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Art. I.—AMERICAN METHODISM IN 1876.*

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IN 1776 the whole Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America was composed of twenty-five ministers and five thousand members, in eleven circuits, on the Atlantic slope. In 1781 it crossed the Alleghanies, and laid the foundations of the "Old Western Conference," which extended from the Northern lakes to Natchez on the Mississippi. Its first General Conference was held in Baltimore in 1784, at which Francis Asbury was ordained its first bishop at the age of thirty-nine. There were then about eighty preachers and fifteen thousand members. Thirty-two years afterward, when this remarkable man died, in 1816, the church numbered over seven hundred itinerant preachers and more than two hundred and eleven thousand members. Soon after Washington was inaugurated as President of the United States, Bishops Coke and Asbury read to him the congratulatory address of the General Conference, which was then in

* Proceedings of the General Conference held at Baltimore, May, 1876.

Art. VII.—REVIVALS OF THE CENTURY.*

BY LYMAN H. ATWATER.

AMONG the phenomena of the century just closed which deserve distinct commemoration and discriminating review, none rank higher than those known as revivals of religion. It is quite certain that our Christianity has infused into our national life its highest powers of endurance and safe development, and beyond all else fortified it against that multitude of hostile and destructive forces which, without this counteracting agency, would have left us utterly to perish at the hands of those who, "while they promise liberty, are themselves the servants of corruption." No two maxims are more trite or indisputable than that virtue in the people is indispensable to sustain a "government of the people, by the people, for the people," and that religion is the only true spring and support of national virtue. To this we may safely add, that Christianity, as the only God-sent, is the only adequate religion for this purpose—the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, not only from the curse, but from the pollution and immorality of sin. This may safely be said without danger of sinking Christianity to the low function of being a mere "aid extraordinary to the police."

But if this be so, it is none the less true that the Christian

* *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, by W. B. Sprague, D.D., with an *Introductory Essay* by Leonard Woods, D.D.; also an *Appendix, consisting of Letters from various Clergymen*. Albany, 1832.

Memoir of the Life and Character of the Rev. Asahel Nettleton, D.D. By Bennet Tyler, D.D. Hartford, 1844.

Remains of Asahel Nettleton, D.D. Edited by Bennet Tyler, D.D. Hartford 1845.

Life and Labors of Daniel Baker, D.D., Pastor and Evangelist, edited by his son Rev. Wm. M. Baker, 1859.

Autobiography, Correspondence, etc., of Lyman Beecher, D.D. Edited by Chas. Beecher, in two volumes. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1865.

Memoirs of Rev. Charles G. Finney. Written by Himself. New York: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1876.

Gospel Sermons. By D. L. Moody.

piety of the country has been chiefly preserved and increased through the last two centuries, especially that now ending, by the agency of revivals of religion. Adopt whatever theory we may as to the ideal state of the church, and assuming that only a steady and continuous growth, which excludes alternations of intense excitement and persistent languor, is compatible with its highest thrift; were we to admit even, as we do not, what some maintain, that, had there been no revivals, there would have been a better average religious condition on the whole than now, yet it cannot be denied that, in point of fact, the strongest and most influential religious life of the country has been largely due to these revivals. This is surely so of those Christian denominations that are at once most aggressive and progressive in character; whose members reach the highest grade of holy living and Christian morality; which are most felt in antagonism to prevailing immorality and vice; and become in every way the "salt of the earth." Even those Christian communions whose theory and practice are adverse to revivals, or are even ostentatious in denouncing them, often owe much of their growth to the direct or indirect influence of revivals. Their members catch the heavenly gales which, during these scenes, are sweeping through and renovating society. Then, too, is the time of their golden harvest. Many have been the confirmations this year in ritualistic churches whose ministers would take no part in a powerful revival going forward around them, of persons who found Christ, along with their associates, in that revival. More than one Episcopal bishop can trace to such scenes the first upspring of his Christian life. Is it strange that in these celestial visitations, when they became all-pervasive, some most prejudiced against them should "breathe the heavenly air," and catch something of their inspirations?

We propose to consider the revivals of the century now closed, not in any way of minute historical details. This would fill more volumes than we have pages for this work. We can only aim at a general review, which shall deal with the successive revival epochs and the distinctive characteristics of each, bringing to view important lessons and inferences, theoretical and practical, deductive and inductive, to which they fairly lead.

As our topic is, the revivals of the century, it technically rules out what, if its extent and results in proportion to the population of the country be the basis of comparative estimate, may be regarded as the first and greatest of American revivals—we mean, of course, the Great Awakening of 1740, which occurred not far from the close of the first century of Protestant church life in this country. This being the only simultaneous widespread revival of that period, may be taken for the concentrated revival of the century which preceded and culminated in it. We have, however, made this the subject of a short, separate article, both for its own sake, and on account of the direct and indirect light it may serve to throw upon some of the phenomena of the revivals of the last century.

From causes specified in our paper on that subject, there was, with sporadic exceptions, a cessation of revivals after the Great Awakening of 1740 in the American churches till about 1790. Then they began and continued to appear with greater or less frequency in one congregation and another till they reached their culmination, and became very general near the beginning of the present century. After this they did not cease. From that day to this they have come to be regarded, not as exceptional, but normal phenomena, in the great body of evangelical, certainly of Methodist, Baptist, Congregational, and Presbyterian, churches. We shall confine our survey more especially to the latter two, although analogous phenomena in the former two have come to be, in an increasing degree, coincident and simultaneous. This has gone forward in later years with the increasing growth of charity, catholicity, and unity among evangelical churches. Union meetings and co-operative measures among them for the promotion of religion have been more and more common. The meetings and measures under the preaching and conduct of Mr. MOODY have been entirely on this basis. It is rare that any special outpouring of spirit and ingathering of souls occurs in a church of one denomination in any community, which does not extend more or less to others. Moreover, there are few such churches in which, whatever accessions to the communion may occur with some regularity from year to year, there are not, also, at times unusual and more extended ingatherings. The Lord, working after the manifold methods and exhaustless riches of his grace,

refreshes, now and then, here and there, with the gentler dews or rains, or the mighty showers of his Spirit, not excepting the great rain of his strength. But the years which we would note as climacteric years, in which the more scattered revivals of intermediate years culminated in general and all-pervading awakenings, each marked by some distinct and incidental, among the essential characteristics common to them all, since the beginning of the century, are 1821-2, 1831-2, 1843-4, 1857-8, 1875-6. Other years have been more or less marked in this respect. But we think these have a decided pre-eminence.

The revivals culminating in the early years of this century and the close of the last, were of immense power and extent, and went far toward recovering religion and the churches from the declensions of the preceding half century, induced by the war, and the reaction from the disorders of the revival of 1740. The exercises of the subjects of them were generally deep and thorough, and usually, during the first quarter of the century, were somewhat protracted before the subjects of them passed out of the alarm and dejection induced by the unsparing exhibition of the terrors of the Lord, into the joy and peace of believing. But they took on, also, two different forms of development, including certain misproportions and maladjustments, in the East and West, which either abridged their duration and usefulness, or planted the seeds of future evils. In New England and the parts of the Presbyterian church most largely and directly affected by emigration of ministers and people from it, the positions taken by the preachers and champions of the great revival in the preceding century in regard to the impotence and helplessness and worthlessness of all prayers and doings of the unregenerate; their absolute dependence upon God for a change of heart, and his sovereignty and liberty in the matter of working it, coupled with the equally emphatic assertion of the perfect and indispensable obligation of the sinner to obey the gospel, and his accumulating guilt and danger for every moment's delay so to obey it, led the pulpit in that and the succeeding period to earnest discussion as to the doctrines of sovereignty and election, and man's dependence. and the modes of reconciling them with the sinner's liberty, guilt, and responsibility. In aid of this came the ponder-

ous treatises, always acute, of Edwards the elder, and the younger, Bellamy, Hopkins, Smalley, and others, on these and related subjects, until ability and inability, natural and moral, liberty, moral agency, dependence, election, sovereignty, decrees, including refined metaphysical distinctions regarding them, became not merely exceptional or occasional, but ordinary and staple material of both pulpit inculcation and disputation. Hence it came to pass, very widely, that religious thought and feeling took "form and pressure" from this source, and that excitements and awakenings in congregations and communities, in regard to religion, centred around these high mysteries, so that conviction of sin and enmity to God was oftener drawn out in the form of enmity to the divine decrees and personal eternal election, than to the simple law of God as such, which is the proper instrument for guiding and evoking the law-work in the soul. Conversion, too, came to be run in a corresponding mould, to be conceived and spoken of as submission to or laying down the weapons of rebellion against the decrees and sovereignty of God, more emphatically than submission to the righteousness of God in Christ, "who is the end of the law to every one that believeth." The objection to this is not that true reconciliation to God according to the gospel does not include submission also to these truths rightly understood, and to all other truths revealed in the Bible, or that, in their due place and use, they are not conducive to edification; nor that such a process is not likely to be accompanied with true conversion in the case of those otherwise well instructed as to evangelical doctrine and experience; but that it displaces or throws into the back-ground what ought to be in the foreground of religious experience; it puts the unknown decrees in place of the revealed law of God; conviction of sin in a conviction of enmity to them rather than of enmity to God and transgression of his law. Submission to them, and to God as the author of them, constitutes conversion and restoration to his favor, rather than justification by faith alone, relying on the merits, blood, and righteousness of Christ as having made satisfaction to the law and justice of God for our transgressions of the same. Not that Christ and his atonement were discarded, or overlooked, or ignored, but that they were lowered in the practical dealing with awakened and inquiring souls beneath

their just and all transcending prominence, which was rather given to the fore-ordination and sovereignty. These are entitled to their own supreme place, but this is not in the centre and heart of the Christian life. The evidence of all this overflows in the narratives of the revivals outspread in the pages of the *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine* of that day. We have felt bound to signalize it on account of its bearing in the explanation of certain eccentric and disturbing elements in later revivals. It did not essentially impair the greatness and glory of these, and perhaps, in some respects, gave them a depth and strength that in other circumstances would have been impossible. Yet it bred a style of religious experience too little enlivened by the spirit of adoption, too much fettered by the spirit of bondage which is unto fear.

The revivals of the Southern and Western States had not only their strongest, but their most abnormal, development in Kentucky, whence their peculiarities, whether for good or evil, radiated a milder degree to adjacent States and sympathetic churches. In the absence of sufficiently large churches, the people were obliged to resort to camp-meetings—in this respect, it is believed, setting the example which our Methodist brethren have imitated, and ossified into a permanent institution. These afforded great facilities and temptations to shouting, wild outcries, convulsions, and other natural outbursts of sympathetic animal excitement, until they took the form of a peculiar kind of bodily agitation known as the “jerks,” which rapidly and widely came to be regarded as identical with, or symptomatic of, conversion. Hence, from the known constitution of human nature, it became epidemic, until religion and revivals became associated with the wildest disorders in the minds of opposers, and of too many of their friends. A natural result was, that young men, intoxicated with spiritual pride and delirious excitement, conceived themselves filled with the Spirit, and qualified not only to be lay-exhorters, but, without any regular ministerial training or education, to exercise the functions of ministers, under whose preaching the revival had been commenced, by some of whom even the foregoing disorders had been countenanced, till the whole movement got beyond their control. A new presbytery was formed, composed of such and their adherents, who proclaimed various doc-

trines, and sustained disorders, at war with our Confession of Faith, till they were decisively met by the action of the Synod of Kentucky and General Assembly. The consequence was the secession and organization of the body which was the germ of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, with divers other small secessions of fanatical come-outers. These disorders, and the desolations resulting from them, were so serious, that doubts were entertained by many of the wisest men, whether the evil did not outweigh the good of these excitements. Although many who first sanctioned these disorders at length condemned them, they could not counteract the evil of them.

Passing now to those revivals which reached their meridian development in 1821, we may observe, generally, that they pervaded the great body of the Calvinistic, especially the Presbyterian and Congregational, churches, and contributed greatly to their enlargement, and the power of religion in the land. They also, as well as those that followed them in subsequent decades, greatly aided the development and expansion of those evangelical, benevolent, and missionary organizations for the propagation of the gospel, which have distinguished and adorned the century. They were also in a remarkable degree free from all that mars the purity and benignant influence of these heavenly visitations, and attended with manifestations and fruit which generally made them unmixed blessings. In the appendix to the admirable Lectures of Dr. Sprague on Revivals, will be found letters of great value from a large number of the leading divines of the Calvinistic denominations of the country, giving copious accounts of many of these revivals, from which the reader may learn their prevailing type. It may be also found more fully and minutely brought out in Tyler's *Memoir of Nettleton*, the great revival evangelist of this period, which includes sketches of some principal revivals, in the conduct of which he rendered signal service in aid of pastors.

31. No proper understanding of the revivals of this and the following decades can be had, which ignores or misinterprets the character and services of this remarkable man. Having devoted himself to foreign missions in the very inception of that enterprise, greatly to his regret he was prevented by sickness from going forth in the first band sent out by the

American Board. His preaching, immediately after his introduction to the ministry, being attended with surprising effects in the quickening of Christians and the awakening of the unconverted, he was persuaded by the ministers acquainted with these facts to defer his departure to the foreign field, until the work thus initiated at home under his preaching and labors should be more fully accomplished. The result was, that his life for ten years was spent in constant labors, attended with such a glorious, uninterrupted succession of revivals as history rarely records. They were, so far as connected with his direct labors, chiefly in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and adjacent parts of New York State. He had, as we have elsewhere intimated in an article on this subject, observed the enormous evils resulting from the disorders which marred the revival of 1740 in Eastern Connecticut, which was the scene of his early ministerial labors. His conviction of their disastrous influence was confirmed by further careful observation of the effect of similar proceedings still in vogue with certain fanatical sects—partially encouraged, also, by some indiscreet evangelists of his own denomination. He deemed “calling persons to the anxious seat; requesting them to rise and be prayed for, or to signify that they had given their hearts to God; encouraging females to exhort and pray in promiscuous assemblies;” also meetings protracted till late in the night, etc., to be of this character (*Tyler's Memoir*, p. 57). Attempts were made to bring him to the sanction and adoption of such measures, but without success. He discarded them and their like throughout his whole career. But more noteworthy, while signally creditable to him, was his observation of the ill effects of the antagonism to and disparagement of the regular ministry by the whole train of pseudo-revivalists. He cherished the most profound and solemn conviction of the absolute necessity of the stated ministry, and stable Christian institutions and ordinances, to the welfare of religion, and set himself immovably against all agencies, whether under color of promoting revivals or anything else, which sought, or in any manner tended, to weaken or undermine them. Hence, he so conducted his labors in revivals as never to overshadow or disparage, but always to strengthen, the ministers he assisted. He invariably made them stronger with their flocks than be-

fore, and left no root of bitterness behind him. If he came to a congregation where the minister, or people, or any considerable part of them, were in opposition to him, he left and went elsewhere, where he was welcomed, and in no danger of dividing churches or undermining ministers. In this respect his example is worthy of all imitation by all evangelists, lay and clerical. In preaching he was earnest, solemn, tender, clear, searching, calm, yet impassioned, with a marvellous insight into the windings of the human heart, and the Scriptures which describe its deceits and corruptions, with their evangelical remedies. He had, too, a power of graphically depicting these things, which, with a touch of the histrionic, never failed to be vivid and magnetic. He always cherished a sacred stillness in his meetings, and frowned down noise and confusion of every sort. He was, indeed, wise as the serpent, harmless as the dove.

In doctrine Dr. Nettleton was a strenuous Calvinist, after the strictest New England type of those days, and was earnest on all matters touching the divine sovereignty, decrees, fore-ordination, election, perseverance. But he, and those of his time in New England, and the portions of the Presbyterian church most leavened by its ideas, took great pains to elaborate a view of the sinner's power and free-agency, which would prevent him from sheltering his impenitence under fatalistic views of inability and dependence on the Holy Spirit; which, in short, would harmonize man's responsibility with his dependence on sovereign grace. In attempting this, he and they brought into fuller prominence, and more explicit definition, and larger practical use than it had before obtained, the famous distinction of natural and moral ability; by the former meaning all the essential faculties of moral agency and right action; by the latter that right disposition, heart, or moral bias, without which these faculties will not, and indeed cannot, be used aright, so as to please God and pass from death unto life. Thus, in preaching from the text, "How long halt ye between two opinions," he says of this halting:

"It is not for want of power. I speak now of what is usually denominated power. It is not for the want of faculties which render you capable of doing your duty. It is true, sinners are represented in the Scriptures as being *unable*, in a certain sense, to do what God requires. But this inability

arises not from the want of faculties, but from the want of disposition. They are said to be unable to do what they have no inclination to do. Thus it is said of Joseph's brethren, that they could not speak peaceably to him. Not because they were incapable of speaking peaceably, but because they hated him, and had no disposition to speak peaceably. When I say, therefore, that it is not for the want of power that you have hitherto neglected to come to a decided choice, I mean that you might have done it had you been so disposed. It is plain that God does not condemn sinners for being unable, in this sense, to do their duty, but for being averse to their duty."—*Nettleton's Remains*, p. 117.

In the course of the sermon he changes the word "inclination," "disposition," etc., into "will," thus: "The reason why God will punish you for not obeying him is not because you *cannot* but because you *will* not. The reason why the almighty power of God is necessary to draw you, is not because you *cannot*, but because you *will* not."—*Id.* p. 122. We have noted this for the purpose of distinctly marking another step in the evolution of the doctrine of the sinner's ability in itself, and especially in its practical application to conversions and revivals. More or less confusion of thought in the way of now identifying disposition with will, in its essence as such, and now of regarding it as an accidental state of the will, or bias of the soul, which, as it is good or evil, determines the will to good or evil choices, is apparent, which we have no time now to elucidate further. We only avail ourselves of the opportunity to signalize the fact, that this method of putting the subject of the sinner's ability and inability, is one of those transitional stages of thought and expression, which, while it bridges over the chasm between what have been known as Old and New School modes of thought and phraseology, shows also a basis of reducing the disagreement to their mutual negations and of harmonizing their more positive conceptions. When Dr. Nettleton places the ability of sinners in the possession of the essential "faculties" of free-agency and responsibility, he resolves it into what all the old Calvinists, but exceptional extremists, admit and insist on. He once told the writer, that while preaching and conducting revivals in the Presbyterian churches South, on a visit there for his health at a later period of his active service, he found no difficulty if he used the word "faculties," or "natural faculties," for natural ability. Again, when he resolves moral ability and inability

into disposition and indisposition, he places it where they place it, and where the Confession places it. It declares the sinner "disabled" by being "indisposed," and thus "made opposite to all good." But this "indisposition," Dr. Nettleton insisted, requires "almighty power" to overcome it, while it is, in its very nature, sinful and blameworthy, like all bad moral inclinations, just in proportion to their invincibility and obduracy. On the other side, we see that Dr. Nettleton and his brethren often put this truth in the form of saying to the sinner, that the sinner has full power to obey the gospel if he only had the will, and that, not want of power, but only a want of will, prevents his acceptance of Christ; that he has full power to obey the gospel, but never will do it till drawn or renewed by the Spirit. This, and like phrase, came into very abundant use at a later period. It meant more or less, according to the accompanying doctrines held or denied by those using it. Sometimes eccentric or extreme men, mostly outside of the Presbyterian body, carried it the length of asserting an extreme Pelagian plenary ability, wholly independent of divine grace, and of denying the divine sovereignty and human dependence which limit it. But after the fermentation settled, the New School brethren, in the Auburn Declaration, with great unanimity, adopted, as their chosen formula on this subject, the following, which embraces every essential point in Dr. Nettleton's representation of it :

"While sinners have all the faculties necessary to a perfect moral agency and a just accountability, such is their love of sin and opposition to God and his law, that, independently of the renewing influence and almighty energy of the Holy Spirit, they never will comply with the commands of God."—(See January No. of this REVIEW, Art. I.)

With those who asserted, or seemed to him to assert, a plenary ability beyond this, Dr. N. was always earnestly at variance. The real question at issue between the more and less conservative of the assertors of natural ability cannot be better illustrated than by the following occurrence, which we personally witnessed, and which we leave to speak its own lesson without comment. A minister who had been under the influence of a leading revivalist in those religious excitements in New York State, which begat so much bitter controversy from the year 1825 onward, examining a young candidate for

installation who had been in the same region, asked the latter: *Quest.* Is the sinner able to change his own heart? *Ans.* I think he is, if he has the disposition to. *Quest.* Can he not produce that disposition? *Ans.* (After prolonged meditation.) I think he can, if he has the requisite disposition to do it.

By disposition is meant not any faculty of the soul, but a state which may come and go, those faculties remaining unimpaired, and which constitutes an aptitude, tendency, and facility for given kind of exercises. It belongs to the changeable accidents, not to the essence or substance, or, according to a certain vocabulary, physical constitution of the soul. We say this because many, of whom Mr. Finney, in his *Autobiography*, is a strong type, often stigmatize the view which holds to such a disposition to evil—styled in the Auburn Declaration, “opposition to God and his law”—as “physical depravity,” and its removal by God’s “almighty power” in regeneration, as “physical regeneration;” by “physical” meaning what is governed according to the laws of matter—*i. e.*, substantially what is material. This term is no part of the terminology adopted by those who hold to the human corruption and divine regeneration of the Scriptures, our standards, and of the Christian church, as consisting in such a bias to evil and its removal.* It was occasionally used by some of the Reformed and Puritan divines as the adjective corresponding to *φύσει*, Eph. ii: 3, to signify that in fallen man it is natural, in contradistinction to being merely acquired by practice and imitation on the one hand, without ascribing it to normal, unfallen manhood on the other. Dr. N. W. Taylor defined this “nature” to be that by virtue of which “men sin, and only sin in all the appropriate circumstances of their being.” It is physical just

* We have rarely met with any form of religious experience so “physical,” in the sense of being corporeal, as that found in Mr. Finney’s account of his own conversion. He says: “The Holy Ghost descended upon me in a manner that seemed to go through me, body and soul. I could feel the impression, like a wave of electricity, going through and through me. Indeed, it seemed to come in waves of liquid love; for I could not express it in any other way. It seemed like the very breath of God. I can recollect distinctly that it seemed to fan me like immense wings.”—(*Autobiography*, p. 20.) We think that one whose conversion contained such an experience might have afforded to be more charitable toward those who held to what he miscalls “physical” regeneration, or who did not conceive themselves possessed of plenary ability to produce it without divine aid.

and only as any native tendency or propensity of the soul is physical, but not in the sense of being material or corporeal.

The revivals of the period of Dr. Nettleton, so largely partaking of his spirit and feeling, his moulding influence, both in and out of New England, were characterized not only by the stillness and solemnity we have mentioned, but by a great tenderness, sweetness, love, and humility in the promoters and subjects of them. The law was preached to awaken, alarm, and convict. The gospel to heal and convert. The obligation and dependence of the sinner were, indeed, always made conspicuous. But the sovereignty and decrees of God were usually set forth in the latter stages of the revival, for the purpose of dispelling the carnal security of those who had remained callous and unconcerned before, because confident of their ability at any future time to enter the kingdom when they should be ready and pleased to do so.

And yet, we cannot do full justice to this branch of the subject, if we take leave of it without saying that the drift of discussion in respect to the sinner's ability, responsibility, relation to divine sovereignty, and the like, designed to cut off all the sinner's excuses for continued impenitence, had fixed the attention of preachers and hearers too much upon the subjective exercises of the sinner in conversion, and the power or agents producing them, whether himself or the Holy Spirit, and too little upon the objective work of Christ, his blood and righteousness; upon gratuitous justification by faith alone, which though distinguishable from, is nevertheless a condition of, that confiding approach to God, which is conditional to all true subjective love of him, and genuine sanctification. We do not, of course, mean that all this was overlooked or ignored, much less denied, but that it was not brought sufficiently into the foreground in the shaping of revivals and religious experience; and this more especially in the regions penetrated by New England theology. This tendency is all the more needful to be noted just here, because it went forward till the sinner was turned more and more to look within himself for strength to deliver himself out of the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Hence, there was a constantly growing tendency to exaggerate that strength, and to exalt it into a plenary, and in every sense adequate,

ability in the sinner, independently of divine grace, to do all things pertaining to life and godliness. The conflict of this with the proportionally emphatic assertion of the counter-principle of the sinner's moral impotence out of Christ, is really, in itself and its surroundings, the pivot upon which some of the embittered theological controversies of the next twenty years, and especially pertaining to the great revivals preceding, culminating in, and following the year 1831-2, turned.

Dr. Nettleton, after his severe illness in 1822, never fully regained his former health. Still he recovered so far as to labor with more or less constancy and uniform success North and South during the next decade, when he was disabled for further efforts in this direction. Few men have been permitted to accomplish so much in winning souls to Christ; and fewer still have so done their work as to leave no sting or wound, no desolation or destruction, but only edification in their track.

An element came into the revivals, culminating in 1831 and beginning a few years earlier, which caused great conflict, and cannot be overlooked in any just, however brief, survey of them. These revivals were numerous and powerful, and as a whole were inestimable blessings. But bitter controversies arose in regard to a portion of them, and the doctrines and measures employed to promote them by various evangelists, whose chief original field of operation, afterward somewhat more extended, was in Central and Western New York. Foremost and by far the greatest of these was Rev. Charles G. Finney, whose recently published autobiography, so full of interest, has challenged fresh attention on the subject, alike by what it upholds, and still more by what it severely condemns. We can only give it a passing glance, although it were easy to occupy not only a whole article, but a volume as large as itself, in a profitable review of it. In order to preclude mistake, we will say here, that many of the disorders and extravagances then complained of and resisted vehemently by many of the most sound and devoted ministers and churches of the country, under the general head of "new measures," and in more or less association with the name of Mr. Finney, had about the same relation to him, as the raids of privates and camp-followers of the regular army have to its own aggres-

sions and the orders of the commanding general. We will further add, that the early active opposition to Mr. Finney's own measures and proceedings was from ministers of New England, or of New England affiliations, headed especially by Drs. Lyman Beecher and Nettleton, supported by such Presbyterians as Dr. James Richards, of Auburn; and not at all from those specially affiliated with Princeton, which, at that time, was brought into no direct relation with them.

Of Mr. Finney, saying nothing now of the coarse and often counterfeit imitators which every such strong leader draws into his wake, it is only just to say, that he was by nature a mighty man in his intellectual and moral, his emotional and volitional, nature. He had those native qualities which fitted him for leadership and eminence in any sphere or profession. Had he continued in the profession of law in which he started, he would certainly have come to the front at the bar and in civil life. He was also naturally a man of prodigious intensity in every element of his nature and the working of all his powers; intense in his convictions, intense in his feelings, intense in his conscientiousness, intense in his reasoning, from premises however imperfect, to conclusions however sweeping, radical, revolutionary. He was no less intense in his self-reliant and self-asserting confidence in these reasonings, no matter what they might come athwart. And, as usually happens in such cases, he was not slow or dainty in denouncing whatever stood against them. He had an extraordinary fondness for abstract and metaphysical reasonings, and a strong power of setting them in plain terms of blunt and pithy Saxon and homely illustration, sometimes degenerating into roughness or coarseness, which carried them home, as if concrete and living realities, to the common people who heard him gladly. When he became a Christian and was passing through exercises preliminary to it, he spent hours daily in prayer, which continued a life-long habit, sometimes with only slight interruption extending through days and nights together. His consecration to his work on all sides was scarcely less entire. With all this "blood-earnestness" of spirit, fiery logic, simplicity and clearness of style, impassioned conviction of the infallible truth and supreme importance of his message, his preaching fairly stormed the hearts of his hearers. It either stormed

down opposition to himself in the communities, churches, and ministers where he labored, or rendered it implacable. His ever-favorite term for overcoming opposition was, "breaking it down." There was no medium, no neutrality. He that was not for, was against him. Right or wrong, there could be no compromise. With the spirit of an iconoclast and radical reformer, he must denounce and overthrow what seemed to him adverse to the salvation of souls, however entrenched in sacred and tender association, or even in the faith and reverence of the church.

The career of such a man, preaching everywhere doctrines terrific and alarming to the impenitent and secure, with motives to conversion vast as eternity, the whole surcharged with denunciations of worldly and unfruitful professors, and of the very prayers and activities usually deemed indicative of piety, with whatever errors and defects it might be deformed, could not but be attended with a continuous series of religious awakenings such as this book records, with whatever incidental evils it might be marred. Indeed, it would be strange if the phenomena were not very much such as it describes. But it is equally obvious that it must needs be to an unhappy extent overbearing, denunciatory of those who could not agree and coöperate with him, often needlessly arraying good men against himself; and, however unintentionally, often weakening the standing of pastors with their flocks—too often causing their removal.

In aid of this came the unfortunate deficiencies of his early religious training and ministerial education. His own account of his early life is, that until he was twenty-six years old, he "had never enjoyed what might be called religious privileges." "When I went to Adams to study law, I was almost as ignorant of religion as a heathen. I had been brought up mostly in the woods. I had very little regard to the Sabbath, and had no definite knowledge of religious truth." "I was never a classical scholar, and never possessed so much knowledge of the ancient languages as to think myself capable of independently criticising our English translation of the Bible" (pp. 5, 6, 7). The first Bible he ever owned, he purchased while studying law, because he found it so frequently referred to in his text-books as authority for legal principles. At this

time, too, he first heard regular preaching from the pastor of the Presbyterian church—a Mr. Gale, recently settled there, from Princeton Seminary. “Although,” says he, “I now think that I sometimes criticised his sermons unmercifully, still,” he adds, “as I attended the prayer-meetings, heard Mr. Gale preach, and conversed with him, with the elders of the church, and with others, from time to time, I became very restless. A little consideration convinced me that I was by no means in a state of mind to go to heaven if I should die” (pp. 8, 9).

Years afterward this minister assured Mr. Finney that he did not believe he (Mr. Gale) had ever been converted. Yet Mr. Finney no doubt honestly takes what he conceived to be the views advocated by this minister, or his own conception and representation of them, as fair and adequate exhibitions of Princeton theology, which he is fond of portraying as near the reality, as the fleshless and bloodless skeleton of a man would be like the man himself. But we do not attribute the distortions, exaggerations, omissions, and misconstructions, by which he so often does injustice to schemes of theology repudiated by him, to any intentional misrepresentation. They are the natural misconceptions of a mind so intense and self-asserting, whose qualifications for interpreting Scripture are what we have seen his to have been, and who “had read nothing on the subject except my (his) Bible” (p. 42). He appears to have regarded the Shorter Catechism and Confession very much in the same light as Princeton theology (pp. 125–6). His special abhorrence appears to have been the doctrine of our standards respecting decrees, native sinfulness, inability, etc. Yet, more than once he represents himself as realizing in his own experience precisely the inability to reach his own standards without divine aid, so abundantly set forth in the Bible: for truth will ever and anon assert itself in the language and speech of those who imagine they have discovered it to be error. Thus, in his account of his original conversion, he says, “When I came to try, I found I could not give my heart to God. My inward soul hung back, and there was no going out of my heart to God. I began to feel deeply that it was too late; that it must be I was given up of God, and was past hope” (p. 15). In reference to the impending death of his wife, he says: “For hours I struggled to give her up unqualifiedly

to the will of God. But I found myself unable to do it. I was so shocked and surprised at this that I perspired profusely with agony. I struggled and prayed until I was exhausted, and found myself unable to give her altogether up to God's will" (p. 375).

As concerns the constant holding up of Princeton and its doctrines as in antagonism to revivals, which is conspicuous in this volume, this is contradicted by all fact. The history of Princeton College, born, as it was, of, and cradled in revivals, is a history of refreshings from above, now gentler, and now poured down in the great rain of God's strength, culminating in that mighty work of this year, which not only passed over the college but the town, and was propagated thence, through deputations of students, to large numbers of congregations far and near, and to other colleges. *Laus Deo*. Surely those who notice the attitude toward revivals in which this book places Princeton, will "forgive us this boasting." Indeed, he seems to have found the prevailing doctrine of Christendom as much in his way, and in need of reconstruction by himself, as that of Princeton and the Confession. He says, p. 257: "In all my ministerial life, in every place and country where I have labored, I have found this difficulty." (Princeton views). Yet there was some piety in the world, and, God be praised, has been since. We think it greatly to be regretted, but not wondered at, that Mr. Finney declined, as he was advised, to go to a theological seminary, to repair, as far as possible, his great lack of adequate educational preparation for the ministry. It would, if nothing more, have given him better and truer conceptions of the principles he so violently and constantly denounced, and preserved him from much of the uncharitable and divisive denunciation which detracted so much from the great good he accomplished, and left more or less evil in its track.

It was a natural consequence of the foregoing conditions, that Mr. Finney should often feel that his own mental states and convictions, especially in reference to those measures and views of his which were most offensive to others, were divinely revealed to him. He says he more and more "became confirmed, in the fact that God had led me, had taught me, had given me right conceptions in regard to the best manner of winning

souls. I say God taught me; and I know it must have been so, for surely I never obtained these notions from man" (p. 87). He used even stronger language in respect to these divine revelations to him elsewhere (see p. 114). We often meet with this disposition to confound his great confidence in his own convictions or experiences with divine revelation, and to fortify that confidence by such a supposed revelation of their truth. This became the germ—more in some of his weaker followers and imitators than himself—of that tendency to exalt personal impressions to the authority of divine revelations, which was one chief bane of the great revival of 1740, and had much to do with many ultrasisms and fanaticisms which distracted many churches reached by this influence. It also had to do with a certain mystical tendency which we discover in the later Higher Life and Perfectionist views of Mr. Finney and others, in which exalted spiritual states of feeling were made a standard of truth seemingly co-ordinate with the word of God. On this we have now no time to dwell, but it will richly repay thorough study and careful analysis.

The "prayer of faith" was another subject on which Mr. Finney preached some novel ideas—pushed much further, to more fanatical extremes, by inferior men—which occasioned great dissatisfaction and evoked earnest opposition from very many sober and godly men. We will not venture any definition of it, because we do not find one so definite given by its advocates, that any statement we could make might not be questioned. But it is quite safe to say, that he severely criticised the ordinary prayers of Christians for spiritual blessings, especially for revivals and the conversion of the impenitent, as not being animated by a positive expectation or assurance of the precise things asked, in manner, form, and time, as asked for; and insisted on prayers more or less inspired by such a confidence as to the answer, as alone likely to receive the blessing, or entitled to be considered the prayer of faith. It is easy to see to what extravagances and disorders such a doctrine might lead in the hands of weaker and less discreet men.

The introduction of the anxious seat, or some equivalent method of bringing the anxious and awakened to rise or take a particular position in religious assemblies, in order to be

prayed for, thus openly taking the stand before God and man of being committed to the pursuit of salvation, was very strenuously and almost universally objected to by all who were known as not belonging to this particular school of revivalists. Indeed, if there is anything against which there is a unanimous protest by the leading divines, whose letters appear in the appendix to Dr. Sprague's volume, it is this, together with the immediate admission of those appearing to be converted, in this or other ways, to the Lord's Supper. The opposition to those measures was so wide, earnest, and persistent that they were generally given up for a considerable period. But they have eventually returned, and in recent revivals have, in some form, largely prevailed. And it cannot be denied that these measures have a kind of power in developing religious awakening, through a rapid, if brief, course, which gives them great favor with most revival preachers. Yet we think this procedure by no means clear of difficulties, and that the whole subject requires a discussion—for which we have now no space—before it finds its due adjustments and limitations.

The Oneida Association of Congregational Ministers issued, in 1827, a pastoral letter to the churches under their care, warning against certain dangers and errors on the subject of revivals, while Mr. Finney was laboring in great awakenings within their bounds. They do not name any persons or communities. But Mr. Finney, in his autobiography, refers to the publication as aimed at himself and his measures, while he strongly denies the justice of these allegations. However this may be, it shows what their complaints were against the general system which they believed to be pursued by many of this class of revivalists. The reader of Mr. Finney's autobiography can readily judge how far they had any basis of truth or verisimilitude as respects him. But our space compels us to conclude our exposition of this subject with a brief summary of their warnings and complaints, as spread out in this letter. They objected to "calling men hard names," in violation of the charge that "the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God, peradventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;" "making too much of favorable appearances," whereby re-

ports are made of "great, powerful revivals," which afterward "come to little or nothing;" "ostentation and noise," "The Lord did not cry nor lift up, nor cause, his voice to be heard in the streets." God was not in the earthquake, the fire, the strong wind, but in the still small voice. "Going to particular places to obtain the Spirit and be converted," while neglecting God's ministry and ordinances for this purpose in their own church;" "not guarding against false conversions;" "the hasty acknowledgment of persons as converted;" "injudicious treatment of young converts, such as turning them into exhorters and teachers," etc.; "suffering the feelings to control the judgment; giving heed to impressions, feelings, and supposed revelations; allowing any body and every body to speak and pray in promiscuous meetings, of whatever age, sex, qualification, or want of it; wrong means of exciting fear, as saying to the sinner, "if you don't repent to-day you will be in hell to-morrow;" "you are a reprobate, you are going right to hell;" trying to make people angry; studying harshness and abruptness of manner, in the pulpit or in private conversation, for the purpose of giving offense; the affectation of familiarity with God in prayer: language of profaneness, such as the frequent repetition of the name of God as an expletive, for want of something else to say; its use in the pulpit for the same purpose that it is used by the profane swearer, merely to give force and energy to the expression; the familiar use of the words *devil*, *hell*, *cursed*, *damned*, and the like, with the same kind of tone and manner as they are commonly heard from profane lips; disregard of the distinctions of age and station, such as young men and boys saying, with regard to their elders and parents, "this old hypocrite," "that old apostate," "that old veteran servant of the devil," etc.; imprecations in prayer; denouncing, as enemies to revivals, those who do not approve of everything that is done; female prayer and exhortation in promiscuous assemblies; loud groaning; speaking evil, or falling down in public or social worship; taking the success of any measures as an evidence that those measures are right, and approved of God; disorderly and disorganizing measures, such as ministers or others interfering in any way in the concerns of congregations to which they do not belong; going into them, getting up

meetings, or introducing any measures under pretence of wishing to promote a revival, without being invited or authorized to do so by the minister of that congregation; putting forward the younger members of the church above the elder; leading children to despise the authority of their parents, and much more of the like. It is not unlikely that, while a few of these things would escape reprobation now, others are exaggerated, and still others are more directly due to other parties than Mr. Finney. But that the great and blessed work, whose noon-day was in 1831, was in many places more or less marred by influences and agencies of this kind is undeniable. That owing to such causes some places were turned into what Mr. Finney aptly calls "burnt districts" (p. 78), where for years little good could take root, cannot be questioned. That they served to distract many congregations, and drive away their pastors, is abundantly proved.

The revivals of the period just reviewed, including also those of the first two decades of the century, begat a marvellous zeal and hope for the speedy triumph of religion and conversion of the world to Christ, which flowered out in the formation of those great organizations for propagating the gospel that adorn the century. Mr. EVARTS beautifully adverted to this in his recent grand oration at Philadelphia. And well he might. His own father, JEREMIAH EVARTS, was foremost in these movements. Doubtless they entered much into the fireside conversation he heard in his childhood. The American Board of Foreign Missions was formed in 1810, and the other evangelical boards and agencies speedily followed. Andover and Princeton Theological Seminaries were established and set in effective operation when the country was undergoing the throes and exhaustion of the war of 1812; and the theological seminaries which have followed in their train, in all denominations, may be regarded as due, directly or indirectly, to this primary impulse. But on these things we have no time to dwell.

During this era, too, the Temperance Reformation, beginning about the year 1825, on the basis of total abstinence from distilled liquors, and proceeding, years afterward, to the platform of total abstinence from whatever can intoxicate as a

beverage, was inaugurated and made prodigious strides, bringing in its train inestimable blessings to the church and society. In its early days it was largely carried forward by traveling agents. In its wake started a numerous progeny of other specialties of philanthropic, moral, or religious reform, also propagated by special traveling agents; all which, joined to the agents then employed by regular benevolent and missionary societies, each feeling that he had an indefeasible right to enter and operate in every congregation, and not a few to denounce, as enemies of righteousness, those ministers who denied them admission, made such a fierce raid upon the proper functions and prerogatives of the ministry, that it became necessary for the latter to contend for their very life and position, and for the proper pre-eminence and stability of the church and its ordinances, against the usurpations and irruptions of these irresponsible and non-ecclesiastical intruders upon their proper sphere and office; as also against similar demands of itinerant evangelists and professional revivalists, or pseudo-revivalists, to take command of their flocks without their consent. In this contest the ministry and church at length prevailed, and had some years of stability and peaceful growth. "Having rest, they were edified; and walking in the fear of God and comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied" (Acts ix : 3). But, meanwhile, great wrecks were caused; churches were distracted; ministers set afloat; and pastorates in many quarters came to be styled "rotary."

A striking illustration of the evil referred to, we find in a communication of Mrs. G. W. Thomson in the *N. Y. Evangelist* of July 6, 1876. The scene is in the frontier regions of Western New York, in 1825, and one of the ministers concerned her own father. She says:

"Mr. and Mrs. Bushnell left a name as a sweet savor among the people for whom they so long labored in Vernon. All these men, tried and true, who had made the waste places glad, were set afloat soon after the great revival of 1825, and thus were to enjoy the fruit of their labors from afar. A notion crept in, disappointing alike to them and their successors, and particularly so to the churches, that if separated from the early pastors, and younger men were employed, the church would surely enjoy a continuous revival. In new-born zeal, so precious a boon was to be secured at all hazards. Old ties, covenant obligations, or even pecuniary burdens, were ob-

stacles not to be thought of for a moment. The most fitting, though humbling sequel, was the subsequent frank avowal, *We were in error.**

Before leaving this subject, we wish to call attention to two facts, which will go to show that whatever may have been the continued and prolonged extravagances of other professional

* The following, from the pen of "Wyoming," in the same journal of July 27th, tells its own story with equal emphasis:

"Two things made me reluctant to unite with the Presbytery of Genesee when I went to Perry, viz.: my personal attachments, and my dislike to entering a church in the situation of the Presbyterian church at that time. It was just after the excruciating act. The air was full of the sounds of battle. To the lover of peace there was nothing to draw one in that direction. Nor were truth and righteousness altogether on one side. There were serious evils existing among the churches in the region. With some of them I early became acquainted. Soon after I commenced my ministry there were indications of a revival. At that time Littlejohn, a member of the Presbytery of Angelica, Synod of Genesee, was holding a meeting in Dansville, productive of no little excitement. The pastor of the church there, Rev. E. H. Walker, and many of its members decidedly opposed his course; others as warmly favored it. Some in Perry decided to secure his labors among them. My consent was asked to the invitation. The reply was that I was not sufficiently acquainted with him or his work to act intelligently. He was invited to visit in Perry for the purpose of learning his views and methods. The family by whom he was entertained had formerly lived in Dansville, and their relatives were among his strongest supporters there. At family worship, the morning after his arrival, his prayer abounded in irreverence and presumption. The family consisted of some eight or ten, each of whom was prayed for by name, except the domestic, who was alluded to as 'this other one,' with the sentence interjected, 'you know her name, I don't.'

During the day I had a long interview with him. We talked upon subjects that drew him out, and the more I learned of his sentiments and measures, the less confidence I had in him and his efforts. On the agency of the Spirit in renewing the heart, I remember he illustrated his thoughts by a figure common to him, he said, in the pulpit: "The Lord screws the sinner up, and up, and up, until if he gave another turn to the screw, snap would go his free-agency!" O! the crudeness and the coarseness which that interview brought to light! When asked what was the conclusion concerning his coming to Perry, the answer was: "That depends entirely upon the church; but if Littlejohn comes, little Joseph will go."

Subsequently I learned that the Presbytery of Ontario, a few months before this, had taken the following action: 'The attention of presbytery having been called to the subject of the efforts of evangelists, and of the Rev. Mr. Littlejohn in particular, within our bounds, after mature deliberation, believe that they owe it to themselves and the churches under their care to make a full and decided expression of their views on the subject; therefore, resolved (1) That we regard his preaching, his efforts in meetings of inquiry, and his general course, as calculated to bring the gospel ministry into disrepute, to multiply spurious conversions, and to undermine the stability of the church; (2) That the churches under our care be affectionately and earnestly advised to discountenance all efforts calculated to increase or perpetuate such irregularities, from whatever source they may proceed.' "

revivalists, Mr. Finney greatly modified his tone in reference to some of those matters which had awakened wide disapprobation and loud complaint.

Dr. S. C. Aiken, then of Utica, N. Y., whose congregation was the theatre of some of the greatest and most successful of Mr. Finney's early revival preaching and measures, and who was then in friendly coöperation with him, wrote thus to Dr. Beecher in April, 1827: "I think he used too frequently the word 'devil' and harsh expressions, but he is greatly reformed, and I apprehend that reading the very quotations which you make from *Edwards on Revivals* was the means of his reformation. Until he came to my house (at Utica) he had never read the book, and here it was frequently in his hands during the revival, also other volumes of that great writer, and he spoke of them with rapture. Indeed, next to the Bible, no book was so much in my family as *Edwards on Revivals* and *On the Affections*." (*Autobiography of Lyman Beecher*, Vol. II., p. 91.) This we apprehend to be largely true; yet we find him, as late as 1830, in Rochester, telling the impenitent that "all their unbelief was nothing but a blasphemous charging of God with lying." (*Autobiography*, p. 365.) On the opposite page, however, we find, instead of the statement, that influence of the Spirit in conversion is merely that of moral suasion, which had been usual with him (pp. 317-18-95), the following language, much in the style of Nettleton: "Sinners were taught, that without the divine teaching and influence, it is certain from *their depraved state* that they never would be reconciled to God, and yet, that their want of reconciliation was simply their own hardness of heart, or the stubbornness of their own wills, so that their dependence upon the Spirit of God is no excuse for their not being Christians at once."

The other point which demands notice is, that Mr. Finney gives an account of his having a "new and enlarged experience" after the death of his wife, and during his second winter in Boston in 1843, where he never appears to have found a very congenial or responsive atmosphere. He had come to the Hopkinsian state of resignation to the will of God, whether it appointed him to salvation or perdition. His own soul, too, became "too full of the subject to preach anything except a full and present salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ." "I spent

nearly all the remaining part of the winter, till I was obliged to return home, in instructing the people in regard to the fulness there is in Christ. But I found that I preached over the heads of the majority of the people. They did not understand me" (pp. 378-9). This will sound strange to Presbyterians, and to the babes in Christ, who have been taught this fulness of Christ by Mr. Moody, as the basis of the very rudiments of Christian experience.

But we can understand and joyfully sympathize with Mr. Finney in his statement: "I have felt since that a religious freedom, a religious buoyancy, and delight in God, and in his work, a steadiness of faith, a Christian liberty, and overflowing love, that I had only experienced occasionally before." We can well believe him, and do not doubt that it added mellowness and sweetness to his religious tone, while we are quite sure that not the fewest of those enjoying this type of experience are those whose doctrinal sentiments Mr. Finney so often and severely impugns.

We must bring this discussion, already much too prolonged, to a close with a bare reference to the subsequent great revival years, which, while blessed with celestial visitations of large and blessed magnitude, present little of a singular or dubious nature requiring discussion.

That of 1843 was in some quarters largely connected with that vulgar form of Second Adventism, known as Millerism, or the doctrine of one Miller, who taught that the second coming of Christ was immediately at hand, and would certainly occur on some particular day of that year.

There can be no doubt that the fear that this might prove true, served to bring many minds face to face with such subjects as judgment and retribution, heaven and hell, and thus helped to deepen and widen the salutary religious concern that was spreading through the country. It is a strong illustration of the truth, that great errors may sometimes be the occasion of fixing attention on the solemn and soul-saving truths with which they are some way associated, and which otherwise were left "bed-ridden in the dormitory of the soul." This is no reason for preaching and sanctioning errors which are always, and in the long run must be, pernicious to the soul, whose only proper aliment is truth. And it is a striking proof, that it is no

evidence of the truth of questionable doctrines or measures, that they are sometimes followed by religious excitements, which, if genuine, are due to the truth associated with them, and if spurious, are only what have attended the proclamation and use of the grossest forms of religious error, pagan and Christian, in all ages.

The revival of 1857-8 was very extensive and pervading. It was closely connected with the commercial panic and business prostration of that year, which so widely led those who were losing treasures on earth to lay up treasures in heaven. Such periods of general depression in business have often been attended with powerful revivals. Nearly all the great revivals we have been considering were, in a degree, traceable to some general gloom and depression in regard to things temporal as one immediate instrumental cause. Dr. N. W. Taylor once told the writer he had never been able to make much impression upon the people of his charge, except when they were "on their backs" with some great worldly disappointment. The revival of 1857-8 was largely promoted by lay-agency and by prayer-meetings conducted by laymen, but not with any antagonism to or from the clergy, who helped and guided it to most happy results, and seldom with any sort of bitterness left behind. It was computed that fifty thousand or more were added to the churches as its fruits.

Of the great revivals of 1875-6, which formed the glorious close of the last, and beginning of the new century, the chiefest glory indeed of our Centennial year, it is less necessary to speak, as they are familiar to all. Although the most conspicuous agents in them have been the lay evangelists, Moody and Sankey, through their labors in the two largest cities of the country, yet the great work through the land has, from the sheer impossibility of their presence in two places at the same moment, been carried forward chiefly under the lead of the pastors, seconded by the officers and membership of the churches. This is as it ever should, and, indeed, must, be in all healthy church progress—all increase with the increase of God. The work of these evangelists in New York and Philadelphia did not interfere with, it only assisted, genuine work of this sort in particular congregations, while it more largely than ordinary agencies reached the unevangelized. The teaching and tone

of Mr. Moody have been singularly scriptural and sound, his spirit earnest and loving, his attitude toward the stated ministry always brotherly and helpful, never harsh or injurious; * his measures and methods, with rare exceptions, judicious and safe. The position of him and Mr. Sankey as laymen gives them a more unfettered access to all denominations than if they were ministers of any one. This is all that can be said in behalf of their taking so high and permanent a position as Christian teachers and preachers, without the sanctions, guards, and responsibilities of ordination, and ordination vows. The whole question of the proper extent and limits of lay agency in Christian teaching and evangelism has thus a new element of complexity. It is brought to the front by these remarkable and idiosyncratic cases, and is further than ever from solution. It must soon be thoroughly discussed. God grant that any train of followers and imitators that may arise, may be gifted with their knowledge and wisdom, their love and humility, their power and disposition to utter sound speech that cannot be condemned, and that these brethren may be honored to achieve, under God, blessed results in the future, of which the past are but the dawn and the earnest.

We only add in conclusion, that with such cause of thanksgiving for the revivals in the past which have given so much life and growth to the church, and with ardent hopes and prayers for their continuance and enlargement hereafter, we deem it important to guard against the tendency so to depend upon such occasional excitements, and the conscious beginnings and visible tokens of religious experience which they develop, as to undervalue the permanent ordinances of the church, and the due training of children in the Christian life, according to the inner significance of infant baptism and of our standards. This is the great reliance for church increase and a "holy generation." Whatever additions may come from without, experience shows that even religious excitements find their most enduring and exemplary fruits

* We cannot, however, give the same commendation to some young people who, aping Mr. Moody, think they have found a patent way of effecting conversion, which warrants them in assuming airs of contempt over pastors and eminent ministers.

among those previously well instructed in the doctrines, and trained, as far as may be, to the duties of religion. Without such material to operate upon, religious excitements would produce only stony-ground conversions, which quickly wither away under the smiting heats of temptation. With such material even the most distempered religious excitements are the occasion of bringing many to a decision to walk in those ways of God to which their Christian training has or ought to have led them.* The great revival of the last century began in

* Mr. Finney, for the most part, had such materials, as he somewhere states, prepared by previous instruction and training, as the subjects of the awakenings occurring under his preaching. To this much of his best success was largely due. We take the following from an article in the *Messenger* of June 28th, by S. N. C. :

“The following item has appeared in the religious papers credited to the *Northern Christian Advocate*, an accredited organ of the Methodist Episcopal Church :

“In the fourteen years the whole church reported 2,072,686 probationers ; these made 509,316 members, being about twenty-two in one hundred ! *i. e.*, of 2,072,686 (only) 509,316 were in the church at the end of one year, and 1,587,370 lost, more than the whole number of members in the church in 1872 ; *i. e.*, in fourteen years the Methodist Episcopal Church lost more converts than would make another church equal in numbers to herself, with several hundred thousand to spare ! If this is not spiritual prodigality in labor and souls, we know not what could be.

“He (Prof. Dabney) informs us, that in canvassing the results of the wide-spread excitement which convulsed the Presbyterian churches of the Valley of Virginia (of which he gives us a general account), several years after the event, they were found to be distressing in the extreme, fully similar, we may say, to the statistics furnished us above. He tells us of one case, the Rev. Mr. Morrison, who, the year previous to the excitement, had rejoiced in the privilege of gathering one hundred souls into his congregation, in the quiet manner then common in the Presbyterian Church ; That upon the close of this harvest, he had remarked to his session, that they had now worked in all the *prepared material*, and that they were not entitled to expect further additions at that time, but that for the next year or two, after seeking the growth and edification of those already in the church, the burden of their labor would be to prepare new material by *household, Sabbath-school, and catechetical instruction*. In this state of feeling and expectation, they were visited by the “revivalists,” and to their surprise and, for the time being, their great joy, another hundred was speedily added to his congregation.

“Upon the occasion of the review, he testified that of the first hundred all but three or four had run well ; of the last hundred all but about five had lapsed. He attributed the failure, in the case of the last hundred to the fact, that they were *unprepared material*.

“Here, we imagine, we have the answer to the question propounded above. From seventy to seventy-five per cent. of the reported *conversions* during the fourteen years in the Methodist Episcopal Church were *unprepared material*, and in the nature of the case, as witnessed by the ages of the church, could not be expected to stand fast.”

the attempt to work out of the dead formalism, into which the perversion and abuse of the permanent ordinances of the church in this respect had run. Let us see to it that, in recovering from it, we do not go to the opposite extreme, and lose all adequate sense of the privilege and duty of bringing up the children of the covenant, not as aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, but in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; that for the heresy of baptismal regeneration, real or hypothetical, we do not substitute the coarse heresy of making some outward "bodily exercise" of our own invention—of rising, sitting, or standing—the birth-throe, or symbol, or credential of entrance into the kingdom of Heaven. Ritualism in essence may come under one form as well as another, in the evangelical as well as in the avowedly ritualistic church. In every way there is a vast deal of sound, practical, and theoretical divinity in the stanza,

Not all the outward forms on earth,
Nor rites that God has given,
Nor will of man, nor blood, nor birth,
Can raise a soul to heaven.

We have already found occasion to notice the tendency to legalism, and insufficient attention to the person, the atonement, the forensic and objective righteousness of Christ, as distinguished from his subjective and inward work of sanctification, which deformed some former revivals, so that their subjects were long in attaining, if they ever attained, the buoyant sense of adoption, and of standing fast in that liberty wherewith Christ walketh free. The danger is now in the opposite direction. The fulness of Christ is abundantly presented in recent revivals. But whether true sanctification as the fruit of that justification is adequately defined and insisted on; whether there is not danger of that Antinomian tendency, which consists in the hope of being saved *in* and not *from* sin, we think deserving of serious, critical, and prayerful consideration. The adversary of souls, if he cannot prevent revivals, is ever striving to corrupt and pervert them. He puts on the guise of an angel of light, when he cannot successfully expose his true character as a roaring lion. Let us beware lest, as he beguiled Eve through his subtlety, even so we be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.