

could engage their attention or lessen the anguish of their minds. But at the same time they possessed their reasoning faculty entire. It was not a senseless melancholy, or obstinate despair. It was not infatuation. Their pain appeared to be the result of a genuine conviction of sin. They were disconsolate [dejected, downcast], for eternal misery lay before them. As soon as they felt the joys of pardoned sin, their darkness was dispelled: they were calm and unspeakably happy.

Upwards of sixty have been added to the Congregational church, and more than one hundred to the Baptist. In this village, which was once the strong hold of Satan, the operations of the Spirit have been very conspicuously displayed. Zion has had new accessions of strength. Here has been a great and unexpected change. Each of these churches have built a very neat and commodious house for public worship. To these places, they resort with willing minds, and call on God to aid them to honor his cause, to walk before him with humility, hear his word with obedient souls, and *glorify their Father who is in heaven*.

EPILOGUE

The Baptist church mentioned here is still in existence, the [First Baptist Church of Norwich](#). Its website provides a [historical summary](#). Sadly, it [apparently no longer holds](#) to the truths of the gospel and fundamental Christianity as it originally did.

The Congregational church is also still in existence today as [The Norwich United Church of Christ](#). A detailed account of the founding and first 75 years of this church (1814 to 1889), including the revival mentioned above, can be accessed [here](#). Sadly, this religious organization has [long since departed from the faith](#) that gave it birth and growth for decades.

Thankfully, the above record of these churches beginning faithful to the gospel remains, and those whom the Lord called through their ministry are happily with Him.

The following is an excerpt from Bradley's *Accounts of Religious Revivals* (pp. 194-202). I read a different portion of this Sunday afternoon. I recognize that it probably seems long, but it is *excellent*. Note especially the circumstances of the churches, how sinful people in the area were, and what these believers did. If I explain something, I'll put it in brackets, [like this]. I would recommend, from a practical standpoint, that you read this together as a family, discuss it, and pray for a similar working of God's grace here. Specifically, pray for:

- Unbelievers would have a deep conviction of sin, real sense of condemnation, absolutely lost, total inability
- Sinners would be humbled to be completely dependent on the person and work of Jesus Christ
- Christians would live faithful lives despite overwhelming surrounding sin and worldliness
- The Holy Spirit would work effectively through the Word and in answer to prayer
- Genuine conversions and the strengthening of churches

Norwich, N.Y.

In 1814 a Baptist and a Congregational church were constituted in this village. Both these churches were very small, but apparently zealous for the cause of their Redeemer. The people around them were notorious for vice and almost every species of wickedness. They were profane. They did not manifest that reverence towards God which divine worship usually produces. If the Lord's day could be distinguished from other days, it was by being more devoted to the pursuit of vanity, and the practice of iniquity. The youths were conformed to the course of this world. Nothing was more foreign to their desire than to attend to things of a serious or religious nature. Vain company was their delight, and vain amusements the object of their unwearied pursuit. It seemed as if the inhabitants of that village were left to fill up the measure of their iniquities, and to go on from one degree of wickedness to another, till the patience of God should be wearied, and he destroy them in his holy displeasure.

But in the midst of wrath, God remembered mercy. Believers who had entered into covenant with each other, were faithful. They illustrated the excellence of the Christian religion in their lives and conversation. Their faith was strong, and their love fervent. They seemed to manifest a more than ordinary attachment to one another. Their happy society could not but

attract the attention of the irreligious and profane, and convince the world that they had been with Jesus. These sent up their sincerely ardent prayers for the outpouring of the Spirit.

In 1816 a special work commenced. Preachers were faithful and warm in their prayers and awakening in their sermons. The duty of believers, the folly of ingratitude of those who sleep in time of harvest, were set forth in an impressive manner. All seemed to feel sensible that something must be done, but many did not know how to do it. Conference meetings were set up and numbers attended. The brethren wished to pray and exhort sinners to repent, but not being accustomed to this work, they had many fears, lest they should not discharge their duty in such a manner as to recommend religion to unbelievers. At one meeting there was an account read of the revival of religion in Lenox, Massachusetts. The people inquired with great solicitude [interest and attention] whether these things were so. The subject was new to them. They sought for information with eager curiosity. They were ignorant of what God had been doing in our land.¹

On the evening of New Year's day a certain class of the youths attended a ball in the village, and there was a conference [a special meeting of Christians for prayer and exhortation] at the same time. These were appointments very different in their nature, and many of the youths had severe struggles in their minds in determining at which place they should attend. It was a critical period. They halted between two opinions. They hesitated whether to serve God or indulge themselves in that vain amusement that never profited any of the human race. On the one hand Satan tempted; on the other, conscience remonstrated [opposed]. On the one hand they were solicited by their evil propensities to go and enjoy the pleasures of mirth, and the recreations of the ball-room; on the other, they were impressed by the Spirit of God to turn from vanity, and prepare to meet their God. It was emphatically a sealing time. They were called upon to act decisively. Some who had made preparations and were resolved to go to the place of recreation, afterwards began to hesitate. One young man particularly, who had been uncommonly impetuous [zealous and passionate] in the pursuit of vanity, was deeply convicted of his sin the very day of the appointment. And even after they were assembled, some were so much affected and so greatly distressed on account of their conduct, that they left the ball-room and sought relief in tears. Thus, there was a striking contrast between the different pursuits of the youths. The occasion excited public attention to a very considerable degree, and we have reason to believe that the event was favorable to their highest interest.

From this time the work became general [everywhere]. It was deep, rapid and surpassed the power of mortals. There was scarcely a thoughtless mind in the whole village. Business was in a great measure suspended. Religious meetings were attended almost every day in the week. Saints were vigilant and active, their faith was strong. Their zeal was not enthusiasm, but it was ardent zeal, and they felt as if they had much to do. They seemed to possess in an eminent degree that which may be denominated religious action, which will always be manifested more or less in seasons of revival. They were not discouraged by the unbelief and obstinacy of others. The power of God communicated energy to their entreaties. With trembling and affectionate concern they went to their ungodly friends, who were distinguished for profligacy [completely given over to sinful living] and infidelity, and conversed with them about Jesus Christ, the Savior of sinners.

This was an unnatural and unwelcome theme, but they were not ashamed to introduce it. Impenitent sinners were astonished and alarmed. Many of them had never witnessed such a scene before. They were seriously impressed with a sense of their wickedness. They saw that their whole lives were one continual departure from God, and that the mercy which could rescue them from ruin would be infinite. They did not esteem sin to be a slight evil, or a kind of infirmity which deserved the compassion of God. They frankly confessed their guilt, and the deep depravity of human nature. They saw that they were justly condemned by the divine law; that they could not justify themselves by their own merits; and that nothing but the blood of Christ could open a way for their salvation. *His blood cleanseth from all sins.*

Although it may be said that the majority of those who are the subjects of this work are youths, yet it was by no means confined to them. The moralist has been brought to acknowledge the insufficiency of mere morality. There was one man particularly, who was often referred to as a standard. It was a remark frequently made by the impenitent, that if this man became a Christian religion was necessary for them also. But this man we hope became a Christian. Two others also, who had for a long time advocated the doctrine of Universal salvation, renounced their error, and became the trophies of divine grace.

The subjects of this work had a very deep and overwhelming sense of their guilt. The penalty of the divine law was set home to their consciences with great power. They felt themselves to be under its condemnation, and they were miserable. Their distress was extreme. Nothing that was said to them