike of religious experience and of ordinary human life flowed once more in their customary channels. There were some temporary professors, there were some "imperfect conversions," there were some whose bright early promise, though not wholly darkened, did not shine forth with an altogether unclouded lustre "more and more unto the perfect day;" but there were very many

too whose shining consistency and purity, and steadfast perseverance to the end, declared plainly that they had been with Jesus, and that in that terrible moment of their soul's agony they had been indeed born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. The history of the Kilsyth revival, in short, as of every other true revival, whether ushered in by the earthquake and the whirlwind or by the still small voice, had in truth been written eighteen hundred years before by Him who knoweth the end from the beginning: "Behold, a sower went forth to sow; and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up: some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and, because they had no root, they withered away: and some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up and choked them: *but other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold some sixty fold, some thirty fold*"