

am a sinner," said she, "I want religion." He proposed a season of prayer in her behalf, and when about to kneel, the husband said, "Pray for me; I want religion too." Their conviction was apparently deep, but they did not at once find peace. Mr. Phinney having been absent a few days, upon his return called upon them. The gentleman met him at the door, in great joy, exclaiming, "I've found Jesus, I've found Jesus." It may serve to indicate the change that religion produced upon this money-lover, for such he emphatically was before his conversion, to observe that he said to his visitor on this occasion: "Since I saw you before, I have found out that the houses, lands, and money that I called mine, are the Lord's; I am only his steward over these: what of them do you need in his service?" "If you are the Lord's steward," said the preacher, "obey your Master." He has never forgotten to heed this instruction. Many deny in practice the religion they profess; but, if you are of those who possess it, you are sure to let your "light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

CHAPTER X.

SKETCHES OF HIS LABORS FROM 1830 TO 1842.

IN 1830, Mr. Phinney moved to Buckfield, under engagement to preach half the time to the church there; the other part of his time, he was to be at liberty to labor as an evangelist. Under his care, the church at Buckfield, it is said, was greatly refreshed; but no further information concerning him, as connected with that place, has been received.

It is well here to mention that, while Mr. Phinney is able to trace with considerable distinctness, the events of his life up to this time, of those of later years, he is able to give only here and there one, and that not with the same fulness as he can those of earlier years. No one can regret more than the writer, that one of an experience so rich and varied, did not keep some account of his life; but, most men who do hard and faithful service in this world, write their history in *deeds alone*. Both reader and writer, must therefore be content with such scanty accounts as we are able to collect. If we take these as *specimens only*, we may learn the spirit and bearing of the man, from them. Only here and there a date can be afforded, and some of these must be regarded only as approximations to the true. The first incident that he mentions, after his removal to Buckfield, is one that gave him great pain. He was engaged, in 1830, in a series of meetings in Phippsburgh, with two min-

isters of that place, each of a denomination different from that to which he belongs. It seems there existed between these two ministers a sectarian jealousy. However, the meetings proceeded with fair prospects of good. Things being in this state, one of them delivered a sermon, bearing somewhat against the denominational peculiarities of the other. Upon the close of his discourse, he began to invite the anxious to come to the altar. The other insisted upon a retraction on the part of the offender, but he refused to make any concession. In vain did Mr. Phinney protest, in the name of religion, against their sinful course: in vain did he beseech them to desist; each cared much more for his denominational dignity, than for the cause of Christ! Though the meetings continued for some days, all hope of good was at an end. The selfishness at bottom in these efforts, was too manifest to suffer them to be blessed in winning any souls to obedience to the great law of benevolence. With a sad spirit, Mr. Phinney left this once promising field, and labored, not without success, in some places adjacent.

He next revisited Georgetown. An impression, favorable to religious reflection, had been made upon the captain and crew of a vessel, by the loss of one of their number, and their own very narrow escape. The corpse of the sailor, who was drowned, was recovered, and Mr. Phinney attended the funeral. The captain, whose name was Oliver, and three or four other sea-captains, were soon after converted and baptized. Our preacher, by his frank and benevolent heart, and

friendly and unassuming manner, was always a favorite among that class of generous men here alluded to.

Here is a sort of chasm in the life of Mr. Phinney, which the writer has not been able to fill. Besides what has been said of one of his visits to Portland, and what is soon to be said of another to Bangor and vicinity, we have been able to learn nothing of his labors for five or six years, extending from about 1831 to 1837.* Of one thing we may be certain, that wherever he was, he was engaged in preaching.

It was probably in 1836 that he visited Bangor. After enjoying a refreshing season with Bro. Jotham Parsons,† he visited the north part of the town, where he had some good meetings. Thence he went to Dover, where his labors were blessed to the conversion of a few persons, whom he also baptized. Here he was invited by the committee of a Congregationalist church, to preach for them a Sabbath or two, as their pulpit was not supplied; but owing to the movement of a party in the church, much more sectarian than their committee, he felt it his duty to decline the invitation. He therefore, upon invitation, occupied the Universalist meeting house. His meetings were large and interesting, as above intimated. He met here many friends, among whom he mentions Major Whitmore and family.

* Mr. Phinney thinks he visited Topsam in 1831, at which time he thinks there was a revival in that place.

† Bro. Parsons resides now in Brooklyn, N. Y. He is a zealous and liberal supporter of our infant cause in the city of N. Y. God grant that he may live to see a flourishing church in his own city.

He next went to Sebec. Here he had the privilege of speaking encouraging words to a young minister almost overwhelmed by trials in regard to his support. It seems that though the young man had been appointed by the Quarterly Meeting, to travel for its benefit, he did not receive enough to keep his horse shod. This is only a specimen of what more than one of our young men, and we might say, old, too, received in former times, to encourage them in the arduous labors of the ministry. On this occasion, Mr. Phinney attempted to teach some of the brethren who possessed their thousands their duty toward the preacher whom they had sent forth to visit the churches of the Quarterly Meeting. To one he said, "What do you mean by letting that young man suffer so? Here you have your thousands; your sons, too, are making thirty dollars a month; the young minister could do as well, and yet, *you* send him off on *your* business, saying to him, 'be warmed and fed; your blessings are good enough in their place, but a starving man must have food; if I find any body poorer than every body else, I take him to be one of your preachers, and I am never mistaken.'"

He observes that though this man began by *giving*, as he called it, a single shilling to his minister, it still was the turning point with the giver, as it prepared him to apprehend his duty more fully. Thus by private conversation with those who began their religious life with false ideas in regard to the support of the ministry, has Mr. Phinney opened the eyes of many. His work in this direction has been all the

more successful, because he knows so well how to exercise the charity that hopeth all things, even from those laboring under the most destructive of all prejudices. It is a matter of devout thanksgiving, that the prejudice alluded to, is so rapidly passing away.

Perhaps it was during this visit that he attended a Yearly Meeting in the Sandy River country, that he speaks of attending about this time, where he met Elders Burbank and Lamb; and where, also, he received some valuable donations for Parsonsfield Seminary. Of this tour he says, "It was profitable to me in experience, and, if at any time I had occasion to use the lash, I tried to dip it first in love."

In the Spring of 1837, he was called to Topsham, in consequence of the death of Elder George Lamb, pastor of that church. This excellent minister, whose "praise is in all the churches," was called away very unexpectedly. "There was great lamentation over him by God's people," says Mr. Phinney. It would seem that scarce any man of higher promise has arisen in the denomination, than Elder George Lamb. Of great natural endowments,—of deep, enlightened, and well balanced piety,—of a sweet and conciliating spirit, he exerted an influence for great good upon the people of his choice. Though cut off in a moment, in middle life, *his influence still lasts.*

The following letter from the present worthy pastor of the church in Topsham, gives some particulars concerning the revival there the spring following Eld. Lamb's death.

"In the Spring of 1837, following the Winter of

Elder Lamb's death, there was a gracious manifestation of God's work in the church in Topsham. A mighty voice, though silent, had been speaking since the death of this devoted pastor,—now in glory. This Spring, Elder Phinney went to Topsham, and continued three months with the people. Near the commencement of his labors, a meeting was held in a private house, and, under the sermon preached, a mate of a vessel, just returned from sea, was cut to the heart, and was subsequently converted. This was the first-fruits of the revival. Many others were gathered during its progress. Children were raised up to perfect praise. Juvenile meetings were held. Even in the public meeting, these spoke and prayed, with great power and effect:—the infant was truly 'a hundred years old.' They filled the congregation with wonder, and hardly could the hosannas of infant tongues be hushed, for the older saints to offer their praise."

After the work had been in progress about twelve weeks, he recommended Elder Daniel Jackson, of Waterville, as pastor of the church. He came before the Lord, and delivered his charge into the hands of Elder Jackson, and prayed that the affection of the converts might be transferred to their prospective pastor, and left many of the converts for him to baptize. In his own words, "I prayed God to hand them over to Elder Jackson." Such was his noble principle in relation to the rights of others, and the well-being of all, as exemplified in other places.

In the following June, (1837,) a protracted meet-

ing commenced in Brunswick, under the auspices of Elders Phinney and Rollins. The Calvinistic Baptists, Methodists, and Congregationalists, united with the Free-will Baptists, in conducting this meeting. More than one hundred were converted in the revival that followed. A sea-captain of influence, kind, and moral, though a stranger to Christ, was among the hearers. One day, at the close of the sermon, his wife arose and said, "Here sits my poor husband, without religion! I have these many years prayed for him! Christian friends, pray for him!" Conviction fastened upon his mind; he was soon rejoicing in the mercy of Christ. Five others, of the same calling, were converted in this revival. Henry Merritt, of Brunswick, says he finds in his Diary the following record:

"August 20, 1837. Almost every Sabbath since June 30, there has been a baptism. I deem it worthy of remark, that in five of the principal baptisms, the company has been lead by a sea-captain, Otis, Merritt, Snow, Sylvester, and Clark." One of those named above, had, like many others, made the differences that exist between different denominations of Christians, an excuse for treating the Savior with neglect. He attended this meeting, and saw Christians of various names, all laboring together in good faith, and rejoicing in their common Lord. His excuse was gone. He said to one who knew the excuse he was accustomed to make, "*I am taken.*" His wife was also converted, and baptized.

In this revival, prayers in behalf of friends were frequently requested. This practice, though often abused, was, in almost every case, followed by the conversion of those made the subject of special prayer. One morning, prayer was requested for a man and his wife, neither of whom had attended meetings of worship for years. Some were shocked at such rashness; others believed that *prayer avails with God*. The same day, that husband said to his wife, as if in derision of religion, "They are making *Christians* down at the meeting house." She expressed a wish to attend the meeting. He consented, and both were there before night. Scarcely had they entered the house, before they were deeply convicted. In a day or two, both were rejoicing in Christ's delivering grace. Mr. Phinney remarks, that when his labors closed in this revival, his temporal wants were very liberally supplied, but it is scarcely necessary to mention this, after what has been said relative to the conversion of "Those who go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters." He adds, "It was very affecting to see those weather-beaten men weep in those meetings, like children."

In February, 1840, we find Mr. Phinney in Topsham again, engaged in a revival, which resulted in another in Brunswick. In relation to these revivals, Mr. Fernald says: "Elder Phinney visited Topsham again, in 1840, and was associated in another revival with Elder Jackson, pastor of the church. This revival was quite general among the evangelical

churches of the place. Eighty-eight joined the Free-will Baptist Communion. The meetings continued during ninety evenings. Many children were the subjects of the revival also." In relation to the same revival, we copy a few remarks from the Diary of captain Merritt. He says, under date of February 27, 1840: "A protracted meeting commenced in Topsham in December last. Father Phinney is there in his glory, and sinners are inquiring of him by scores, what they must do to be saved." Under date of March 8, of the same year, he says, "The reformation continues in Topsham; God grant it may cross over our Jordan, that Brunswick may share largely in it." The Diary reads, "March 19, 1840, 2 P. M., protracted meeting commenced in this place,—Elders Rollins and Phinney,—with prospects good.

Saturday, March 28, '40, commences, Wind south, warm, for the season. Snow nearly all gone. Extremely bad travelling, but good times—in midst of *reformation*. The oxen are yoked, and people are flocking to the house of God by *heavy loads*—starving for the Word.

Friday, April 3, '40. Extremely bad travelling. Meetings are well attended, and powerful reformation is progressing.

Sunday, April 5. Thirteen baptized and joined the church, most of whom are heads of families.

Sunday, 12. Thirteen related their experience yesterday, and are candidates for baptism.

Sunday, 19. A fine day. Thirty-seven were baptized to-day, near the meeting house, of both sexes, of all ages between eighteen and forty.

May 3. A baptism. Seventy-eight, thus far, added to 161, our former number, makes 239, our *present* number.

Aug. 10. Have taken a collection for Bro. Phinney, who has been laboring with us throughout our revival, and, we trust, he has been instrumental in doing much good. Notwithstanding the extremely bad travelling, and dark, stormy nights, and his great infirmities, for seventeen days and nights in succession, Bro. Phinney was constantly at his post, and *alone*. May God reward him for his labors of love."

Previous to the revivals above described, near the close of the year 1838 a Quarterly Meeting was held in Harrison. "It was," says Mr. Phinney, "a dragging meeting. Preachers and brethren of different denominations who attended, requested that the meeting might be protracted, promising their assistance. For several days, all was discouragement, but at length the reformation cloud drew nigh. Backsliders were reclaimed, and the impenitent requested prayers. The interest continued to increase. The meeting was moved to the Methodist meeting house, in the south part of the town. At this time I reached the place. When I entered the meeting, I heard them confessing their sins,—their quarrels, their hard speeches, their cheating in buying and selling. The work went on gloriously, until nearly

all, in that part of the town, were converted. Then we thought it best to move the meeting to Bridgeton, the town west. Here, one meeting begins in the Congregationalist meeting house, and another in the Free-will Baptist, for one house would not contain all. It was my lot to remain at the Congregational house. The good work began in both houses. The stoutest hearts, and false doctrines, bowed before the power of the Cross. The temperate and intemperate confessed their sins. It was wonderful to hear the old drunkard, and others of vicious habits, praising God." Next, he was invited to Waterford, by the Congregational minister, who had invited another minister of a different denomination, to unite with him in the responsibilities and labors of a protracted meeting. The latter refused to have anything to do with it. The former proceeded. "When I arrived," says Mr. Phinney, "the minister with whom I was to labor, said that a large and anxious congregation would be in attendance, 'but,' said he, 'we here, before God, are in a poor condition. We have great difficulties, arising from building a new meeting house, and leaving an old one. Two parties have thus arisen, and their strife against each other is warm. Those who do not take either side, are greatly grieved. I am afraid that a great many of my church never had any religion.' Well, sir, I said, I have a never-failing Bible-medicine for all such ailings. 'Confess your faults, one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.' This medicine has never failed, and it never can. 'Well,' said he, 'you are

an old hand in reformations, I will give all up to you."

Sometimes, the minister who would do good service in his calling, is to be entirely silent, and even, so far as possible, to ignore all strife or differences among his hearers. But not so always. There are times in which he can hope to accomplish no good, until these are attended to directly, and their cause removed. However disagreeable, *it must be done, or all is lost!* Our preacher judged the present to be a desperate case. When he arose to preach, "Brethren," said he, "I have come to bring you some Bible-medicine, for I understand you are sick. 'Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.' Not a word here about murder, highway-robbery, theft, or anything of the like. It may be about minor offences, faults,—*faults*, just such as you have here about your meeting houses! Now, nothing can be done toward curing you, until these are all confessed; but, remember, brethren, God does not tell you to confess *each other's faults!* This is the difficulty in *your* case. You are all forward to confess *each other's faults*. Now, *reverse this*. Begin to confess *your own faults*, one to another! Confess your *OWN* faults, not your *brother's!*" He affectionately urged them to their duty, in a few additional sentences, and then took his seat. A physician immediately arose, with tearful eyes, and bore witness to the truth. "Sir," said he, addressing his pastor, "sir, I have been out of the way. I have lost my interest in religion. I have often come here to sleep,

rather than to listen to the word of God!" *Forgive me!*" "Don't confess to me," said the pastor, "I have need, rather, to confess to you! My preaching has not had life enough in it, to keep any one awake. I want you, and all my congregation, to forgive me." Next, a lady arose, and, calling another by name, said, "It is well known I have used many hard speeches toward you, I *have been in the wrong*,—forgive me!" "*I have been most to blame*," said the other, "can you forgive me?" A physician, next, of another church, addressing one of the deacons of the Congregationalist church, confessed that he had held a sectarian hardness against him, and had not, in many other respects, acted the part of a Christian. "O! sir," said the deacon, "I have abused you, how can you confess to me? Forgive me!" Thus they continued to "confess one to another," until all their trials in regard to their meeting house were settled. Only one serious difficulty now remained in the church, and that, a family quarrel. The pastor invited the parties, and Mr. Phinney, to his house. The case was stated. One of the party, an aged mother, began, "O! how I have been abused! You would not blame ——" "Be still," said our preacher, "*be still*, I tell you; you are confessing the faults of others. You must confess your *own!*" At this point, her son approached her, and confessed to her that he had done wrong, that he had not treated her as a son should, and, moreover, concluded by saying, "Mother, will you forgive me?" The mother replied with a reluctant "Yes!" Next, the son's wife

confessed to the mother-in-law, and with tears begged her forgiveness. The old lady, a little moved, replied, rather coolly, however, "I forgive you." Last of all, came the other mother-in-law, confessing and begging forgiveness. The heart of the other, by this time, was quite soft, but she had not fully complied with the text. "Are you now ready," said Mr. Phinney, "to confess *your* faults?" "Yes," said she, "I have done wrong; I am the cause of all these trials." The church was now prepared to labor for the good of the impenitent.

After a short sermon in the afternoon, the impenitent were invited to come forward for prayer. Many accepted, and among them was one known as an infidel, who said, "Though I have had many doubts as to the truth of the Christian religion, my doubts are now entirely gone; the humble confessions this morning, were not of man." Not only were sinners converted, but the minister came to the conclusion that he had many Christians in his church.

This meeting was greatly injured in its influence by changing the place. The minister who at first refused to have anything to do with it, became anxious to have the meeting in his own church. "To prevent hard speeches," says Mr. Phinney, "we complied with his wishes, but in attempting to avoid one evil, we fell into another far worse; the minister we tried to please, got a hardness against the one I was laboring with, and in trying to settle their difference, an occasion was given to gainsayers to say that the ministers had not religion enough to keep them from

quarrelling." He remarked in this connection, that, so far as his experience goes, it is always a bad thing to change the place of meeting during the progress of a revival.

He then visited Bethel, Lovell, Fryeburgh, Norway, and two or three other towns, in all of which he was permitted to see sinners turn to the Lord. In these places, he preached mostly in Congregationalist churches. In Fryeburgh, at the close of a meeting, in which he enjoyed great liberty, a young lawyer was found in a condition so paralyzed as to excite the worst fears of his friends. These merely physical phenomena, soon pass away, but sometimes they serve as a transition point, so to say, to the character. Perhaps it was so in this case.

In one of these places, a lady requested the privilege of kneeling at the altar, and confessing to the congregation her manifold transgressions. Mr. Phinney, perceiving that owing to the intense excitement, her mind was in danger of becoming unbalanced, assured her that the will would be taken for the deed. Caution is to be exercised in such cases, or sad results are suffered. The feelings must not be left without control.

The revival which we have here noticed, was very extensive, reaching several towns not named. It was supposed that in it were converted a thousand souls, that united with different denominations.

We might have mentioned on a previous page, that he was engaged, probably in 1838, in a revival in Lewiston. "Other brethren," says he, "were engaged

with me. One day, after remarkable liberty in preaching, for me, I went down to the altar, to beat up for volunteers. Soon, a colonel, away back in one corner, arose and said, 'Sir, I accept your invitation. You may think strange, my friends, to see me here; but for many years, I have at times sought for religion; in secret places I have prayed and wept, and then, drying my tears, I have come back to act the hypocrite—to pretend I cared nothing about religion. But I am now determined to seek God consistently. My friends, follow me.' He then came forward, and with him, young men enough to fill six or eight pews. I continued to exhort till more than one hundred came forward for prayer. Not long after, perhaps the next day, the colonel found liberty. When he returned to his family, he said to his wife, 'We have lived long enough as heathen; let us hereafter serve God.' Many others were converted, whom I left in the care of my fellow-laborers."

Not long after this, he thinks he went to Phippsburgh, where he enjoyed a good season; he went to Georgetown next. In one or the other of these places, Elder J. Fuller was engaged with him, and perhaps also in Westport, to which place he went soon after. "Here," he says, "we found the brethren laboring with a prospect of good; but there was no breaking away. I exhorted them to greater earnestness. They were great tobacco-users. No decent person would dare to kneel on the floor of their meeting house. I exhorted them to cleanse the house,

and pulpit, for that was stained also. After that was done, the meeting began again, and we invited sinners forward. A goodly number were converted."

"Then I went to assist Bro. Page, of Edgecomb. On my way I met him coming after me. We had a good work in Edgecomb, and then I went to Boothbay. In this place, the Free-will Baptists and Methodists had united to carry forward a protracted meeting. We invited the Congregationalists to join us. At first, they refused, but after a little, their minister called upon me. I exhorted him to come. I told him the reformation cloud was gathering about us, and the people leaving him. He said he would be glad to, but some of his leading members were too rigid to consent. But they at length consented and joined in the meeting. I preached a sermon on Christian union, and their member most opposed to the movement, bore witness to its truth, and invited me home with him. We labored together in love; the meetings were full, and the Savior with us."

During the time over which this chapter extends, he visited Bath, where his labors were greatly blessed. "A reformation," says he, "had broken out among the Methodists in that village, for it was not then a city; the stoutest hearts came forward for prayer, but for reasons not necessary to state, a division arose—a part went to the Town Hall to hold their meeting—this party united with the scattering F. W. Baptists in the place. They sent for Elder Hathorn and myself to come and labor with them. The result was,

the organization of a church there. May it continue to prosper."

Since writing the above, he writes, "In 1839—1840, I visited Phippsburgh, Westport, Edgecomb, Boothbay, Georgetown, Bath and Falmouth." This is in reference to the revivals already noticed. He also sends the following note in regard to some of his labors in 1841:

"I attended the Farmington Quarterly Meeting, held at Vienna, Kennebec Co., the second Wednesday and Thursday in Dec., 1841. After the close of the meeting, tarried several days in compliance with brother Edgecomb's request, and held afternoon and evening meetings, during which, a number of backsliders were reclaimed, and some sinners hopefully converted. From there I went to New Sharon, a beautiful town situated on the Sandy river, in Franklin Co. With the second church in this town brother Edgecomb had labored with good success half the time for three years; the church, which was in a very low state when he commenced laboring with them, had been built up, large numbers added, a house of worship erected, and, in short, God's abundant blessing had followed his labors. But now, he had decided to leave them, and as they had no pastor, he wished me to go and preach to them on the Sabbath, and in case they might desire it, hold a series of meetings. I accordingly tarried more than two weeks, preaching every afternoon, and attending prayer meetings in the evening. God's Spirit was poured

out, and numbers rejoiced in the hope of the gospel. Between twenty and thirty were reclaimed and converted, among whom were some who for years had been hardened Universalists, one, an old man, I am told by one of his neighbors, has maintained a life of prayer ever since.

During this time the brethren had engaged the labors of brother Caleb M. Sewall, of Chesterville. I then visited the fourth church, in the north part of the town, at Weeks' Mills, and witnessed a good revival there.

C. P."

In 1842, he again visited Richmond, where his labors were blessed to the conversion of sinners; but, owing to certain circumstances, not proper to publish at so early a day, his visit this time did not result so pleasantly as the one previously described. It should be observed, that some also were converted in Litchfield at this time. Relative to this visit to these towns, we have gathered some interesting particulars, which hereafter may be given to the public.