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ART. I.—BIBLE WORDS FOR SALVATION.

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IN the examination of such a subject, the most suggestive passage with which to commence is Acts ii, 47: *Ὁ δὲ κύριος προσετίθει τοὺς ΣΩΖΟΜΕΝΟΥΣ καθ' ἡμέραν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ*; rendered, "And God added daily to the Church of such as *should be saved*." This gives the idea of a future or prospective salvation, viewed as decreed or determined, and so it has been doctrinally regarded. Thus, Matthew Henry says: "Those whom God has designed for eternal salvation, shall, one time or other, be effectually brought to Christ." The doctrine is true, but it is not taught in this place. To say nothing now of any considerations arising out of the etymological and proper meaning of the verb *σῶζω*, such a rendering, and such an interpretation, are irreconcilable with the present imperfect, or continuous, participle, which can never be rendered *salvandi*, or *salvi fierent*, as the Vulgate and Calvin have it. It can mean nothing else than "*those who are being saved*," if we may use a form of speech which has been condemned, but which is among the necessities of our language. The Greek participle denotes a process, or present action, now going on, or a present state now having continuance.

method by which salvation was to visit the world. It has held religion, as has been well said, and rightly said, "to be not a mere communication of ideas concerning the divinity, nor an exhibition of any of the peculiar powers of the divinity, rather as a solemn effort to reunite the broken bond between God and man, the offended and the sufferer; and to restore the latter to that blessedness for which he was originally fashioned." Religion's great end is the recovery of fallen man, through man; but that man is to be associated with and clothed with the power of God.

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ART. VI.—MASSACHUSETTS CONVENTION SERMONS,  
ON "THE GREAT REVIVAL."

By REV. E. H. GILLETT, D. D.

THERE can be no question that for a long period antecedent to the Great Revival of the last century, the cause of vital piety in this land had been steadily declining. This was the case emphatically among the New England churches, and unquestionably the extravagances which in numerous instances characterized the revival, were due to the creation of popular feeling promoted by the security, formalism and worldliness which hedged about "the standing order."

The Revival came, almost in suddenness and startling effect like an earthquake shock. The doctrines of grace, and the necessity of that transformation which they were designed to produce, were presented by the revival preachers with such freshness and force, as to carry with them almost the weight of a new revelation. Yet they were simply the old doctrines of the New England fathers revived, and vindicating in the experience of men their divine power.

The process by which, for long years antecedent, they had, under the forms of dead orthodoxy, been bereft of their power, had not been unnoted. Aged ministers, with memories that carried them back to a brighter period, had uttered their lament, as they spelled out *Ichabod* on the walls of the

temple. With good reason they might charge, as they did, the sad change which they had survived to witness, to the corrupting or misleading influence of works like those which issued from the school of English theology, represented by men like Whiston, Hoadley, Emlyn, Pierce, or even Dr. Clarke. Read in this country by the young ministers, their latitudinarianism took effect, and its influence was disastrously felt.

In his Convention Sermon before the ministers of Massachusetts, in 1722, Cotton Mather takes occasion to remonstrate against the measure of neglect into which the vital doctrines of the gospel seemed to have fallen. His language—while some allowance may be made for his peculiarities, and the taste for censorship in which he indulged at times—indicates plainly enough a widely prevalent doctrinal degeneracy. He remarks :

“But while we are examining what subjects we have to be handled in our ministry, I must become an humble petitioner, and I blush to say so!—on the behalf of some truths, which all real and vital piety forever lives upon; and which yet, alas, are threatened with a sentence, at least, of banishment from the ministry in some churches which once they have been a beauty and a safety to. The truths which are to show us how sensible we should be of our natural impotence to turn and live unto God, and with what sentiments the withered hand is to be stretched out; the truths which are to show us how we are to plead the sacrifice and righteousness of our Saviour, that we may be pardoned and accepted with God; the truths which are to show us how we are to repair unto the cross of our Saviour, that our indwelling sin may be mortified; the truths which are to show us how we are to live by the faith of the Son of God, and from our union with him as the head of his people; and how we are to die unto creatures, in conformity to the death of our Saviour; the truths wherein the mystery of Christ is most contained; wherein the spirit of the gospel is most conspicuous, and by which the power of godliness is most enkindled and preserved. My friends, what have these truths done to deserve an excommunication from the house of our God? Or are we fond of seeing an *Ichabod* upon our ministry? Verily, if we let these truths go, the glorious God himself will be gone; yea, be gone far from a forsaken sanctuary.

It is to be suspected that the loss of these glorious truths, if they must be lost, will be very much owing to an overgreat value for such books as have been very much in vogue among us; books, whereof it may be complained, *Nomen Christi non est ibi*, and, the religion of a regenerate mind is not there to be met withal; books, which if our young men will read, they ought also to read the just castigations which Dr. Edwards, in his *Preacher*, has bestowed upon them. Upon this occasion, you will forgive me if I do not suppress the

words which a venomous writer of some things that he calls *Laconics*, has, with what aim I know not, lately published. The Presbyterian divines have been observed of late (says the man) to preach after the manner of the Church of England men. But without setting up for a prophet (says he) I dare venture to affirm that this will be their ruin. And now I dare venture to affirm that such a prophecy, from such a *Balaam*, is what some in the world have cause to think upon."

No one can read the sermons of Edwards, Tennent or Whitefield, without feeling that in them Cotton Mather would have recognized champions of these vital truths in the behalf of which he put forth his earnest plea. But during the interval between the Convention Sermon of 1722, and the commencement of the Great Revival—an interval of nearly 20 years—the process of degeneracy was still going forward; Mather's remonstrance had not arrested it.

But how was the prevalent lethargy to be broken up? How were the vital doctrines of the gospel to regain ascendancy? It was only to be by a religious convulsion, unprecedented in the history of the country, and, since that day, paralleled only, if paralleled at all, by the Kentucky Revival of the last century. As might have been expected, the foundations of the ecclesiastical deep were broken up. Precedents of apostolical zeal were studied. The itineracy of Whitefield and others was regarded as commendable, and worthy of imitation. Fanatical fervors were justified by his words or example. Men like Davenport, Allen and Crosswell, were swept away on the tide of their own enthusiasm. Laymen hastened to assume the office of "prophets," and found not a few to join them in the denunciation of an unconverted ministry. This, indeed, was a favorite theme. Whitefield introduced it, and others took it up. But it served only to alienate and exasperate. Pastors, as faithful as Fish of Stonington, became odious to a large part of their congregations. Separations, often utterly unwarranted, took place from established churches. The new congregations, exulting in their spiritual emancipation, indulged in fanatic excesses, reviled ministers faithful and devoted, ran off themselves into antinomianism and boisterous extravagance, eager still for the indulgence of an enthusiasm which disgusted others while it led themselves astray.

Yet this excess, and the denunciations that accompanied it, were provoked by the very prevalent notion that an unconverted man might be a useful minister. It was regarded by many as an impertinence to insist that only those who had experienced the renewing power of the gospel should preach it. The Rev. Wm. Williams, in his Convention Sermon of 1726, seems almost disposed to ask pardon for being so bold as, by way of advice, to suggest the importance of ministers knowing by experience the power of renewing grace. The need of such advice, implied in his language, speaks for itself. He says :

“ And if I might take the liberty to offer a word of advice to the candidates for the ministry, it should be this : That upon the most mature deliberation, you would make choice of the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord. Set wide open the everlasting door of your souls that the King of Glory may come in ; that the advancement of his honor and kingdom, truth and interests may lie near your hearts, and may be the great things for which you devote yourselves to his service. And to this end get thoroughly acquainted with the nature, excellency and necessity of his kingdom, and how much your safety and the safety of those you shall preach to is involved in a severe subjection to and dependence upon Christ, and living according to the laws of his kingdom.”

It must be obvious that the excesses which attended the progress of the revival were chargeable, not to the revival itself, so much as to the state of things which had preceded it. When the awakening came, men who for the first time felt the power of evangelical truth, regarded with surprise and indignation the state of things which had prevailed around them. They revolted at the character of the preaching to which they had been accustomed, and were still expected to listen, and many were thus prepared to regard with a blind admiration the course and utterances of those over-zealous leaders who gave only louder and more emphatic expression to what they had felt themselves.

Conscious of the gross injustice to which they were subjected by the denunciations of men carried away by their own enthusiasm, not a few of the ministers felt constrained to protest against their course. It must have been the deep sense of aggravated wrong that led to such enactments as those which, in 1742, for the first time disgraced the statute book of the colony of Connecticut, and drew upon them the criti-

cism of such a cool conservative as Dr. Chauncy. His "Seasonable Thoughts," published in 1743, subjected him to new reproach as an enemy of the revival, and yet it is largely made up from reliable testimony, and citations from divines as evangelical as John Owen or Richard Baxter.

If we turn to the Convention Sermons preached at Boston, immediately following the outbreak of the Revival, we shall learn the views entertained of certain features of it by representative clergymen of the day. Nearly all are cautious about condemning it absolutely, and yet it is quite evident that in the opinion of some it was a damage and a disgrace to the Christian cause.

The Convention Sermon of 1742 was preached by Israel Loring, for many years pastor of the church at Sudbury. In the course of it, he took occasion to allude to those "who have in one part of the land and another set up for teachers and exhorters of the people." On this subject he remarks :

"As for any outward call to authorize them to this work, this is what they can't pretend to. They never were regularly introduced into this, were never selected thereunto by that order that God appointed in his church. And as for an inward call enabling them to teach and exhort, it may justly be feared that they are utterly destitute of it—at least that the greatest part of them are so. Such as set up to be teachers and exhorters of others, should doubtless be men of superior understanding themselves; but are the persons I am now speaking of such? How should they come to an eminency of knowledge in divine things? Knowledge in the liberal arts and original tongues is an handmaid to divinity and a great help to attain it; but this our exhorters are destitute of. Christ's ministers get their knowledge in a course of hard study, with the blessing of Christ upon their endeavors; but the teachers that I am speaking of, spring up as it were in the night, and have very little time for the gaining of divine knowledge in an ordinary way. Have they the knowledge of divine truths by inspiration? The Apostles had so; their learning was not acquired, but infused; but these extraordinary and miraculous gifts being long since ceased, it is a vanity for any now to pretend unto them.

May we not conclude then that the exhorters of the present day, are utterly unqualified for the work which they have so temerarily undertaken, and consequently that Jesu; Christ never called them to it, and that he will never assist them in it, nor reward them for it. Indeed, persons will cry out and fall down at the preaching of these sort of men, as well as at the preaching of some others; but this with me is so far from being a seal of their divine mission, that this very thing among others makes me very suspicious that, in the strange bodily emotions, screamings, roaring, and falling down of many persons, religion is very little, if any thing, concerned."

The Convention Sermon of 1743 was preached by Nathaniel Appleton, from 1717 till his death in 1784—a period of nearly 67 years—pastor of the church at Cambridge, and during that time a fellow of Harvard College. Two years before, he had preached a sermon entitled “God and not ministers to have the glory of all success given to the preached Gospel.” The title of itself indicates its scope, and bespeaks the jealousy which many felt lest such instruments of the Revival as Whitefield and Tennent should seem to usurp to themselves the credit of what was due only to a divine power.

In his Convention Sermon, he indulges in a similar strain, while vindicating the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, humiliating to human pride :

“Thus every doctrine that gives the least indulgence to *men's lusts*, that conives at sin of any kind, or degree ; or that tends in the least to take off the sense men have of the evil of sin, though it should never be with such plausible pretences of advancing the merits and righteousness of Christ, or the richness and freeness of divine grace, must be declared against. So on the other hand, any doctrine that leads us away from Christ, from our dependence upon him, or a sense of our obligation to him, or that leads us to a *self-confidence—self-boasting* ; or that takes away any of the glory that belongs to the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, in the grand affair of our redemption, is a corrupt doctrine, and to be openly opposed, if we would keep the world from being corrupted with it.”

It is not a little significant that one, who, for more than half a century filled the pulpit at Cambridge, where the ministers of Massachusetts were trained, should have remarked in this connection :

“And although the reducing Christianity to a system, is upon many accounts very useful ; yet by endeavoring to make every thing quadrate with a particular scheme, we shall, without care and caution, darken rather than enlighten some Christian doctrines.”

But it is on the objectionable measures adopted in connection with the Revival, that Dr. Appleton dilates more freely. He remarks :

“And here I can not but think there are many things at this day that have a plausible appearance at first view, and yet are of a dangerous tendency, which I think ministers, if they would be a light to their people, should instruct and warn them about, with the meekness and gentleness of Christ.

As particularly, ministers *leaving* their own particular charges, and going from place to place without any regular call or desire, intruding themselves into other men's parishes ; whereby they are in danger of exciting and grati-

fyng their own pride, stirring up itching ears in the people, and leading them away from their love and esteem of their own faithful ministers.

So again, ministers setting up to preach, without premeditation and study, looks plausible to the weak and ignorant, but is of dangerous tendency.

Again, encouraging *illiterate persons* publicly to exhort, which by speaking freely and boldly upon some points, lead the people to think they have more of the Spirit of God than ministers; by which means such novices are in danger of being lifted up with pride themselves; and the end of it with respect to the people, if it should go on, would be ignorance and error, for many of the gross errors and corruptions of the Church of Rome have come in at the door of ignorance."

The following passage is quite significant, as indicating Dr. Appleton's views of the dangers likely to arise from admitting into the ministry men unqualified for it by education or by grace. By implication it admits that errors on the subject had been prevalent :

"We should put none into the ministry but what we have reason to hope and trust have so much *light* and knowledge as that they are able to teach others, and instruct them in all the doctrines and duties of Christianity; and so much *salt* or grace in themselves that they will, by their doctrine, and by their example, recommend religion to others, and be a likely means to encourage others in the ways of God. I wont pretend to prescribe certain rules for ministers to go by in this matter; whether by a particular formal examination, or by observation; but this I say, that ministers should admit none into holy orders, but such as they have a satisfaction in their own minds about, that they will in a good measure answer as *light* to the world, and *salt* to the earth."

It was at this date that Dr. Chauncy put forth his "Seasonable Thoughts." The publication of this work was not needed to define his position. That, indeed, was sufficiently well known, for on public occasions he had already given emphatic expression to his sentiments. But the choice of him, in these circumstances, to deliver the Annual Convention Sermon of 1744, indicates the confidence with which he was regarded by the great mass of his brethren, and their sympathy with him in many of his views.

That this was his own opinion is shown by the language which he employs in a letter addressed to his kinsman, Rev. Nathaniel Chauncy, of Durham, Conn. In this he remarks : "As I have spoken freely, and printed my sentiments as far as was proper, upon the religious state of affairs among us, 'tis a satisfaction for me to think that I was so unanimously

chosen by the body of the clergy in this province, to preach a Convention Sermon to them ; which I should not have mentioned, only that by this you may argue the thoughts of the ministry of this government about the present work."

In this Convention Sermon he gives his view of the Revival :

"I doubt not saving impressions have been made upon some who were before thoughtless ; and good Christians, a good number of them, have, I believe, been quickened to greater care and diligence in the business of salvation. But I can not say that the good has been more than a balance for the last (evil ?) Great disorders and irregularities have been almost general, and I know no place where there has been this *religious commotion*, but it has been accompanied with a very unchristian spirit of captiousness, a readiness to think well of all in one particular way of thinking and talking, to the condemning of everybody else. *Passion* seems to take the place too much in the room of reason ; visions and trances have become common ; and, I fear in a multitude of cases, an *over-heated* imagination is taken for the influence of the *divine spirit*. If we have reason to *sing of mercy*, I think we have equal reason to sing of judgment. The country was never in a more critical state, and how things will finally turn out, God only knows. The *standing ministers* of the land are evidently struck at, and so are the colleges ; and, if itinerant ministers and lay exhorters are not discountenanced, I dread to think of the consequences. I am afraid that ministers are not so faithful as they should be in testifying against these things, which they can't but own are disorderly."

It is not surprising that when the writer of this letter was chosen to preach the Convention Sermon he should direct public attention to these matters of which he complains ; undoubtedly it was expected of him, and he was chosen mainly with this in view. After quoting Richard Baxter's views of the Separates and fanatics of his day, Dr. Chauncy proceeds as follows :

"I will not go about to draw a parallel between the late times in this land, and those referred to by this learned writer ; but thus much I may be allowed to say, that the *body of the ministers* were never treated with more insult and contempt than by multitudes, and of those too, who once esteemed them the glory of New England ; nor were they ever more hardly censured than by some of their *own order*, from whom they might have expected better things. It will not be denied that they have had all manner of evil spoken against them, and this, in the face of crowded auditories. And are there not numbers, in many places, who have learned from their admired teachers to give them no better names than *Pharisees, blind leaders of the blind, opposers of CHRIST* and what not ? and han't this contempt been thrown upon as valuable ministers as any the Lord Jesus Christ has in the country, of as known *soundness in the faith*, and as *exemplary a walk* in conformity to the precepts of the Gospel?"

Another of what he regarded as the evils of the time, is

thus adverted to. Speaking of the course pursued by some ministers, he says :

"I shall add here, they should be particularly careful not to mingle their own passions and prejudices with their prayers: Nor should they oblige a whole assembly to be of their mind, in matters of doubtful disputation, or else come to an undesired pause in their devotions. Ministers, when praying in public, are to be considered as the mouth of the congregation; and as such, there is a manifest impropriety in the going into the use of such petitions, or thanksgivings, as a great part of the congregation can't, in faith, join with them in offering up to God. I rather mention this, because it may have been too much a practice, among some ministers, more especially in the late times, to express themselves in language they could not but know, if they allowed themselves to think, a considerable number of those they were praying with could not give their hearty Amen to."

On the subject of preaching he remarks :

"Further, ministers, in their preaching should apply to the *understandings* of their hearers, and not lay out all their endeavors to work on their *passions*. Not that it is improper to speak to the *affections*, for they have their use in religion, and it may serve a great many good purposes to excite and warn them. But then it ought to be remembered, the *understanding* is the leading power in man, and ought, as such, in the first place, to be applied to. To be sure, the understanding ought not to be neglected."

It is quite a noticeable fact that Dr. Chauncy refers also to the same evil, in connection with the introduction of candidates to the ministry, to which Mr. Williams and Dr. Appleton had adverted, thus incidentally confirming the correctness of the widely prevalent impression that not a few of the ministers of the land were really unconverted. His sagacity enabled him to discern that one of the causes, or at least occasions, of the abuse of the clergy by the more zealous friends of the Revival, was to be found in their own faults and deficiencies. He remarks toward the conclusion of his discourse :

"How careful should ministers be to *introduce none in to the sacred office* who are like to be despised? We are the persons to whom it belongs, according to the appointment of Jesus Christ, to separate men to the work of the ministry. And we ought to be cautious on whom we lay hands for this purpose. We should not suddenly do it in an affair of such importance; nor indeed at all, till first satisfied that the qualifications of the person are such that there is no prospect of their falling into contempt. And in order to this, there should be some trial of them before they are intrusted with the care of souls. It might be best, if we countenanced none in *preaching* till they had first been *examined*. I know it has been a long custom for *young men* to go into the

pulpit when they themselves think fit to do so. Perhaps the churches in this land are the only ones who take so little care in a matter of such consequence to the interest of the kingdom of Christ. 'Tis high time it was rectified. And if, as a means to so good an end, ministers would be peremptory in refusing their pulpits to all candidates, till they had passed their trials before proper judges, it might be of singular service."

This language, stating a sad fact confirmed by other testimony, is very significant when taken in connection with the excesses that attended and followed the Revival. "It has been a long custom for young men to go into the pulpit when they themselves think fit to do so." Such is the testimony of Dr. Chauncy, and it is well sustained.

An Edinburgh reviewer, several years since, in a critique upon Lathbury's *History of the Church of England during the Commonwealth Period*, very ably and effectually retorted the charge of the latter that the Puritans occasioned all the sects and violence that marked the period following the execution of Charles I. He showed that the previous intolerance toward Non-Conformists, and the cruelties practised upon men like Leighton, Prynne and Bostwick, provoked the terrible reaction that followed, and that Laud and his allies were the responsible authors, not only of the convulsions amid which they fell, but of whatever violence overtook the adherents of Episcopacy. The root of the evil ran back to a preceding generation.

So it has been repeatedly in the history of nations and of churches. So it was in the Great Revival of 1740-1. There were causes in existence which provoked the reaction. Sagacious men anticipated mischief from them. Honest and candid observers subsequently traced the mischief to its source. The seeds of evil may outsleep the winter and never germinate. No suspicion may be excited of the harvest to which they will ripen. But the spring-time brings them up from the clods, and under the very warmth of revived religious emotion they develope their real nature. There are some chapters of history that are rich in lessons of Providential retribution.