

did was, to say he had paid and had the receipt. The collector afterwards, however, wrote to him to call and pay, and "save costs." Mr. Phinney, calling at the office one day, said to the officer, "What does this mean?" He became excited; but Mr. Phinney produced the "voucher." When the officer saw that he had been making a show of his authority at his own expense, he undertook to intimidate the honest man by falling into that kind of blustering, to which those are liable who have a bad cause to maintain; he still insisted upon having certain fees, adding, "pay or I'll make you suffer." "I know my rights, and am not to be intimidated," said the preacher; "but, to show you that I love peace, I'll give you the last money I have for my family." The other, as though he had just made a discovery, said, "Oh, you are that Phinney that goes on preaching expeditions, are you?" "The same, sir." "I shall of course take your money," said he, adding, "I have a perfect hatred of hypocrites." "Take it, sir, if your conscience will let you," was the answer, as the money was handed over.

It may not be best always to yield to such unjust demands, but the spirit in which Mr. Phinney did it, was not without its good results. Some years after this occurrence, the officer heard him preach. At the close of the meeting he not only returned his ill-gotten gains, but, what was much more difficult, he made proper confession.

CHAPTER V.

HIS SECOND TOUR AS AN EVANGELIST.

FOR more than a year after his return from the visit, some incidents of which are narrated in the preceding chapter, Mr. Phinney preached but little, giving his attention for the most part to secular business. During this time, having disposed of his land in Phillips, he had removed to Berlin, a town adjoining, where he was doing his utmost to provide for his family a comfortable and permanent home. Though thus engaged in business, he had not abandoned the hope of entering "the gospel vineyard" sometime as a permanent laborer; but, at present, he found himself unable to make any definite arrangements in this respect, as some debts which would soon fall due must be paid. We shall see, however, that he was soon led in a way not of his own devising.

Some time in June, 1816, he started to Gorham to engage in labor, to procure the means of meeting the demands just mentioned. The first day, arriving some time before night at Farmington, many of his friends who had, as we have seen, been converted under his influence, insisted upon his preaching to them that evening. He consented, and the meeting was not in vain; as at least of the redeemed will in heaven no doubt, as they now do, look back to it as the time in which they were enabled to make their escape from the kingdom of evil.

Next morning, instead of proceeding directly to Gorham, as had been his intention, he was induced to turn aside to Wilton, a town adjoining Farmington. To this decision he was influenced by learning that — Page, usually called "Father Page," had recently held there a series of meetings; that, when some had been converted, and many more deeply impressed with religious truth, the meetings had unhappily been brought to a close by the riotous proceedings of certain opposers of religion, who took their wives and others by violence from the meetings, especially those of their friends whom they supposed to be under conviction; and that "Father Page," broken-hearted by persecution, had relinquished the field; and, as his death soon after occurred, it was supposed it had been hastened by the abuse there received. This was too much for our preacher to bear unmoved. He hastened to bear comfort to the "lambs among wolves."

When he arrived at the river which he must cross in going to Wilton, he found the bridge borne away by the freshet, by which the river was then greatly swollen. But he was not to be turned aside by so great an obstacle. By the appropriate use of a voice that can do good service on such an occasion, he soon brought to his assistance a young lady, who ventured to cross the river in a small boat. So swimming his horse before them they passed the river in safety.

After paying due tribute to the courage and skill of the fair one who had ferried him so safely over the swollen river, he spoke to her in his own way

concerning the Savior. "Well, dear," said he, "have you found any one who can safely ferry you across the dark river of death?" When she replied that she had not, he added, "Well, dear, you will soon need some one; there is no bridge across that stream: I have come to lead you to the only one who can conduct you safely." So did the words of the earnest preacher deepen the impressions she had already received at the meetings before alluded to, that, as soon as she had conducted him to her father's residence, she betook herself to prayer, and very soon found Him by whose grace she was enabled to say, "O death, where is thy sting?"

Mr. Phinney next visited the family of Mr. Gammon, whose wife and daughters were among those recently converted. While here engaged in devotional exercises, one of those who had dragged his wife from meetings came in. At the moment he entered, the preacher was singing; and immediately taking the wicked man by the hand, he continued to pour out his soul in praise to God. The man of wrath had now, as he afterwards confessed, met more than his match. Though he was not at that time converted, deep impressions were made upon his mind; at least his spirit was so far conquered, that he never afterwards prevented his wife from acting her pleasure concerning meetings.

He next called upon Mr. B., who was full of wrath because his wife and two daughters had been converted. The preacher had now to take his turn. Mr.

B. immediately began to abuse him with all the insulting language he could command, concluding with emphasis, by saying, "I am mad." Mr. Phinney, who well understands that violent feelings soon expend themselves, calmly waited for the appropriate time, when he politely asked the privilege of conversing with his family upon the subject of religion. The reply was, "You may go in, if you will behave yourself." "I will do just as you bid me," said the preacher. The preacher was invited into the house, and, after a little conversation, even to pray. After he concluded prayer, Mrs. B., the wife of the persecutor, also presented a fervent petition for the conversion of all her family, and especially her husband, and thus in this family established the family altar. At parting a great change was perceptible in the father. To labor for the conversion of such men as have here been introduced, requires great meekness, and especially that wisdom which enables one to keep possession of his own soul under abuse. In these qualities our preacher is not deficient.

Having thus spent the day in giving comfort to the newly converted in Wilton, and exhorting them to steadfastness in the faith, he was next morning on his way again to Gorham. He went no farther this day than Buckfield, where he called on Elder Joseph Hutchinson, who was then residing there. When he came within sight of this place, he experienced emotions similar to those of which he was the subject, as described in the preceding chapter. When Elder

H. met and welcomed him to his home, he expressed the hope that Mr. Phinney had been sent to that people on an errand of mercy.

By his own heart, seconded by the solicitations of the good minister with whom he was staying, he was prevailed upon to remain next day and preach in the evening. Though the meeting was well attended, the preaching was without any marked effect,—a circumstance of no little embarrassment to many of our preachers in those times, as they expected to see at almost every meeting no little impression made upon the impenitent.

Next day being Sabbath, he attended meeting in a town adjoining with Elder Samuel Hutchinson, where the latter had stated appointments. During one part of the day Mr. Phinney was called upon to preach the funeral sermon of a child. On that occasion his soul seemed to attain to more of his wonted freedom, and his hopes rather revived; but, attending meeting next day in company with Elder S. H., in Buckfield, at "The Federal School House," he became again somewhat disheartened, fearing that he had mistaken the path of duty. He determined to start the same day again to Gorham, and for this purpose his horse was even led out. But the following incident changed his purpose: An impenitent young lady from one of the neighboring families, upon learning that Mr. Phinney was about to leave, hastened to entreat him as he loved the Savior, to remain. "The Lord," said she, "has work for you here. I am yet in my sins, and

so are many of my young friends. For my part," she added with much earnestness, "I want religion." Mr. Phinney says, "As I loved my own soul's welfare, I dared not go; I told them to put out my horse, and circulate an appointment for a meeting. How her earnestness rebuked me!"

A series of meetings was commenced. The Lord's Spirit was poured out. The young lady just mentioned soon found the pearl of great price; she also proved an efficient laborer in winning others to Christ. The work continued till many were converted.

Impenitent reader, oft have you felt your need of the Savior's pardon,—oft have you felt that if you possessed millions you would freely give all for the religion of the Son of God. You cannot buy it; but rich or poor you may receive it without money and without price. Emulate the moral courage of this young lady. Express freely your conviction to some Christian friend, or faithful minister. Like her, frankly tell what you want, and ask an interest in the prayers of Christians. What though no revival may follow; be assured that your own soul may be saved.

Before passing, we add a few incidents that occurred in this revival. Mr. Phinney says, "Be sure to tell about the drunkard converted there, for the encouragement of others." It so occurred that a lady well stricken in years, who was professedly a Universalist, attended these meetings. At length her heart was touched; she sought and found pardon. Her husband, an inveterate drinker of the poison-cup,

was by consequence induced to attend the meetings also; he was at length converted. He led a faithful Christian life, and died in the triumphs of faith.

"Come all the world, come sinner thou;
All things in Christ are ready now."

The meetings in Buckfield being closed, Mr. Phinney once more set out for Gorham, where he expected to arrive the second day; but the following incident changed his plan: In his way lay Raymond, where Elder Zachariah Leach, of lasting memory among the good, then resided. He found this friend of his just ready to go to Standish Neck to attend the funeral of a young man who had been drowned. The deceased had been a pupil of Mr. Phinney, and he could not resist the promptings of his heart to accompany his friend to the funeral, to offer to the bereaved parents his condolence. That every thing connected with the interests of his pupils affects the teacher's heart not less than if connected with his own, many, not naturally affectionate, are able to testify. But here was an uncommonly warm-hearted teacher, in company with other pupils, attending the funeral of one of their number who had been suddenly snatched from bright hopes, and that too, in the very place where the light and joy of the pardon-granting Savior first beamed upon his own soul. What wonder then that, after an affecting sermon by Elder Leach, exhorted in words of power his young friends to be also ready. The sermon, the exhortation, the occasion, were not in vain. Many, being deeply impressed, urged Mr. Phinney to remain and hold a

series of meetings. However pressing secular interests may be, he is not the man who can refuse to comply with such a request from such a source.

The meetings thus commenced resulted in a great religious awakening, in which many, not only in Standish, but also in other towns, were converted. This revival at length reaching Gorham, its interests called Mr. Phinney to that town.

Thus, after spending more weeks than he expected to days, he reached his native town; but in a capacity how changed. "In his own country," however, his preaching was not without its wonted power. So large were the audiences he drew, that it was difficult to accommodate them in the ordinary places of worship. In that part of the town called "Horse Beef," it was found necessary to hold his meetings in open air; one of his friends, though not a professor of religion, generously preparing a pulpit and seats in his orchard, to which he invited the preacher and his hearers.

Many zealous Christians worked and prayed with the preacher, staying up his hands by their sympathy, and by manifesting an interest in their own spiritual attainments, and the salvation of the impenitent. The result was, that in a few weeks not less than sixty, who had been without hope, were brought to Christ.

Among those who were very useful in this revival, and whom Mr. Phinney would be happy to name, mentions Miss Almira Westcott, since Mrs. Jeremiah Bullock.

However unexpected it was to Mr. Phinney to

visit his native town in the capacity of an evangelist, instead of that of a cooper, it was more so, that he was able to return home, as soon as the interests of the meetings would permit, more than prepared to meet his creditors; that he should thus in opposition to a false sentiment, then generally prevalent in that region, and indeed among all our churches, receive temporal blessings where he had bestowed his spiritual labors, was very surprising. But so it was. The grace of God abounding in the hearts of those just brought to Christ, so triumphed over even this sad error of the head, and the pinching economy not unnatural to that cold year, [1816,] memorable for three snowy days in June, that the faithful preacher's debts were paid, and his children did not cry for bread.

On his return, calling again upon his friend Leach, he was introduced to another field of usefulness. A series of meetings was commenced in Raymond, which resulted in the conversion of several, who were baptized and added to the church.

At this place and time he first met that eminently faithful servant of God, Zachariah Jordan, in the capacity of a preacher. From Raymond these friends travelled in company to Berlin, Mr. Phinney's home, and back again in a few weeks, having holden a great number of meetings at Buckfield, and several other places.

We will close this chapter with the two following incidents:

During the revival in Gorham, above noticed, at a prayer meeting, though at a private house, the young

people present seemed so fully possessed with the spirit of the evil one, that they came near exhausting the patience even of our good natured preacher. At all events, he thought, as he could be of no service to them, it was best for him to leave them to their own way; and with this design, he took his hat to start. One of his mischief loving friends, a young lady, in a manner half playful and half serious, said to him, "Are you then going away to leave us sinners to perish?" "The world," said he, "is full of sinners, many of whom not only treat ministers with politeness, but have some desire to be saved: among such I can do more good." "I want religion," said she, becoming at the same time more serious. "Then," said he, "let us kneel and pray."

The season of prayer accordingly began. "They told me afterwards," says Mr. Phinney, "that I prayed very loud, and more than an hour. I presume I did; for I was unconscious much of the time, and when I came to myself I was completely exhausted, and my throat was very sore; but that sight I shall never forget! As soon as I opened my eyes I saw nearly every one present was prostrate, and most begging for mercy in great earnestness. The meeting continued till a late hour, but before it closed fifteen persons passed from death unto life, and thirteen others that were present were soon converted, who attributed their awakening to that meeting. Among the number was the man of eighty years, and the child of fourteen.

Mr. Phinney remarks also that some were so

affected by the intense excitement, that they were not at first able to control themselves fully, and "staggered like drunken men."

Once when Mr. Phinney was on his way from Gorham to Farmington—a journey that he often made—overtaking a stranger, the following characteristic dialogue took place between the travellers. It may be interesting to some to know that the stranger was Mr. Heifford of Canton, and that this occurred in what was then a forest, where that village now is. After salutation, Mr. P. said, "Do you love the Lord?"

H. O, yes; I always loved him; for "He is kind unto all, and his tender mercies are over all his works."

P. It is not so with me. I once hated God and his righteousness. I despised salvation through Christ. I was not disposed to think I needed salvation, and though God was kind to me, I would not allow him to save me. My proud heart would not accept his tender mercy. But now I love him. Would you not like to pass through a like change?

H. There is no need of such a change in my case. I never hated that lovely Being; and He is so merciful that it will be well enough with all hereafter.

P. I perceive thou art in the bonds of iniquity. Shall I pray for you?

H. Do as you please. Do your duty.

No sooner was this banter given than Mr. Phinney began to dismount. Leading his horse to the fallen trunk of a large tree, he knelt, still holding the rein.

Mr. Heifford, from curiosity, remained while the preacher offered a fervent and affectionate petition to the throne of grace for the conversion of his fellow traveller. After prayer, as their roads parted, they took leave of each other; the preacher dropping in his own impressive manner the single expression of the Bible, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Twenty years passed away, and Mr. Phinney, in company with Elder Jordan, was engaged in a revival at Hartford, (Me.,) not far from Canton. Mr. Heifford was present. As soon as he heard Mr. Phinney's voice, he said to himself, "Thank God, that is the voice—that is the man who prayed for me when I was a Universalist." At the close of the meeting, Mr. Heifford pressed forward, and taking Mr. Phinney by the hand, "Did you," he began, "did you pray for a Universalist on Canton hill twenty years ago?"

P. "I did."

H. "I'm the very man. After we parted I began to reflect upon what had passed. I felt that you possessed something I did not. I began to feel wretched. I tried to pray. I went back to the place where you prayed. I looked at the prints of your knees. I often stole up to the hut of a poor man who knew God, to hear him pray. In short, I had no more peace till I was born again. How I did want to hear your voice again! I praise God for your faithfulness to me."

The best logic to use with the self-righteous, is the manifestation of a life hid with Christ in God.

Even in this life we meet some results of our lives—whether good or bad; in eternity we shall meet all. Shall they afford us bliss?