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puted by one who has followed the course of this essay that Irenaeus was an Asiatic Greek by birth, by name, by education, in style, in the absence of Hebrew and Syriac attainments, and in the New Testament he read from his childhood.

ARTICLE V.

STRICTURES ON REVIVALS OF RELIGION.

BY REV. W. H. H. MARSH, PASTOR OF THE CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH,
SALEM, MASS.

ONE of the prominent evangelical agencies of our time for the promotion of vital piety and the salvation of men is best defined by the current phrase which the agency has coined as descriptive of itself, "revival effort." Such effort is now nearly universally accepted as indispensable to the growth of existing churches and the planting of new ones. So general is this recognition that to submit any criticisms on the theory or method of such efforts is to invoke on ourselves the severe censure of those who set themselves up as the special champions and promoters of religious awakenings. To do so often incurs the charge of frigid conservatism, or a want of zeal for the Lord, or a want of interest in the salvation of sinners. If pastors or churches raise any question as to the scripturalness, or even the expediency, of measures employed, they are assumed to have no sympathy with the thing itself. If they institute an earnest, scriptural inquiry into the theory and objects proposed by the special advocates of revivals and revival measures, they are assumed to be influenced more by excessive caution than by love for souls; more by indifference to the end sought than by sincere rev-

him, and that we have no trace of it before Augustine (§ viii), this lessens the improbability of alterations in the *Greek* text of biblical passages made subsequent to Irenaeus and incorporating readings of the Codex Bezae. Even then, the boldness of such interpolations, unless from the hand of Irenaeus himself, is only surpassed by that exhibited in Codex Bezae itself. So if Dodwell be right, our theory is weakened, but not rendered improbable. Cf. Massuet, *Diss.* ii. § 53, Harvey's *Irenaeus*, i. p. clxiv, Sanday, *Gospels* in 2d. Cont. pp. 330, 332.

erence for the biblical and evangelical character of the means employed. It seems never to be surmised by those who assert themselves the special advocates and promoters of revivals, that they are fallible; may possibly have more zeal than knowledge; or, that in the eagerness with which they press their "one idea" they become reckless respecting the means they employ, or virtually adopt the Jesuitical maxim, that "the end sanctifies the means." Evangelists must not be criticized. Measures proposed must be neither questioned nor sifted. We must accept with subservient meekness, and without any doubt, as an ordained agency of God whatever labels itself evangelical effort, and avows as its object the promotion of revivals of religion, however sentimental or sensational it may be. It is necessarily wise, expedient and scriptural, because the end it proposes is in itself good. To examine into its nature or its essential tendencies or probable results is an impertinence; to object is a proof of want of sympathy with the thing itself; and to withhold co-operation is disobedience to the plain indications of Divine Providence.

But notwithstanding all this, there is a conviction, widespread and growing, among our wisest and most devoted pastors and our best churches, some of whom have reached their conclusions by the way of bitter experience in spurious revivals and reckless measures for their promotion, that there is something radically wrong in our theory of revivals and methods of promoting them, or else we should not witness such lamentable results as often follow them. For it is a fact, that with the converts thus added to the church the desire for novelty and excitement is far stronger than the desire for the sincere milk of the word. A church trained to rely on such effort is in a state of chronic dissatisfaction, or of death-like inactivity, until by some sort of revival measure it is again galvanized into spasmodic vivification, while pastors are cheerless and discouraged if they are not having a "revival season"; just as though the whole of religion consisted in feeling very happy; or the noise of

battle and the shout of victory were to be always heard in the church; or the pastor were accomplishing nothing unless he had many inquirers and nightly meetings; as though his office had only one function and object — baptizing men and women, and thus increasing the numerical strength of the church. This state of things does exist. The instances are not exceptional or occasional; they are frequent. They are found in every city, and may be cited in every association. Indeed, it has come to pass that — unless we know the pastor to be judicious, or the church to be under the leadership of wise deacons; unless we know the work has been preceded by patient and well-directed labor; by healthful, formative discipline, and careful development of the energies of the membership; by the faithful preaching of the word and constant waiting upon God for his blessing — the reports of revivals contained in our newspapers are, must be, received at least *cum grano salis*. We do have fearful reactions, unhappy church quarrels, and many things besides, often following those revivals heralded most loudly, which make us blush for the honor of religion and tremble for the ark of God. As Dr. H. C. Fish has well said: “These spurious movements have done more to harm the cause of true revivals. Artifices to catch attention; devices to entrap the careless; representations to create impressions; an exaggerated style of preaching to produce alarm and shake suspicious hopes, and to raise a *furore*, no matter of what kind — these have been sometimes put into requisition, over which truth and reverence and humility must weep, and which have done more to injure revivals than all opposition and unbelief on the part of those who make no profession of piety.”¹ This opinion of Dr. Fish we are glad to quote in confirmation of what we have just asserted, because he has had large personal experience on this subject, and has added to personal experience extensive observation and inquiry. He is an enthusiastic advocate of revivals, and while many may not endorse some measures he lays so great stress upon, yet he concedes what

¹ Handbook of Revivals, p. 14.

many of our pastors and churches, not so enthusiastic as himself, claim to be true.

Now we do not believe we can have revivals without the natural tendencies and results of the presence of the human element in their promotion. In the working out of his purposes of grace God employs human agencies; men, not angels. We must, therefore, expect unwise methods, and the extravagances of well-meant, but uninstructed zeal. We must not be surprised by occasional excesses of passion and consequent absence of calm, deliberate judgment. Man being imperfect, the evidences of imperfection are traceable in all he does. He works in revivals, as in all things else, not as passive, but as active; not as a machine, but as a moral agent; working, it is true, in obedience to impulses awakened by the Divine Spirit, but manifesting themselves none the less through his own powers, and in accordance with the laws of his own mental, moral, and physical constitution and condition. He does not cease to be man, though actively engaged in promoting a work the efficient cause of which is supernatural, and the final cause God's glory in the salvation of men. President Edwards, in writing of Christian experience, makes an observation pertinent also to the agency of Christians in promoting revivals. He says: "It is not to be supposed that Christians ever have any experiences in this world that are wholly pure; entirely spiritual, without any mixture of what is natural and carnal. The beam of light as it comes from the fountain of light upon our hearts is pure, but as it is reflected thence it is mixed; the seed as it is sent from heaven and planted in the heart is pure, but as it springs up out of the heart is impure; yea, there is commonly a much greater mixture than persons for the most part seem to have any imagination of."¹ Hence the reason for closely discriminating between the many things entering into Christian experience; carefully distinguishing the spiritual from the carnal; the love of God from mere passion; the suggestions of selfishness from that disinterested

¹ Works, Vol. iii. p. 382.

benevolence awakened in the soul by the grace of God in Christ, and the wishes of selfishness or of prejudice from the convictions wrought in our moral self-consciousness by the Divine Spirit and the inspired word. We fail to discriminate in these things as we ought, and hence so much of religious experience is superficial, unreliable, and unscriptural. It soon becomes entirely unsatisfactory to the convert, or he accepts a false notion of religion as a life in the soul, and as a service to be cheerfully and obediently rendered to God. Hence religion is misconceived both subjectively and objectively. It is either forgotten or held with the looseness of indefinite conception and shallow conviction, that while the efficient cause of all true piety is divine, that Divine Cause is working out its effects, not independent of, but through and by a human subject. Nor is this all. The effect is to be manifest by the change of character *in* the human subject. And this, too, not in contravention of the laws and functions of man's mental and moral self-consciousness, but in harmony with them, though the secret of that harmony be so profound and so subtle as to elude all our attempts to analyse and define it. And as all the laws and functions belonging to man's self-consciousness are included in the work of the Divine Spirit, so all that belongs to man's present condition, whether essential or incidental, is also recognized, and becomes apparent, in all his attempts to work out what God thus is working, or has wrought, in him. By essential things in man's present condition, we mean the present constitution and arrangement in the midst of which man is placed and of which he is a part. These are not ignored by the Spirit and word of God, but are too often disregarded by men, who vainly attempt impossibilities, and assume the exercise of prerogatives beyond the sphere within which God has limited human judgment, conscience, and activity. By things *incidental* we mean the degree of mental culture, breadth of intellectual grasp, the circumstances of early education, and the formative influence entering into the foundation and structure of character. None of these

things are ignored by the Spirit in quickening the hearts of men and fitting them for eternal glory. They all appear in connection with revivals of religion as well as in the various departments of Christian work. They are apparent in revivals, in the definition of their object, in the method of their promotion, and in their results. We may expect all the evidences of the employment of a human agency, though working out the gracious impulses God may awaken within. We accept, therefore, as unavoidable, though undesirable, the imperfections inseparable from the employment of human agents in promoting revivals of religion.

But here, after all, has been, and is now, the cause of mistake and source of disaster in connection with revivals of religion. We do not discriminate between the Divine and the human. We know this cannot be done with strict accuracy of judgment. Our imperfect knowledge of the method by which the Divine Spirit works, and our fragmentary understanding of the laws of man's mental and moral self-consciousness render infallibility of judgment impossible. We do not, therefore, mean that we can trace the precise boundary between human passion and that love to God and all things pure begotten in us by the Holy Spirit, or infallibly define this as unwarrantable assumption and that as the assurance of faith, or trace with unerring precision the distinction between the sorrow of the world which worketh death, and godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation. These and many other things are distinct from each other in origin, nature, and effects; and yet there is a shading of one into the other, an interblending of outward indications by which we are perplexed when we attempt to analyze and define them. But, granting this, there is much we might know, of which we are wilfully and culpably ignorant. The existing indifference to such questions is not a healthful indication, but is rather an evidence of the inconclusiveness of our theological thinking and the superficiality of our religious experience. If physicians became indifferent to the study of the diagnoses of disease, and gave no thought

to the indications of convalescence, their knowledge of the science of medicine would be of little value, and their practice of it an imposition on the credulity of their patients. The knowledge of symptoms and of the effects of their medicines in changing for the better the condition of the system is essential. What we want, is a scriptural knowledge of the diagnosis of sin, and a better acquaintance with the scriptural evidences of recovery from its power through the grace that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. In times of special religious interest this is all important. It is vital. The inquirer should have correct instruction. He should know himself, and know God through the atonement, life, and teachings of our Redeemer. Personal piety is comprehended in just two things—a true knowledge of ourselves, and a right understanding of the way of salvation from the sin by which we are depraved and condemned. These are the first lessons to be learned by the inquirer, and all his subsequent attainments are but the expansion of these two fundamentals. Yet these are not the things carefully explained or understood. Often during such seasons the utterances to which we listen, whether intercessory, hortatory, or explanatory, are indefinite in statement and positively false in the theory of salvation they define, when they define anything. Starting converts on the narrow way with such confused conceptions and vague impressions of what religion is and what Jesus requires of them, it ought to occasion no surprise that so many cannot endure the heat and burden of the day, and that so many among us have need that some one teach them “the way of the Lord more perfectly.”

The truth in reference to the present aspect of revival efforts is, that we are giving undue prominence to the human side. It is natural this should be so; for the Divine is secret. Its operations are not immediately traceable; we only know them by the effects we witness. Indeed, the Divine side of the work is largely a thing accomplished before we are aware of anything having been done. The Spirit has wrought conviction in the sinner's heart before

we are informed of the fact. His mind is brought into an attitude of inquiry before he makes known his anxiety to us. Men are constrained to seek before they announce themselves seekers; and so it is in every part of a true religious awakening. In the spring-time we see in bud and blossom, in the new leaf, the springing grass, and the fragrant flower the evidence of the revivification of all nature; but that which vivifies we do not see. It is there, nevertheless. To doubt its presence is impossible; but to uncover it, to know its secret, to trace all its subtile and intricate workings is beyond our power. There are points of resemblance between this illustration and all true revivals. The power of which they are the effect we do not see; we only know its presence by its effects, even as the wind bloweth where it listeth, and we hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth. But there is this difference: In revivals we see the effect of Divine power manifested through, by, and upon man, who is thus at once subject, medium, and agent. Hence we must of necessity judge of the work largely by what we know of man, his passions, prejudices, mental idiosyncrasies, his strong emotions, his prior conceptions of religion, and his liability to subject his mental to his emotional nature when his attention is once wholly directed to his soul's present and future welfare. These are facts we must take into consideration, and no prejudice in favor of any theory of revivals or of revival work should make us indifferent to them. It is just here the danger exists, and for this reason the most judicious discrimination is necessary; for the greatest extravagances have been accepted as special operations of the Holy Spirit; excesses have been approved by which the cause of true religion has been disgraced; while the ecstasy produced by mere animal emotion and the illusions of an excited imagination have been accepted as undoubted evidence of regeneration and the special blessing of God. Urging most earnestly to effort, and putting disproportionate stress on the emotional nature, the special advocates of revival effort have given

little attention to the possible perils inseparable from the undue exaltation of human agency in promoting the interests of true religion; while it is not improbable that excesses and abuses arising from this cause have made others so suspicious of the spurious that they are not laboring assiduously, and as God directs, for the promotion of the true. Having made these general observations on revivals, we proceed to point out the fundamental errors respecting them into which we have imperceptibly drifted, and from which our churches have greatly suffered.

The first is Undervaluing all Kinds of Christian Work not immediately related to Revivals of Religion.

Where this is the fact a continuous state of feeling in church and congregation just like that enjoyed in seasons of special interest is demanded. If this be not maintained it is assumed that nothing is being effected. For this reason we have many members in our churches, and in some instances we have entire churches, exhibiting no interest in anything not directly contributing to the development of immediate results. Working only for these, they can be relied on only while such interest continues; when it subsides their zeal effervesces; a few are left to endure the burden, and nothing more is heard of those who a short time before were a consuming fire of zeal, until by some novel arrangement the process of regalanization is again commenced. Consequently we have an element in our churches, and a class among our pastors, to say nothing of evangelists, who make what they call religious awakenings the chief end of their desire, prayer, and labor. They can see nothing important but this, and in their intense and narrow zeal cannot imagine anything is being accomplished if such awakenings are not constantly occurring. They measure the efficiency of churches by this rule, and determine the worth of a pastor by his ability to dexterously manipulate church and congregation so as to maintain what they regard as a good state of things.

Now whether it is possible or not to maintain in a congregation a perpetual revival state is not the question, and

hence it is not necessary here to note the distinctions between such a state and spasmodic zeal. What we insist upon is this, that there is a state of things in some of our churches — there is a policy adopted by some evangelists, and having the sympathy of some of our pastors — precisely like that I have just described. Assuming, as they do, that the promotion of religious awakenings and the conversion of sinners is the end of all Christian work, they soon disparage and afterwards neglect other and relatively as important matters. The weekly expository lecture, prayer and conference meetings as means of mutual edification, the cultivation of Christian forbearance, the duty to abound in love and good works, interest in missions, the raising up and proper training of such a ministry as the times demand, the culture of Christian character, and the edification of the whole body of Christ, these and many other things indispensable to religious progress, to the development of the resources of the church, to the organization of all her forces for work, and the consequent strengthening of her hold on those moral agencies by which society is moulded and controlled, are in part or altogether ignored. Hence we have churches whose reputation for activity in times of special religious interest is widely known, but whose contributions to missions, attendance on prayer-meetings, influence in their localities, constancy in devotion, and faithful co-operation with their pastors and the general benevolent work of their denomination, are all in sad contrast with their periodic zeal for the salvation of men. For the cultivation of these things they have no desire. Time and thought bestowed on them is not judged wisely expended. But what would be thought of a military commander who should say: “To push my foes to the wall and win splendid victories is the great object of my campaign, and therefore I will neglect discipline; I will rely on the enthusiasm and bravery of my men.” He might at first by boldness and dash achieve some brilliant successes, but surely in the end he would be disastrously and ignominiously defeated. His army would be demoralized,

disheartened, and routed. As a commander he would be chagrined, disgraced, and cashiered. Confidence in his ability would be hopelessly lost. So in a church where training is undervalued — the culture of those gifts and graces essential to the perfect symmetry of Christian character neglected. The prosperity of such a church will be precarious ; its zeal like the meteor's flash ; and after exhausting itself by convulsive efforts will be destitute of moral power in society — “twice dead, plucked up by the roots.” The minister accepting this policy, and therefore neglecting to feed and train his people, will certainly fail and be discouraged as a pastor. In that office his record will probably be, startling awakenings under his ministry, followed by sad decline because of his lack of qualification to lay those deep foundations so indispensable to strong Christian character and vigorous Christian labor. Then, despondent in heart and, it may be, soured in spirit toward his brethren, he will resign, to seek another field, there to repeat the same thing. We have churches and ministers of this sort, and both undervalue the importance of those things always requisite to their preparation for work and their success in working. Other causes doubtless have contributed to this state of things, but none so much as the theory that the promotion of revivals is the chief end of all Christian labor.

The second, intimately allied to what has just been advanced, is a Radical Misconception of the Place assigned by Divine Providence to Revivals of Religion in the Extension of Christ's Kingdom.

What we mean is this : they are not regarded as results of careful, well-directed, and often of long-continued labor, but rather of transient endeavor and of periodic enthusiasm. It is supposed a church may be as inactive as an oyster-bed, as lifeless as a graveyard, as cold as an iceberg, and as penurious as a miser ; doing nothing for the cause of Christ for months or for years ; neglecting prayer-meetings, indifferent to discipline, and making no effort for the salvation of men. And yet, such a church, stirred by a sudden im-

pulse born of some exciting event in the religious world, may come together, perhaps invite an evangelist, sing and pray, make vows, assert the best intentions for the future, and pledge themselves to excellent resolutions; have a large number profess conversion — from what or to what nobody knows, and hence the converts are not instructed — and so report a glorious revival of religion. This is not an overdrawn picture. The thing itself is too common, and altogether too sad for caricature. The theory of revivals it assumes is accepted, and the practical phase it presents is often repeated. That under such circumstances there can never be a genuine revival of religion is not asserted. It is possible God may suddenly rouse his people in this way when they have become wholly indifferent. But if so it is exceptional. It is not in harmony with his normal method of working. And when a work having satisfactory evidence of being a true work of grace occurs under such apparent conditions, the roots, from which the work grew, may be deeper and much farther back than we are able to discover. We have no doubt this is so. For if there are not some remote and hidden causes — we mean secondary causes — by which God has been working, it may be for years, there is, judging by God's ordinary method of working through human agency, scarcely a possibility of it being genuine either in character or results.

For it is true that God does work by human agencies. And it is just as evident that in manifesting his gracious purposes by such agencies it is his sovereign pleasure to employ a series of intermediate causes before the final result is apparent. In fact, so much is this an integral part of God's arrangements that we see no final results in this life or in a single generation. All things are working — working together — working together for good. All Christian efforts originating in the impulses of the Holy Spirit and guided by Divine Wisdom, are but part of one all comprehensive plan, the wisdom of which we cannot understand, and of which we see only the partial and relative results. Consequently

the prayer of Habakkuk, "Oh Lord, revive thy work," was in its spirit far more comprehensive than he knew. Like every true petition for the establishment of Christ's kingdom, it embraced everything by which that glorious consummation is to be finally attained. For God has so constituted man that by intellect, conscience, emotion, faith, prayer, and activity he influences those about him and the generations succeeding him. We cannot change this. God employs it. We are privileged to know the evidence to an extent sufficient to satisfy us that the law exists, but we have not sufficient knowledge of the law, and may never have, to trace all its intricate and subtile workings. But if not discernible by us, God, in his all-comprehensive economy of moral and spiritual causes and effects, has given us demonstration of the thing itself, clear and strong enough to constitute a reason why we should employ in faith the means adapted to the end we desire, assuring us that whatsoever we sow the same also shall we reap. And this is true of all genuine revivals. They do not come up in a night like Jonah's gourd. If such movements, like the seed on stony places, spring up quickly because they have no depth of earth, for the same reason their boasted fruits soon wither away. If they are genuine they must grow like the oak, strike their roots deep like the Cedars in Lebanon. They are the harvests gathered after sowing good seed, carefully cultivating the field, and so fostering and maturing the grain. This is, therefore, where the radical, and sometimes fatal, mistake is made in promoting revivals of religion. Past labor is treated as if worthless, or assumed to have been misdirected. And just here is our chief criticism on the course pursued by some evangelists, and by not a few of their enthusiastic devotees. They ignore patient continuance in well doing. Years of faithful service by a judicious and faithful pastor, and instructive biblical preacher, are disparaged, while the "measures" of the evangelists are praised as the magical instrumentalities by which such wonderful effects were wrought. The impression is made, and often the evangelist and his followers are not

anxious to have it corrected, that, if such means had been employed instead of the stereotyped agencies used, many such glorious ingatherings would have been enjoyed. In this way the harmony of churches has been marred, pastors have been unsettled, and thus — because justly suspicious of them — evangelists have become unacceptable to the best class of our pastors and churches.

Now, contrary to this flippant, superficial, and pharisaical disparagement of such labor, we believe that tireless devotion, biblical preaching, judicious pastoral oversight and counsel, are sacred offerings to the cause of God which he will in no wise dishonor or forget. They are incorporated into his all-wise, all-inclusive plan, in harmony with which he is making certain the triumph of the cross, and preparing the way for the enthronement of his Son as the “Prince of the kings of the earth.” If, therefore, such labor be neglected or disparaged we may not reasonably or scripturally hope for his blessing; for we are not complying with the conditions on which he has authorized us to expect it. And this being evident, we cannot contemplate the extent to which such labor, spiritual power, and moral worth is being ignored as a contribution toward the promotion of revivals acceptable to God, without a feeling of sadness for the want of faith in God and appreciation of the devotion of good men it exhibits, and hence a painful suspicion of the genuineness of the work wrought under such circumstances.

For we know God has made no change in the method by which he carries forward his cause through human agency. He works first on man, and then by man on his fellow men. If he move masses — as he does in great awakenings — he does it by means of a man. A Luther, a Bunyan, a Whitefield, a Wesley, a Spurgeon is raised up as his chosen instrument. But these more conspicuous examples are only representative. That is, what by them we see God effecting in the larger sphere he is constantly doing in innumerable smaller ones; and combining these lesser influences he makes all things ready for those greater and more glorious exhibitions of his

grace and mercy. The great outpouring on the day of Pentecost is in its essential features the type and forerunner of all true revivals of religion. Leaving out the miracle-working gift bestowed at that time, a thing not designed to be permanent—and as a fact it ceased with the apostolate—Pentecost is deserving of closer study and imitation than it has yet received as to the place revivals occupy in the divine economy for the establishment of Christ's kingdom. We can only indicate the particular point relating to our position. It is simply this, the minds of the people and of the disciples were prepared for what occurred on the day of Pentecost. We do not mean that they were prepared by the promise assuring them that something remarkable would occur, and for which they were to "tarry at Jerusalem"; but there was also a previous mental, moral, and spiritual preparation for Pentecost of which they may not have been fully conscious as to its intention, but which was, nevertheless, as real in fact and design. For three years Jesus had been preaching and teaching; for almost as long, the seventy and the twelve. Hence the popular mind had been greatly moved; the spirit of inquiry had been aroused; men were musing in their hearts whether Jesus of Nazareth were the Christ or not. There was a combination of labor and of providences that preceded Pentecost and that immediately culminated in Pentecost. In saying this we do not mean that Pentecost and that all revivals are results of natural causes only. What we mean is this: there was a Divine Providence in planning and timing, as well as a divine power in producing the impressions preceding Pentecost; and hence, when—all things being guided by divine wisdom—the fulness of time came, that same gracious and divine power descended more fully on the assembled people, and astounded the multitude by combining in one grand result all that had been done up to that time. In this way the work of God is carried forward, and revivals of religion have a determined place and a necessary relation both to the results and enlargements of all Christian work. Pentecost made it

possible for the disciples to do what could not have been done before Pentecost, and Pentecost was possible because of what had been done before it arrived. If, then, we would have general and glorious revivals, we must honor the place assigned to them among the results of all labor, prayer, and sacrifice. Then the harvest gathered will be abundant and valuable. The effect will be the unfolding of a divine power in and through our churches. Zion will lengthen her cords and strengthen her stakes.

A third error is Indifference to the Scriptural Character of the Means employed for promoting Revivals of Religion, especially as seen in the Tendency to Sensationalism.

Agencies and results in the moral and spiritual realm are even more intimately related than cause and effect in the physical. The relation is more complex, more comprehensive, and exists in obedience to a higher law — a moral law, involving moral consequences abiding and far-reaching. The character of the latter is therefore determined by the nature of the former. If we would see a certain result, we must employ just the agency for the production of that result, and no other. The relation is like that of the tree and the fruit. "A corrupt tree will not bring forth good fruit." We cannot "gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles." A poisoned fountain cannot send forth a healthful stream. A bad life cannot exert a good influence; and, for the same reason, unsound teaching and illegitimate agencies cannot produce perfect character. Hence the agencies by which we build up the character and enlarge the sphere of the influence of our churches cannot be an exception to this principle. If we desire a healthful condition we must use, as far as possible, only the means for the production of such a condition. Experiments are dangerous. Innovations are perilous. Departures from the teachings of Jesus, from the example of the apostles, and the principles underlying the methods of activity in the apostolic churches are liable to be productive of pernicious results, and for this reason should be carefully scrutinized before endorsing them. It is not

affirmed that we should do nothing for which there is neither apostolic precept nor precedent ; as, for example, the apostles made no use of that potent instrumentality, the printing press, as it was not then in existence ; to infer, therefore, that we should not would be to discard an agency raised up by Divine Providence, susceptible of being made most effective in the work Christ has delegated to us. But even the press, essentially considered, is not a departure from the practice of the apostles, for they did use the written page ; we employ the printed ; that is all the difference. The rule is, that we must not deviate from the spirit of their method of working, and must, in all we do, keep within the principles by which they were guided. Hence we do not include the multiplication of meetings, whether during the day or for a succession of evenings ; for all such things, being incidental rather than fundamental, are left to be determined by the existing circumstances, the demands of the hour, and the facilities at our command. Questions, therefore, relative to such things can at best involve only considerations of expediency and practical utility, and may degenerate into mere quibbles dictated by a captious spirit or ignorant zeal. Agencies must be determined by a different principle altogether. It is "the adaptation of means to the end," and in determining this we must keep within the scriptural precept and example. If we set these aside we jeopardize the result we desire. We may produce an effect, but it will not be a revival of God's work ; for that can be secured only in the way God has appointed. Change in this is no more desirable or possible or safe than it would be in the way by which we raise a crop of corn or produce a flower in our garden. If we want the crop of corn or the flower we must seek it in conformity with the laws of nature, and not in disregard of them. It is just so in all true revivals. They must be obtained in the way God appoints. In promoting them the scriptural character of the means employed is vitally important.

To define the scriptural means we do not judge within the object and scope of this paper. It is sufficient for our pur-

pose to say that they must be scriptural. The point we insist upon is, that their scripturalness has not received sufficient attention. For this reason, as already shown, we have become indifferent to all means not focalizing in one point—the production of immediate results of the kind we have come to regard as indispensable to a revival of religion. It is thought the end is so desirable that the nature and appropriateness of the means is wholly a secondary consideration. And it has come to pass that we must accept the vagaries and extravagances in manner and method of all who claim to be specially engaged in labor to promote revivals of religion, or submit to the charge of hostility to religious effort and opposition to the “use of means.” Expediency and zeal are to be accepted as adequate apologies, if not as reasons. All innovations are to be received without questioning, on the presumption that the men introducing them are good men, or they are pleasing and attractive to the young. Results must be accepted as genuine; and if anyone does not join enthusiastically in their glorification, he is assumed to have no heart in the good cause. And what is the consequence of this disregard of scripturalness in the use of means, which, in not a few instances, is little better than reckless enthusiasm, in which all reasons for acting and the selection of methods are drawn from an overwrought imagination or strong feeling, swayed by an unsanctified will, rather than from the study of God’s word and sincere reverence for its teachings? The answer to the question is, “By their fruits ye shall know them.” The type of piety formed by such means is emotional, rather than rational. Its theological basis is the sensibilities and sympathies, rather than the Bible. It has its source in highly wrought emotions, rather than in gracious experiences; is often impracticable in church relations; is self-opinionated, rather than wise unto salvation; presumptuous, rather than humble; and guided more by impetuous self-will than by the spirit of Christ and the word of God. That we should be pained by none of these things if we conformed to the fullest extent possible

to the word of God is not affirmed. Even then we should encounter them, even as the apostles did. But what we do affirm is that if we gave a more earnest study to the scriptural theory and method of religious revivals we should greatly decrease the sum total of those things by which our hearts are saddened and the interest of evangelical Christianity compromised in the opinion of those who are without.

If any one should think we have made our statement too strong, we are nevertheless persuaded that none will dispute the position that *sensationalism* now enters largely into the means employed, and that it was not used by the apostles. That in all places where they preached there was a curious, gaping multitude, doing nothing except hearing or telling some new thing, and that the agitation of the popular mind by the preaching of the apostles furnished a sensational stimulus and gratification to those gossiping loungers and idle talkers was doubtless the fact. But the apostles did not pander to this class. They did not covet their approbation. They made no attempt to produce an excitement by catering to their prurient curiosity. We know that a "time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" will occasion more or less excitement, according to the sentiments, culture, and habits of the society in which it occurs. But that is not the question. What we say the apostles did not do, and we should avoid, is the deliberate creation of excitement in order to turn the thoughts of men to personal religion. Yet often the first thing done is to produce some excitement, and if this is not brought about in some way nothing is effected. Arguments addressed to the understanding and designed to reach the conscience by convincing the judgment, thus rousing men to a sense of sin, of alienation from God, and of personal reconciliation to him through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ are not relied upon. Reason and conscience are not the objects of appeal. The effort is not to awaken man's indurated moral self-consciousness through them. They are not made the means of reaching, awakening, and

renovating the affections and sensibilities. On the contrary, as every man must admit who has carefully and dispassionately studied the methods and measures of some evangelists, the emotions and the imagination have been conspicuously appealed to, while the demonstrations of clear reasoning and the pungency of appeals to the conscience based upon God's word and man's moral constitution have been as conspicuously absent. The theory on which these measures are defended is preposterous. What, excites men before you reason with them? Excite men before you reach their consciences, and in order to reach their consciences? Excite men first, so that you may lead to Christ afterward? Very well, suppose you do. When the exciting conditions are withdrawn, what remains to hold either reason or conscience loyal to Jesus? Nothing. It happens to them, "according to the true proverb, the dog returns to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." Yet churches are looking for excitement as indispensable to the progress of Christ's kingdom. There must be some clap-trap to catch the people. Resort is had to some kind of pious fraud. A sort of side-show must accompany the exhibition of the cross. It may be a tirade against Universalism, or an unprovoked assault on other heretical bodies, whom we should rather try to win than we may convince and save, than repel by insulting allusions or declamatory denunciations; or it may be the dreamy mysticism and lofty pretensions of the higher life, or great personal magnetism, or remarkable ability in working upon and managing the emotions. No cause for surprise, therefore, that we have so much that is both superficial and sentimental in the typical piety of our day, when we make so little account of straightforward earnestness, of clear perception of the truths of the gospel, of deep conviction of man's moral ruin, and that his recovery is possible only through the saving knowledge of Christ. Therefore it behooves us to "inquire for the old paths, and walk in them"; so shall we see a better day in Zion. We shall rejoice in true revivals

that will lift the people out of sin and bring them into joyful communion with God.

In submitting these reflections and criticisms, it is not meant to disparage revival effort. Having the fullest faith in both its necessity and efficacy, to all that is scriptural and in harmony with the fitness of things we say heartily "Amen and amen." The day in which we live calls for the employment of all our forces. The fields are white already to the harvest. Enthusiasm must not, therefore, be chilled by cold, searching criticism; nor honest endeavor intimidated by sarcasm or ridicule. But, notwithstanding, we need to be careful, though not abating earnestness one jot or one tittle; wise, though just as persistent; more biblical, but just as unremitting in our activity. That untempered zeal should lead to extravagances, the results of which we deplore is to be anticipated; that earnestness in so great a work should sometimes degenerate into rashness ought not to surprise us. Rather these possibilities and tendencies should incite us to a healthful caution, so that we may not suffer the consequences of undue zeal, thus preventing rashness and avoiding extravagances. To do this, how imperative that wisdom and grace which cometh from above! May it be sought in all our churches and by all our pastors; and in seeking it may the prayer of all Christians be, "O Lord, so revive thy work that we may see most of thy glory and least of human imperfection."