APPENDIX.

I.

FIRST BEGINNINGS OF THE REVIVAL WORK.

The following extract from a deeply interesting letter, addressed by Mr. Burns to Mr. M’Cheyne, and which has come into my hands after this work had nearly passed through the press, will be read with deep interest, as throwing much light on the very first beginnings of the revival movement of 1839, both in his own soul, and in the scenes of his earliest ministry:—

“DUNDEE, *Nov. 18th,* 1839.—DEAR BROTHER IN JESUS CHRIST,—After having forcibly withdrawn myself from many other pressing engagements in order to write a few lines to you, I experience the greatest difficulty in making a commencement, from the multitude and variety of the thoughts which rise to view before me. Indeed everything connected with the whole period of my residence here, since April last—a period the most remarkable *but one* (that of con­version) in my own life, and all the thoughts and feelings growing out of these—embarrass and oppress my mind so much, that I hardly know what to begin with first.

“God’s wonderful and most merciful procedure towards me, in con­necting me with you and your dearly beloved flock in Dundee, I saw unspeakable cause to admire from the very first moment that that connection was formed. I felt myself not only *without,* but almost *against* my own intentions, at once drawn into the most endearing union with one of the few ministers in Scotland that I had seen cause to regard as making ‘full proof’ of the ministry, of the gospel of Jesus, and one of the few congregations that I had ever heard spoken of as really deriving *visible* saving benefits from the labours of their pastor. These things made me astonished at the mercies of my God and Saviour from the very first; but *now,* when, after the lapse of seven months, I have been allowed to see at least some part of the development of the Lord’s designs in this matter, I know not what to say, or how to speak. I feel almost as if it were my duty to be silent in adoring wonder, and leave that theme for the harps of the heavenly Jerusalem, which I can but dishonour while my mind is so blind, my heart so cold, and my mouth so little accustomed to the matchless praises of Jehovah.

“When I came among your people I found such evidences of the Lord’s work, in convincing and converting sinners, as was truly re­freshing to my soul, after having spent *more than seven years* from the time when, if ever, I was brought to know the Lord, without, alas! ever seeing so much as a *single case* of open and visible transi­tion from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. I knew a few, who, I had reason to think, had really been brought by the Spirit to the knowledge of Jesus, and a few more who, I hoped, had reached the *extreme edge* of the *safe* side of that line which divides the kingdom of Satan from the kingdom of God; but, an awakened sinner seeking after Jesus with the whole heart, I do not remember to have *ever* seen, from the time when I began to feel an interest in looking for such evidences of the Spirit’s presence, until, in the astonishing, free, infinite, and sovereign mercy of my matchless Redeemer and Lord, I was sent to your beloved and favoured flock. Here I found not a few who seemed to have passed from death to life under your ministry, and who, in addition, had got beyond that ice-cold region of formal profession, in which even those who are alive to God are in general afraid to speak, as it were, *above their breath,* of any of those gracious exercises of the regenerate soul, which so much offend, because they so holily condemn, a secure but godless generation of carnal professors. From the atmosphere into which I at once discovered the Lord had brought me, when I entered your church, I learned that there were not a few to whose conversation, as well as to whose minds and hearts, their own state as sinners under a glorious dispensation of divine grace was become familiar. I almost immediately invited from the pulpit, all those who were under any anxiety about their souls, and might wish private direction, to call on me at particular hours for this purpose; and I soon learned from the intercourse to which this led in *many* instances, that the necessity of union to Jesus, and entire dedication to his service and his glory, was a truth to which the mind of the congregation *in general* had been brought under your ministry to yield *assent,* and one which, through the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, not a few seemed to have savingly realized in their consciences and hearts. Excited by my intercourse of this kind (the *only* kind, with little exception, that I have had) with your people, *and sup­ported by the prayers of God’s children among them,* I prosecuted my labours among them during the first four months of my residence here with great benefit and pleasure to myself, and not without a pleasing testimony in the consciences and hearts of many of the people of the Lord, that I was really teaching some part of the truth ‘as it is in Jesus.’ Besides preaching on Sabbath at the usual times, I continued the Thursday prayer-meeting, and the male and female classes, which were all attended, as far as I could find, by about the same number as during your own ministry, and seemed to the outward view to make interesting and encouraging progress. There was one thing, however, that always *appalled* me, when I was enabled to *realize* the necessity of the second birth, that so few seemed under my ministry to be awakened to a solemn and *supreme* concern about their souls, though I had every reason to believe that there were hundreds in the congregation and parish, who, with a name to live, were in reality ‘*dead* in trespasses and sins.’ Many seemed interested, and some of the people of God appeared to be refreshed, but very few, indeed only two or three persons, awakened for the first time from the sleep of carnal security, came to me in anxiety for direction in the way to Zion. I sought to declare the truth of God, both in the law and the gospel, with all faithfulness on every occasion, and to ‘labour fervently in prayer to God’ inbehalf of the people at all times; but still there was no appearance of a general awakening among them to the sense of their natural state of sin and misery, and of their absolute need of the glorious Saviour who is offered freely to sinners in the gospel. I always felt as if the ground which was won from the enemy on Sabbath was lost during the following week. Many of the people I feared were in danger of thinking of whatever was said to them as doctrine suited to the pulpit and the Sabbath, but not to be considered true, and of supreme importance, on week-days and at their ordinary business; and thus, however plainly their state was taught, and however urgently they were besought to flee to the Lord Jesus as the only Saviour, they seemed still in general to continue going on in the beaten track of their ungodliness, impenitence, and unbelief. There were a few fellowship meetings in the parish while you were here, and these had increased but very inconsiderably in number and size. Still there were at the time when I was called to leave the people, in order to attend at my father’s communion, some indications of an approaching revival of the work of God among them. There appeared to be an increasing earnestness in desire and prayer among the people of God, and especially, I think, among the younger Christians, who had been brought to Christ under your own ministry, for a larger outpouring of the Spirit of God, and a more general awakening and converting of souls to Jesus. I remember of being told also, at the time when I was going away to Kilsyth, by a person to whom I had been lamenting the little success that seemed to attend the preaching of the Word, that she had seen several persons from time to time around her shedding tears upon the Sabbath; and the very last time that I met the young men’s class before my depar­ture, I was encouraged by noticing more than usual solemnity among all, and one young man in particular, who has since, I trust, been savingly converted, weeping profusely, while I was pressing the neces­sity of a full and immediate acceptance of the Lord Jesus.

“I left Dundee upon Tuesday, the 16th July, intending to return to it on the 24th, after attending at the communion, which was to be dispensed at Kilsyth on the 21st of that month. But the mar­vellous outpouring of the Spirit of God, which was witnessed on Tuesday, the 23d, having made it appear to many inexpedient for me to leave so soon that favoured parish, I remained there for a fortnight longer, and only returned to Dundee upon Wednesday, the 8th of August. In my absence Mr. Lyon, missionary at Banton, in the parish of Kilsyth, came over to Dundee and officiated for me; and I found on my return, as was natural, that the accounts which had been brought to them by Mr. Lyon, of what he had witnessed on that ever-memorable Tuesday at Kilsyth, together with the fact of my being detained from returning to them in consequence of being employed as an instrument in the Lord’s work in another place, had produced so deep an impression as seemed eminently to prepare the way for the commencement of a similar work among themselves. However, I cannot say that I returned to Dundee with this distinct expectation, which I was in some degree kept from entertaining by a full conviction that the work at Kilsyth was almost entirely depen­dent for its origin *on the prayers of God’s people there,* which had been for some time incessant and most fervent; and that it was in a very *inferior degree,* indeed, connected with any particular instrument em­ployed in preaching the gospel. I entertained perhaps less hope of an outpouring of the Spirit on the people at my return, also, because I was inclined to think, as other people thought, that I must be exhausted by the incessant labours of the preceding fortnight, and I had rather the idea of taking rest on my return, than of then be­ginning, and from that time continuing to labour day by day as con­stantly, and in the same glorious and blessed work, as I had been engaged in at Kilsyth.

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“It will be painful for me to part with your people; but it will be as pleasant as it could be made when I leave them in your hands as their pastor under the chief Shepherd. I pray, as many of them are doing, that your expected meeting with them on Thursday night may be blessed for the awakening and conversion of many souls. Your letters when absent were much blessed, and not least the two last, which, though they contained less perhaps that was directly hortatory, yet, coming at a time when *little goes far,* they were the means of awakening some that I have met with. But most of all do I believe that your prayers for your people have been answered in this work of the Lord. Indeed, I do not know how far depen­dent it may be all found to be on your wrestlings in the Holy Spirit in behalf of your flock, both while among them, and while absent on the Lord’s *chosen* errand.

“Glory, glory, glory to the Lord Jehovah! ‘Ye angels that excel in strength, praise him!’

“‘Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!’ The Lord Jesus be with thy spirit.’ Amen.

“Your humble brother in the Beloved,

(Signed) Wm. C. BURNS.

‘Rev. R. M. M’CHEYNE 20 Hill Street, Edinburgh.”