

THE
PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY.

NO. 3.—JANUARY, 1888.

I. REVIVALS OF RELIGION.

The word Revival implies the previous existence of life ; more properly, it means resuscitation or resurrection from the dead. But according to usage, and with reference to the secondary meanings of the word *life*, it means calling into active exercise a life which has become torpid or has been slumbering. Hence, it has special application to the church, not to the world outside. In Acts 2: 41 ff. we have an account of a revival in the proper sense of the word ; for all the statements there concern the members of the visible church of God. What is commonly called a revival—a general religious movement among the unregenerate—was called by our fathers an “awakening.” There is a sense in which such an awakening may be called a revival, to-wit : a revival of God’s work, (Hab. 3 : 2)—that work of salvation, of calling in His elect—which He has been doing from the beginning. This work seems at times, and in some places, almost to cease ; the Lord seems to abandon His church and give it up to the power of Satan, as in the days of Elijah, at the crucifixion of Jesus, and in the “Dark Ages.” Then comes a time of reviving, a great movement among the dry bones, and a great multitude stand up for the Lord. (Josh. 24—1 Sam. 12.—Judg. 2.—1 Chron. 29.—Hezekiah, Josiah, the Maccabees, Pentecost, the Wilderness, the Brethren of the Common Lot, the Reformation, the Kirk of Shotts, Northampton,

the Wesleys, etc.) Great revivals have generally followed seasons of great declension, notably in our own country, the great revival of 1740-45.* They demonstrate that God does *not* forsake His church, and that the religious nature of man is indestructible.

II. The only efficient agent in producing a revival is the Holy Ghost; a revival cannot be "gotten up;" it must "come down," hence begins with prayer. Acts 2:1 ff.

III. The only instrumentality to be used is the Word of God,—bringing the soul into contact with it by reading, preaching, singing, the sacraments, and the exercise of discipline. Error may be mingled with the truth in the course of a revival; but it is the truth alone which is the means of awakening the unconvinced and of quickening the spiritual life of believers. The truth of God is seed and error is seed, (Matt. 13:24-27); and each produces according to its kind. See John 17:17, 19.

IV. Questions connected with revivals.

1. *What is to be thought of "religious excitements?"*

Answer—They are not to be indiscriminately condemned. There are excitements which destroy the balance of the soul's powers, and there are excitements which elevate and invigorate those powers while the balance is maintained. A pair of scales may be in a state of equilibrium, because both scales are empty. This may illustrate a state of indifference. Or, a weight may be put into one of them only and the other kicks the beam. This is a state of morbid excitement, and, when existing in a very high degree, a sort of phrenzy or madness. Or, equal weights may be put into both scales; the pressure is increased, but the equilibrium is preserved. This may illustrate the effect of a proper religious excitement. Such an excitement does not derange the powers of the soul. Rather, they are more thoroughly *arranged*, brought nearer to their normal state, the ideal state, which has been disturbed by sin. The reason is, that the emotions in this case are the offspring of the truth—produced by the realities which are suited to move the soul. I may illustrate my meaning by what Paul says (I Cor. 14) in reference to the excitements attending the exercise of spiritual gifts at Cor-

*See Hodge's Hist. of the Presb. Ch. Vol. II. pp. 13 ff.

inth. As to those operations of the spirit, he affirms that they tend to and are designed for edification; that their legitimate exercise is perfectly consistent with decency and order; and this because they do not destroy the self-control of those who have them. "The spirits of the prophets," says he, "are subject to the prophets." That mysterious energy of the spirit by which the prophets spoke did not so excite them as to derange them. It would not do for those Christians in their public assemblies to say that they were so carried away by the spirit, that the *afflatus* was so strong that they could not help speaking even when others were speaking. You *must* help it, says the Apostle, for God is not the author of confusion, but of decency and order; the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. The error of the Greeks, recently emerged from heathenism, was an error implied in the very word they used for prophesying, a word near akin to that by which they expressed madness. The heathen notion of inspiration was that the *afflatus* of the divinity was too much for the feeble powers of the human organ, and consequently that his powers became deranged. The New Testament never uses the Greek word alluded to of any of God's prophets. On the contrary, it teaches that, no matter how strong the *afflatus*, "in the very torrent, tempest and whirlwind" of it, the subject thereof "must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness." The prophets were indeed sometimes overcome and prostrated by visions of God and of angels, but these were effects upon the body. Their minds were not deranged. So far is it from being true that the energy of the spirit of regeneration and of sanctification, of faith and love, of hope and joy, destroys the balance of the soul; it is, on the contrary, an energy whose principal effect is to restore that balance and especially to restore its rights and prerogatives to the conscience, that regulative and imperial faculty of the soul.

It follows from this account of the nature of religious excitements that—

(a). No excitement is to be considered as genuine because it is uncontrollable; and this, not only for the reasons already given, but also for the reason that other sorts of excitements

notoriously not religious, that is, not the effects of the gracious operations of the Spirit, are uncontrollable also. Saul was greatly excited when he lifted up his voice and wept, and said in the presence of his own men and of David and his men, "I have sinned;" but he sinned on. Judas was greatly excited when he threw down the money and declared that he had betrayed the innocent blood. But he went and hanged himself.*

(b.) No excitement is holy and genuine because the subject of it professes to have great spiritual enjoyment. See Matt. 13: 20; Mark 6: 20. "Satan," says Dr. Plumer again,† "has his devices for *pleasing* the people as well as for *disgusting* them in matters of religion. What is more calculated to gratify a carnal mind than a strong delusion leading one to think himself a Christian, and yet not disturbing his lusts? Besides, man is naturally fond of frolic, and many excitements in religion are so conducted as to suit this propensity. Unconverted men have as little enmity to a religious frolic as they have to one of another sort, provided, always, that the thing is not to last too long, and that these matters are to resume their usual course, and all parties are to be at liberty to return to their covetous practices, their selfish gratifications, their avoidance of rigid self-denial and their indulgence of sin."

(c.) Religious excitements which exist only in social and public meetings—private and closet duties being neglected—are to be suspected. After due allowance has been made for the legitimate operation of the social and sympathetic part of man's nature in the matter of public worship, it may be said with Dr. Plumer, that "when any man or number of men can pray fervently and very earnestly in a social meeting, yet when alone have but few words or little earnestness and less power, they may know that their hearts have deceived them." See Zech. 12: 10-14.

(d.) All religious excitements are to be dreaded which make men careless as to the state of their own hearts. "At no time more than in a general awakening should the extent, spirituality and holiness of the law, the unspeakable deceitfulness and wickedness of the heart, the sovereignty of God, the trying fires

*Plumer's Past. Theology, p. 236. † *Ibidem*, p. 237

of the last day, the perfectly lost and helpless state of the unregenerate, and the fulness and freeness of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, be kept constantly in view by ministers, Christians and sinners."

(e.) A religious excitement attended by "bodily exercises" is to be dreaded. Not that these exercises are proof of the spuriousness of the excitement, but that while they are as little proof of its genuineness, they are so considered by ignorant people, and the Spirit of God is dishonored. Moreover; there is more danger of self deception; that is, more people are in danger of deceiving themselves, when these exercises attend the excitement, because, by the operation of sympathy, they spread more rapidly than the ordinary signs of emotion.* Such narrations as that of Davidson will make every sober Christian pray against these exercises. It will not do, however, because these phenomena can all be accounted for upon natural principles, to say that there is no real presence of the regenerating and sanctifying Spirit in such scenes. They prove nothing either way, save that the nervous system is powerfully affected. The presence of the Spirit can be proved only by effects which are in harmony with His own blessed nature and with His Word. (John 3: 8, Gal. 5: 18-24, Eph. 4: 20 and ff.)—This leads us to the next question about revivals.

2. *What are the evidences that a genuine revival has taken place?* This question may be answered in a general way by reference to such passages as those just cited. But let us take an instance of a revival known to us by God's testimony to have been genuine, and see what the effects were—(Acts 2: 37-47.)

(a.) This revival began with a deep conviction of sin on the part of the professed people of God—the members of the Jewish Church. A so-called revival in which are not awakened the unconverted members of the church, including both the communicating and the non-communicating members, in which there

*As to the nature and varieties of these bodily exercises, see *ad nauseam*, chap. vi. of Davidson's Hist. of Presb. Church of Kentucky, pp. 142 ff. As to the propagation of them by sympathy, see same, pp. 148 ff. See also Alexander's Religious Experience, pp 77 ff.

are no "searchings of heart" and bitter bewailings of unfaithfulness on the part of the true people of God—is hardly worthy of the name. See II Chronicles, chapters 29 to 31, the revival under Hezekiah; especially chapter 30, verses 7-9, 13-19. So, also, chapter 34, the revival under Josiah, especially verses 23-33.

(b.) An increased attention to those duties of which *God* is the direct object, mainly His worship—(Acts 2: 42)—His word more valued, and the fellowship of believers in the ordinances of worship, sacraments and prayers deeper and more pronounced.

(c.) A marked increase of attention to those duties of which *believers* are the direct object, (verses 44-45.) Liberality in giving is a good sign of a genuine revival.*

(d.) An increased attention to those duties of which *the impenitent* are the direct object—(v. 47.)

In short, a revival shows itself to be genuine by its effects upon the *religious*, the *fraternal* and the *missionary* life of the church.† It is deplorable that even in our own branch of the church, the number rather than the quality of those added to its communion should be so much regarded.

3. Another question is, whether *the frequent occurrence of revivals is a test of the faithfulness of a minister of the gospel?* †

Some are called to sow, others to reap (John 4: 35-38); some are eminently qualified to awaken sinners, others to edify saints. The difference between sowing and reaping is strikingly illustrated in the foreign missionary work, which has been hitherto mainly a sowing work. The reaping done by Paul and Barnabas came after centuries of the preaching of Moses in the synagogues (Acts 15: 21). See the Acts of the Apostles, *passim*. The ingathering under the Apostles in Palestine was the reaping of that which had been sown by their Lord, (Comp. Acts 2 with John's Gospel, and Acts 8: 5-8 with John 4: 5-42.) Every

*The statistics of the General Assembly of 1887 show that while there has been an extraordinary addition to the numbers of our church, there has been little increase in the contributions. This fact, if it be a fact, is a very painful one.

† See A. Monod's Sermon, entitled, "La Vocation de l'Eglise."

‡ See Plumer's Past. Theology, chap. 21, pp. 239, 241 ff.

minister is to be faithful in his place, and leave results to God who is sovereign. See Isaiah 49: 5, 53: 1, Rom. 9: 15-16, II Cor. 2: 15-16.

4. *What means are to be used for obtaining a revival and for promoting it?**

(a) The means have been already mentioned in a general way: they are God's Word and the ordinances, mainly of worship, by which the Word may be more readily and impressively brought into contact with the heart and conscience. And here, it is of the very last importance that we should adhere to God's commands and abstain from our own inventions. We should carefully distinguish between means that God, in His sovereignty, may use, and means that He authorizes us to use. The sudden death of some one in the congregation would give great emphasis to the warnings of the minister; but no one would say that it would be right in men to cause a death in such circumstances, in order to make the truth impressive. †

(b) The means ordained of God are adapted to the nature of man as a rational and responsible being. The emotions which we ought to seek to awaken, are the emotions which the truth has a tendency to produce: and we ought to aim at no other. The means are moral, not physical in their nature: they operate

* See Plumer *ut supra* c. 22 pp. 244 ff.

† The plea so often urged that good is done, that souls are converted by the use of such measures, is a very sorry one. The answer is easy. 1. No soul is converted except by the power of God, and in pursuance of His decree of election. No man can convert a soul, whom God does not choose to convert. 2. It is the very plea by which many corruptions were introduced into the church in the third and fourth centuries. Some of the heathen were brought in and converted, but what multitudes were ultimately destroyed! The venerable Dr. John H. Rice, of Virginia, in a letter to Dr. Archibald Alexander, dated March 4th, 1828, says: "He (Mr. Nettleton) affirms that wherever these measures have been tried, they have run down any revival that may have occurred, have divided the Church, and put the judgment and feelings of all that have not been brought in utterly against religion. From the little that I saw, I would say that if good is done by these irregular means, it is done at a frightful expense. *It is like slaying hundreds to save one.*" See Dr. Maxwell's Memoir of Rice, p. 338.

morally, not mechanically. Hence, some kinds of preaching, praying, singing, administration of the sacraments, are better suited to obtain a revival than other kinds. The gifts of ministers vary. Some are better fitted to awaken, others to edify and comfort. Paul and Barnabas were sent out together, no doubt, because their gifts were not the same, and they were intended to complement each other. For the very same reason that God selected men and not angels to be preachers, the men themselves must not be all of the same mould, and the same man must not always be exactly like himself. One of the most significant statements concerning the great preachers above-mentioned, is that in Acts 14: 1, "It came to pass in Iconium that they *so* spake that a great multitude, both of the Jews and also of the Greeks, believed." The result was due, in part, to their manner of speech, the matter being the same gospel which they preached everywhere. The man of doctrine and the man of "consolation" (*παράκλησις*) both surpassed themselves on that occasion.

The odious distinction, however, between ministers indicated by the use of the phrases "revival men," or "revivalists," in application to some of them and not to others, ought never to be made. "If a revival man," says the great preacher whom we have several times quoted, "is one who loves to see hearts broken in view of the cross of Christ and labors to that end, then all converted ministers, not in a back-slidden state, are revival men. If by this distinction it is intended to designate those only who have frequent and precious seasons of refreshing, it is a wrong use of the words; for many whose ministry is exceedingly blessed are never so called. Neither can a desire to witness a day of God's power, nor soundness of evangelical views, nor earnestness in publishing the gospel, nor solid and lasting success in the ministry be pleaded as exclusively belonging to those who regard themselves as the peculiar friends of revivals." So much as to the *manner* of dispensing the word and ordinances.

As to the *matter*—the presentation of certain doctrines of the word is better suited to obtain a revival than that of others. See the Acts of the Apostles. The reading of the genealogies in the first chapters of I Chronicles—Hermann Melville relates—was

the means of awakening a careless sinner on one occasion ; but nobody would say that such a passage is as well suited to alarm and awaken as that in John 3 : 1 ff, or that in Mark 9 : 43-50, and a multitude of others that might be named. The preaching which presents "the three R's," as they were quaintly called by Rowland Hill—Ruin by sin, Redemption by Christ, Regeneration by the Spirit—is the best suited for revival because it is the preaching of the very core and marrow of the Word. (I. Cor. 1 : 17-31 ; 2 : 1-5 ; Matt. 3 : 1-12.) Let us guard against imagining that preaching to believers, dwelling upon their privileges and hopes, their temptations and perils, is not suited for revival work. Dr. Nathan L. Rice, of Kentucky, who was eminently blessed in this kind of work, is reported to have always begun a "protracted meeting" by preaching a series of sermons to believers.

It is impracticable and unnecessary to go into details upon these matters. Within the limits just stated, there is great room for variety in the forms of presenting the truth ; and this variety will be determined by the circumstances of cases and the judgment of the workman who has been taught by the Spirit rightly to divide the word of truth. The Memoirs of Dr. Nettleton contain many specimens of this variety in the mode of presenting truth both in public and in private.*

UNAUTHORIZED MEANS.

These are used in various degrees of offensiveness, often with circumstances of irreverence and indecency. In the time of Finney, the Pelagian revivalist, they were called "new measures,"

*The mention of Dr. Nettleton prompts the writer to add that the name of that great "revivalist" has been egregiously abused to sanction the use of "new measures" or "revival machinery." The truth is, he abhorred these things and wrote against them. Finney, the Pelagian, was the great worker and defender of that machinery in his day, and Nettleton was his antagonist (See Finney's Autobiography, c. 1 e). The writer was informed by a venerable minister who was an attendant upon the ministry of Dr. N., in Prince Edward County, Virginia, in 1828, that Dr. N. would not even hold "inquiry meetings" until the increase of the work made it impracticable any longer to see inquirers privately. (See Dr. John H. Rice's remarks as to Nettleton's opinion, quoted in the note on a preceding page.)

and later they have gone by the appropriate name of "revival-machinery." They embrace all those measures over and above the means which God Himself has appointed which have been invented by "evangelists" or "revival preachers" for the purpose of awakening careless sinners; such as "the anxious seat," the "altar," to which "mourners" are invited in order to be specially prayed for; the reading of letters (which, perhaps, have been procured by solicitation) from young converts or from inquirers; "silent prayer" of the congregation; the calling on certain classes in the congregation to arise and separate themselves from the rest; the roaming over the assembly of certain persons for the purpose of making appeals to individuals and of producing excitement by mere motion; the calling upon certain descriptions of people in the audience to sing certain hymns and the requiring of the rest not to sing; the demand for unusual postures in parts of the worship, as, for example, kneeling in singing, etc., etc.

There is one feature which is common to all "revival machinery;" and this is to lead awakened sinners to *commit themselves* in order to get them over that indecision and fear of man which have kept them back and to render it impossible for them to return with consistency. The measures used for bringing about this commitment are various. Some of them were described in the last paragraph. To these may be added the exacting of a promise "to give themselves to religion at once." These measures, as has been suggested, while they are intended to commit the actors, are intended also to awaken the attention of others, and to serve as means of general impressions.

Now some of the objections to this machinery are the following:

(a.) They lead to a reliance on other means than truth and prayer and on other power than that of God. Sinners are very apt to place dependence on this act of commitment. "I have taken one step, and now I hope God will do something for me" — "is language" which, Dr. Griffin says, "I have heard more than once."*

* See his letter in the appendix to Dr. Sprague's lectures on Revivals. In the same appendix may be found twenty-three letters from

(b) These measures divert the attention of the sinner from the truth of God as impressed upon his own conscience. Dr. Ichabod Spencer remarks in his *Pastor's Sketches* (we quote from memory) that he never knew anybody to be converted by a funeral sermon, and he accounts for it by the fact that those who are really afflicted by the death are too much absorbed in the contemplation of their loss to attend to the truth which is set forth by the preacher. So in this case, the sinner is not allowed to meditate upon the truth he has just heard, but his attention is called away by a proposition to change his seat. So also the congregation is invited to cease meditating upon the truth and to watch the motions of some who are walking up and down the aisles, or to be on the tip-toe of expectation to see who are going to rise and go forward. What has truth to do with these tactics? They are evidently designed to work on the senses, the imagination and the passions; they are merely for effect.*

(c.) Hence, when often repeated they become mere forms, like those of Rome. Rome ascribes a magical or a mechanical effect to her sacramental forms; a like effect is virtually ascribed to this revival machinery. In both cases, the sinner is invited to submit himself to the manipulations of the minister of religion, with the hope of "getting through," and it is no breach of charity to add that in both cases the Christians who are made are man-made and machine-made.

There is another point of resemblance. In the case neither of the priest nor of the "revivalist" is there any necessity for spiritual gifts, for a spiritual frame of mind, or for piety or any—the most eminent and venerable ministers of the time, of different denominations, such as Archibald Alexander, Francis Wayland, Samuel Miller, Edward Payson, Bishop McIlvaine, Ashbel Green, Moses Waddel, Thos. De Witt, et al.—and showing a significant agreement of views as against "the new measures." He would be a bold man who should venture to set up his opinion against such an array. Dr. Sprague's book was published in 1833.

* On the "anxious seat" and the principle of public "commitment" see remarks (Dr. Chas Hodge's?) in *Princeton Theological Essays*, 2d series, pp. 122 ff.—and Dr. Sam'l Miller's letter in the appendix to Sprague on Revivals, pp. 261 ff.

thing indeed but the power of physical endurance—and *brass*. We do not deny that some of these measures have been used by good men and with an earnest desire to do good; but there is nothing in their own nature which forbids their being used with effect by men who have not one spark of genuine piety. Accordingly we find that they have been successfully used by wicked men and hypocrites. The Roman priest performs the ceremonies of the ritual and the business is done. The character of the priest has nothing to do with the efficiency of the ritual. Whether he be a Hophni or a Zadok, makes no difference in the result. The recipient or patient "gets through" alike in either case.

(d.) This suggests another thought, that these measures most naturally affiliate with a Pelagian or semi-Pelagian system of doctrine. The mummeries of Rome have an intimate connection with the semi-Pelagian position of that body. It is not a question of vital importance which of the two was first in the order of time, the abuse in practice or the error in doctrine. If both belong to the same organism, it matters not whether the head or the foot came in first. It is enough for us to know that the head and the foot are members of the same body, and that if the one be admitted the other will be apt to follow in due time. No such ordinance as that which the Papists call baptism could have a prominent place in a body which was not at least semi-Pelagian in doctrine. And so it may be truly said that the machinery in question is thoroughly semi-Pelagian in its affinities. It was introduced in modern times by churches of that doctrinal tendency; it was worked *con amore* by the Pelagianizing party in the Presbyterian Church in the years preceding the schism of 1837, and if not condemned again and put down, it will bring on another semi-Pelagian schism or something worse. It is altogether out of harmony with the doctrine of our church concerning the agency of the Holy Ghost in regeneration. One or the other must, in the long run, be given up.

The connexion here asserted between Pelagianism and the use of revival machinery is fully vindicated by the history of the famous revivalist, Charles G. Finney. In a review of his sermons in the *Princeton Review* for 1835 (republished in the

Princeton Theological Essays, 2d Series, pp. 77 ff) it was shown that he denied the doctrines of total depravity, of regeneration (in the Calvinistic sense), of the direct agency of the Holy Ghost upon the soul, etc.; that he held to the notion of the "self-determining power of the will," and to the related doctrine of sin and holiness as consisting in volitions only, etc., etc. He asserted the perfect, unqualified ability of the sinner to regenerate himself (pp. 103 ff.) The great aim and effort of the preacher is to persuade the sinner to convict himself. Hence the use of extra measures. He says (page 83), "God has found it *necessary to take advantage* of the excitability there is in mankind to produce powerful excitements among them before He *can* lead them to obey." "There is a state of things in which it is *impossible for* God or man to promote religion but by painful excitement."

(e). The use of this machinery brings a multitude of unconverted people into the church who would not otherwise come into it. The appeal is made to mere natural sensibilities and sympathies; people, especially the young, honestly mistake this natural feeling and mere impressions on the imagination for religious conviction or for the sentiments which result from religious convictions, and without time for testing their sentiments and for manifesting their real nature and origin, they are hurried into the church and assume the irrevocable vow. A few months are sufficient to reveal the fact of self-deception to a multitude of these "converts;" but they are in the church; they commit, the greater part of them, no "offence" to warrant their excommunication; and they remain in the church, while they are of the world. Hence another fruitful source of apostasy from the faith. By the terms of the supposition, such church members have no spiritual relish for the distinctive truths of the gospel; in particular, there is nothing in them which says amen to the teachings of God's Word concerning the desperate power and malignity of sin, and concerning the almighty and sovereign power of the Holy Ghost. The real problem of sin has never been anxiously revolved by them, and they are, consequently, unable to appreciate the Bible soteriology, whether

of the Son or of the Spirit. Now, as a spiritual experience of the power and reality of the truth is the only security for its preservation; as it is the presence of the invisible church within the body of the church visible which determines and perpetuates the faith,* it is plain that the church, in which the greater part is unconverted, is in danger of losing its faith. The world in the church!—this is the great peril. This is doing more to help the cause of Rome and of infidelity than all the crafty books that are circulated in their interest. This is the peril against which the church has been warned from the very beginning; and it is a peril into which the use of revival machinery is aiding to plunge us.

(f.) There is an argument *ad hominem*, which may be addressed to Presbyterians in our own churches, and which ought to be conclusive with them against these “measures,” even if they are not convinced that the measures are in themselves wrong, and that is that they are a clear addition to the covenant which has been made with one another by the congregations constituting “the Presbyterian Church in the United States.” This covenant is contained in our standards. We have agreed as to what “the ordinances in a particular church” shall be, (Form of Government, chapter 2, section 4, article 5,) and in the “Directory for Worship” the features of the worship to be observed in all our congregations are described. No congregation has the right to introduce any other form of worship, and at the same time remain a constituent part of that church to which these standards belong. It is not improbable that many machinery-using churches in our communion would be scandalized by the introduction into our non-machinery using churches of a liturgy. But why should they? The covenant is violated, it is true; but the machinery has also broken it. We do not hesitate to say, that if the covenant has to be broken in one way or the other, we should consider the breach by liturgy much the least offensive and dangerous of the two.

* See this point ably illustrated in the discourse delivered by Dr. Latimer, on the occasion of his inauguration as Professor of Church History and Polity in Union Seminary in Virginia.

(g.) This part of the discussion may be appropriately closed by a testimony or two of the General Assembly. There are many testimonies of this sort, as may be seen by consulting Baird's Digest, Book 3, Part 4, which bears the title, "Revivals." We shall content ourselves with a quotation or summary from the pastoral letter of the Assembly of 1832, of which the venerable James Hoge was Moderator :

"1. In a time of the revival of religion let it be remembered, that while all proper means are to be used to deepen and cherish serious impressions and to awaken and alarm the sinfully secure, *an undue excitement should be carefully avoided.* If instead of distinguishing between deep and genuine and salutary convictions of sin, and the mere effusions of animal passions and nervous sensibility, the latter are encouraged and stimulated, as leading to a desirable issue, the most baneful effects are likely to ensue—effects, multiform in appearance and character, but in all, deplorable and pernicious. Therefore, 2. We advise, that with tenderness, but yet with unshaken firmness, all bodily agitations and noisy outcries, especially in worshipping assemblies, be discouraged, and as far as possible prevented. 3. Guard against every species of *indecorum in social worship*, such particularly, as is manifestly apparent when several individuals pray or exhort or converse at the same time. 6. *Let not the settled order of churches be disturbed.* In the absence of pastors or other authorized ministers of the gospel, let the elders or deacons or other Christians of standing and experience, rather than young converts, take the lead in the social exercises of religion. 7. *Listen to no self-sent or irregular preachers*, whatever may be their pretensions to knowledge, piety and zeal. 8. Let no doctrine inconsistent with the Scriptures as explained and summarily taught in *the doctrinal standards of our church* be promulgated and favoured in any of our churches. 9. *Let not apparent converts be hurried into the churches*, and brought to the Lord's table, without a careful examination; nor ordinarily without a suitable period of probation, by which the reality of their religion may be better judged of than it can be by any sudden indications, however plausible. Nothing is more directly calculated to injure the cause

of God and the credit of our holy religion than *urging or permitting individuals to make a public profession of religion*, as soon as they have experienced some serious impressions, and flatter themselves that they have been renewed in the temper of their mind. All experience shows that such persons often and speedily dishonour the profession, and not unfrequently become open apostates, and sometimes avowed infidels. 10. Finally—*let no measures for the promotion of religious revivals be adopted*, which are not sanctioned by some example, or precept, or fair and sober inference, drawn from the word of God. . . . If such a warrant can be fairly made out, let the measure be adopted; but otherwise, let it be promptly abandoned; for it must be remembered that the Bible contains not only a *safe*, but a *complete* rule of duty." The italics in this extract are in the original as printed in the Digest. (Ed. Phila. 1885, pp. 199 ff.)

The opinions of the most eminent ministers of the past generation, as given in the appendix to Sprague's Lectures on Revivals, are in the same line with these testimonies of the Assembly of 1832; but we must content ourselves with a simple reference to that work. Under these testimonies and opinions we shelter ourselves from those, if there be any, of our readers who are disposed to charge us, on the ground of the views we have expressed, with being hostile to revivals and to vital piety. The same charge was brought against our fathers—men with whom we would not venture to compare ourselves for a single moment as to knowledge or piety.

A few words may be added upon the danger to the peace and character of the church from so-called "evangelists." Our history is instructive upon this subject. The schism of 1741 was occasioned, in great part, by the excesses and extravagances of itinerating ministers who, instead of preaching in destitute neighborhoods, invaded the pastoral charges of settled ministers, often without their consent, or with a consent extorted by the clamors of the people. The greatest contempt was shown for these settled ministers, no matter how long or how faithfully they had labored, if they had not been what the evangelists were pleased to consider "successful." They were treated as "blind leaders of

the blind," cold-hearted, unconverted; and their people were not only encouraged but exhorted to forsake their ministrations for those of the warm-hearted, zealous, inspired evangelists. These evangelists were generally good men; among them such men as Whitefield and the Tennents; but this fact made the results all the more deplorable. See Hodge's History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, part II. chaps. 4 and 5.

Another great evil which resulted from the same causes was the lowering or the attempt to lower the standard of the education of the ministry, and the encouragement to the laity to usurp the functions of the ministry. These two things go hand in hand as we see now, in our own times. If preaching is nothing but exhorting sinners to flee from the wrath to come, why may not an uneducated, zealous layman do it as well as a trained and ordained minister? Thus the order of Christ's house was broken down; and but for the faithful testimony and labors of the noble men who were stigmatized as "graceless and unconverted" (see the extraordinary sermon of Gilbert Tennent, in Hodge's Hist. of Presb. Ch. Part II. pp. 152 ff), the Presbyterian Church would have been ruined. Let it be added, with thanksgiving to God, that some of these good but erring men afterwards confessed their error and deplored their uncharitable judgments and speeches.

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*History repeats itself. Carolstadt, the contemporary and friend of Luther, denounced human learning as useless, if not injurious to the student of Scripture; went into the shops of the lowest mechanics and consulted them about the meaning of difficult places in the Bible; insisted that ministers ought not to study, but to support themselves by the labor of their own hands; persuaded the students of the Wittenberg University to abandon their studies and even the boys in the lower schools to throw aside their books and enter immediately upon the business of religious teaching. Carolstadt persevered in his unhappy course for years; and although he afterwards came, in great measure, to his senses, acknowledged his fault and professed to mourn over it, still the cause of truth had been dishonored, and incalculable mischief done, which it was impossible to recall. See the admirable letter of Dr. Samuel Miller in the appendix to Sprague's book before cited, pp. 248 ff. Well might Baxter say—"The work of God is divine; but our mode of dispensing it is human; and there is scarcely anything we have the handling of, but we leave on it the prints of our fingers."