

ARTICLE II.

THREE ERAS OF REVIVAL IN THE UNITED STATES.

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THE history of our churches, from the early years of the settlement of the country, is illumined by the record of God's gracious dealings in the form of revivals of religion. In the darkest times there were tokens of the Divine presence. Towards the close of the seventeenth century, when the churches began to decline from their primitive purity of doctrine, and during the first quarter of the century succeeding, when the half-way covenant and the errors of the Arminian system had done their worst, and even after the Revolution, when infidelity of the French type was so prevalent, there were churches which enjoyed the special influences of the Holy Spirit. An account of these occasional works of grace will form an interesting chapter in some future history of revivals. They belong to the general life of the church, and illustrate it, showing how God kept alive the flame of piety in the wilderness, and during wars with savage tribes, and while, in opposition to French and British aggressions, our fathers were laying the foundations of a great Protestant and independent empire.

Some of these detached instances of religious awakening may be referred to, as they throw a few rays of light upon that dark period which lasted from about the time when the first generation of settlers had passed away, to the beginning of the "Great Awakening." There were several revivals in Northampton, under the ministry of Stoddard, during this season of decline. The first, according to Trumbull, vol. I. p. 135 *Hist. Conn.*, "was about the year 1679; a second was in 1683. Another was about the year 1696; a fourth, in 1712. In 1718 he had the happy experience of the fifth. These he termed his harvests. He was eminent and renowned, both for his gifts and graces; and his ministry

was, from the beginning, blessed with uncommon success. The revivals were, some of them, much more remarkable than others; but in each of them, and especially in those in 1683, in 1696, and in 1712, the greatest part of the young people in the town appeared chiefly concerned for their salvation." The town of Windham, Conn., was the scene of a remarkable work of grace in 1721. Though the population was not large, yet under the ministrations of Mr. Fitch, who was a "clear and powerful preacher of the doctrines of the reformation," as many as eighty persons were admitted to full communion in the church in the short space of six months. It appears that the first of the revival seasons in Northampton was in 1679. This was the year when the "Reforming Synod" met for the express purpose of discussing these two questions: "What are the provoking evils of New England?" and "What is to be done, that so those evils may be reformed?" This was a very important meeting, and was followed by lasting results. The recommendations of this Synod were carried into effect by the churches, in their own time and way. They held days of fasting and prayer, and had preaching adapted to the wants of the time. "Many thousands of spectators will testify," says Cotton Mather, "that they never saw the special presence of the great God our Saviour more notably discovered, than in the solemnities of these opportunities." And Increase Mather testifies that under some sermons, at this time, hundreds were savingly wrought upon by the Holy Spirit. The work, however, was not very general, and did not extend to the other colonies.

Passing these occasional cases of religious awakening, we call attention to the fact that there have been three marked periods in the history of our churches, both in New England and beyond its borders, which may be properly styled Revival Eras; periods when great numbers were converted in a comparatively short time, and when the cause of Christ rapidly gained great moral and spiritual power. The first period, heralded by the revival in Northampton in 1734, commenced

in the year 1740, and continued for several years. This is generally styled the "Great Awakening of 1740;" by Edwards it was called "The Revival of Religion in New England in 1740." But as it was not confined to the Eastern colonies, the former designation seems most appropriate. The second period began about 1797, and continued, with variable power, during several years into the ~~the~~ nineteenth century. The third period witnessed its greatest triumphs in the years near the close of the first third of the present century; that is, between 1830 and 1835. Each period extended through several years, and it would be difficult to point out the precise time when either of them ceased.

Each of these seasons, however, had marked characteristics; each had its own special type; each was modified by circumstances; each had a doctrinal peculiarity. Though all had the same basis in the Gospel of Christ, and were carried forward by the Holy Spirit, yet a specific difference separated each from the others. The design of this Article is to note these specific differences, and the causes of them.

The first period, the era of Edwards, Whitefield, Bellamy, Parsons, and the Tennents, had for its dogmatic peculiarity the doctrine of Justification by Faith. The doctrine of the "new birth" was made prominent in the preaching of that time. Wherever Whitefield went, he told the "story of the cross," with endless variations. But it is nevertheless true that the great want of the times was met by Edwards when he preached on this subject: "We are justified only by faith in Christ, and not by any manner of virtue or goodness of our own." He and his followers, and in general the ministers who entered zealously into the great work of that day, spent much time in showing the desperate sinfulness of the natural heart; the condemnation of all men, without exception, because they have violated the law of God; the worthlessness of all the righteousness of men; the inadequacy of sacraments, of morality, and of good works, so called, to save the soul from the curse of the law, and to purify it from sin; and the absolute need of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. All the great doctrines of the Gospel were preached,

but the central doctrine of that revival was that of justification by faith in Jesus Christ, as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. The utterance of it fell upon the churches and the public mind almost as a new discovery, and produced astonishing results. There was an awakened interest everywhere. In those places where error had not obtained too firm a hold, the Christian people were revived, and sinners were converted. Errors were renounced, ordinances took their proper place, and the churches were built up in the faith. In other communities, where the ministers and the people had departed from some of the fundamental truths of the Gospel, there was opposition to the revival; and this was, in many cases, manifested in forms of peculiar and unchristian hostility. But the word of God grew mightily and prevailed. It is supposed by a careful historian, Tracy, in his valuable work, the "Great Awakening," that at least fifty thousand persons were converted, in all the colonies, and about thirty thousand in New England alone. A proportional addition to the church, at this time, would amount to nearly seven hundred thousand in the whole country, and to more than three hundred thousand in New England. These facts help us to estimate the relative force of the great reformation with which God is now blessing our land. The highest estimate does not make the number of converts greater than two hundred thousand; that is, in proportion to the whole population, the relative number of converted souls is only about two-sevenths as great as in the "Awakening of 1740." But we should remember that the "great awakening" continued for several years, while the present special religious interest has been enjoyed for a few months only. Perhaps there was no period of four months' duration, in the time of Edwards, when the results were so great and astonishing as during the four months which followed the opening of February, of the year 1858. And, as the present work is still going forward with power, may we not hope that its final results will mark it as the grandest since the planting of Christianity in the midst of pagan darkness and pollution?

Passing now to the second Revival Era, that of 1797, we find that the dogmatic peculiarity of it was the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty. Dr. Griffin was one of the honored leaders in this great work of grace; he was surrounded by such men as Mills, Hallock, Robbins, and Strong; and in the later stages of the work—the supplement, as it may be called, to the revival of 1790, Dr. Nettleton was a conspicuous and successful laborer. Now it is known by those who have only a superficial knowledge of those times, that these men insisted much upon the sovereignty of God. While they did not discard nor overlook the other doctrines of the Bible, they were very earnest and zealous in holding up God as an almighty Sovereign. The preaching of Bellamy, who died in the year 1790, was adapted to make his hearers feel that God was *great*, infinitely great—as the infinite, sovereign disposer of all events, and all men. He was identified with the revival of 1740, and died before that of 1797 commenced; but doubtless his preaching in his later years was adapted to the altered state of the times. It is interesting to read that Dr. Hopkins, who began his ministry in the Great Awakening, brought it to a close during a precious season of religious interest, among his own charge in Newport, while the second revival was in progress. Thus he who had seen in his youth the practical power of the doctrine of justification by faith, realized in extreme old age, that the doctrine of divine sovereignty has the same power to humble the pride of the natural heart. The younger Mills, during the period of conviction, was angry with the sovereignty of God. He could not endure the idea that God should do all things according to his sovereign will. This great truth roused up all the pride and stubbornness of his nature. But when his heart was subdued, he cried out with rapture: “Glorious sovereignty! glorious sovereignty!” His conversion was a type of that of thousands. Ministers dwelt much upon God’s sovereignty; praying Christians talked of divine sovereignty; in their prayers, God was addressed, and worshipped, and loved as a sovereign. The hearts of sinners, as this great truth was perceived, were enraged

against God as a sovereign ; but when they were renewed by the Spirit, and had given up their rebellion, they rejoiced in the sovereignty of God. This was almost universal ; so much so, that it is safe to say that the doctrinal basis of that great revival era, was divine sovereignty.

The history of this period, as compiled by the late Dr. Tyler, proves that one characteristic prevailed nearly all the revivals in the different towns throughout New England, which were then so highly favored. It was remarkable to see how much one revival was like another, and how different from those of the former period. While the great essentials of each were alike — in both cases, the Holy Spirit working with the truth, and turning sinners from the power of Satan unto God — yet each season of revival had a specific difference, which was so marked, that a person who is familiar with our religious history, could tell to which period the revival in any place belonged, even if the account of it made no reference to names, places, and dates. All the revivals of one period had a family likeness ; all the revivals of the other period had also a family likeness. The great saving truth that animated the one, was deliverance from sin and hell, by faith in a sanctified Redeemer ; the great saving truth that animated the other, was the cordial recognition of God as a wise, holy, blessed, but absolute Sovereign.

The third era of revival, which so many still remember with such hallowed interest, had its distinctive type. Its doctrinal basis was Duty ; the duty of immediately giving the heart to God. Whoever can remember the preaching of that time, in those places where revivals prevailed, will testify, that, while all the great truths of the redemptive system were insisted upon, yet peculiar stress was laid upon the duty of submission. " You are a rebel against God by voluntary disobedience ; you are able to abandon your sins ; and it is your solemn, immediate *duty* to throw down your weapons of rebellion, and submit your heart, your will, your whole being, to God." Such was the strain in which impatient men were addressed. We do not mean to say that all preaching was of this kind, for some ministers were opposed

to it; but merely that this was the characteristic of the preaching of that time. The sinner's duty was stated, explained, and enforced with great clearness, pungency, and power. The results were great, and, on the whole, very precious. Churches were quickened, and many were added unto them of such as shall be saved. Throughout New England, the Middle and Western States, and in many portions of the South, the word of God had free course, and was glorified.

Turning our steps backward, we are now to inquire into the cause or causes which gave to each of these seasons of remarkable religious life and power a peculiar type, and to glance at the results of these several eras of revival.

Unquestionably the Holy Spirit was the primary and efficient Agent in all these seasons of awakening, but there were reasons why the Spirit made special use of particular truths or doctrines, at different times. Before Edwards entered upon his ministry, and even before he was born, certain errors and corresponding bad practices, had crept into the churches, and the public mind, to a considerable extent, was laboring under a deluding heresy. Moral persons were allowed to bring forward their children for baptism, provided they had been baptized themselves; and in time, such persons were admitted to the table of the Lord. It was even held by some, that baptism and the Lord's Supper were converting ordinances. Men were taught that the use of the means of grace was virtuous in the sight of God, even in the case of those who were not converted. By degrees, the idea of meriting divine favor, through religious exercises, grew up, and the country was becoming filled with pharisees. Hundreds, not to say thousands, who had never exercised saving faith in Christ, were received into the churches. Many unconverted men entered the ministry, who afterwards, under the scriptural preaching of Edwards, Whitefield, and Gilbert Tennent, renounced their hopes, and began anew, by bewailing their pharisaic hypocrisy, and by an act of personal trust in Christ as their Saviour. As a matter of course then, if there was to be a revival of pure religion, it must

needs be based on that particular truth or doctrine which strikes death to the heart of the errors that prevailed at the time. This doctrine was Justification by Faith in Jesus Christ, who died the just for the unjust. In the presence of this doctrine, the notion of human merit could not stand. Multitudes abandoned their false hopes, and crowds of sinners who had been expecting by a reform in their habits, and a timely use of ordinances, to merit heaven, were driven in despair to the cross of Christ. The Arminianism of the type that existed at that time, received a check; it was expelled from the great majority of the churches, and compelled to confine itself within those narrow limits, where it rotted away into the semi-infidelity of Unitarianism.

This season was attended and followed by incidental evils, but the general results were good. The church of New England, and of the land, was saved from total corruption, if not from extinction; the people were prepared to go through the the excitements that preceded the battle of Bunker Hill, the awful temptations and trials of the War of the Revolution, and the fiery ordeal of French infidelity. Our country was saved by the Reformation of 1740.

We come now to inquire why the Revival of 1797 took on a different type. What was the reason that the Spirit made prominent use of another great truth, at this particular time? The answer is forced upon us by the situation of things. In the first place, the people of the country had become exceedingly proud on account of their great achievements in the Revolutionary War. They had succeeded beyond their own expectations; had accomplished, in fact, what, in the beginning, the boldest of them had scarcely dared to imagine. By their heroism, their wisdom, and their endurance, they had drawn upon themselves the admiration of the civilized world, and were lauded to the skies by all the nations of Europe. They had been able to form a national union, and inaugurate a general government, under the presidency of Gen. Washington, the "foremost man in all the world." His term of office was drawing towards a successful issue, and the country was prosperous beyond

all experience. In a low state of piety, such as always attends and succeeds a time of war, these facts inflamed the pride of the people to a high degree. In addition, peculiar causes combined to introduce into our country, especially among our politicians and leading men, the philosophy of the French infidels. These, whether atheists or deists nominally, were, to all practical purposes, godless men, and their followers in this country, were like them. Strenuous endeavors were made to discredit the Bible, and to overturn Christian institutions. The great effort was to dispel the idea of God as a moral governor. The language of the hearts of thousands, in the army, in public life, and even in college halls, was "let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." "Let us break away from God; he shall not reign over us." In this condition of things, what truth would the Spirit oppose to the prevalent form of ungodliness? What could it be but the doctrine of divine sovereignty? What did the people need so much as to see and feel that there was an infinite God above them, who could and would do all things after the counsel of his own will; who would make the wrath of man praise him, and restrain the remainder of wrath; who would raise up one, and cast down another, at his own pleasure; and who would finally, bring all men to judgment? What other truth could so well meet the moral malady of the times, and abate the bloated pride of a godless generation?

It is a matter of fact that this was the doctrine employed by the Holy Spirit, and that the results were wonderful. Great multitudes were converted in Connecticut, in Massachusetts, and other parts of New England; and the work extended, though with local peculiarities, to the south-western states. There was less fanaticism at this period, than in the great reformation which preceded it, and consequently the visible evils that followed it were less. By the perversion of men one evil result, which will be noticed below, grew out of this revival, but the general effect was such as to demand profound gratitude and praise to God. Infidelity received a blow, at this time, from which it has never recovered in our country. The prevalence of unbelief is a grief

to all thoughtful minds; yet there has been a great improvement in this respect, during the last fifty years. In the beginning of the century, open or secret infidelity was the dry rot or the foul gangrene that corrupted a large proportion of men in public life; while it is a rare thing to find, in these days, an avowed infidel among our leading men. Interpret this fact as we will, it proves a gratifying advance towards the truth, in the public sentiment. In bringing about this change, Dr. Dwight, whose influence on the general mind of our country, has never been fully appreciated by the public, was an honored instrument. The beneficial efforts of this revival era, have reached to our times in another form. Foreign missions, home missions, in the modern sense of the term, and nearly all of the benevolent movements of the day, grew out of this work of the Spirit. The church not only repelled the assaults of infidelity in a triumphant manner, but entered, as never before, since apostolic days, on her aggressive work. Since then, she has been going forth to the spiritual conquest of our country, and of the world.

When we come to examine the peculiarity of the third great era of Revivals in our country, the cause of it will be found, as we apprehend, without seeking very far. The doctrine of divine sovereignty had been abused and perverted. A feeling, if not a conviction, had grown up in many minds, that *nothing* could be done, to promote the cause of Christ and secure the conversion of sinners. In "God's good time," the Holy Spirit would be poured out, and men would renounce their sins. The accounts of the former revivals were often written in such a strain as to convey the idea that a revival was a mysterious movement, beginning without any regard to human instrumentality, remaining a certain time regardless of human exertion, and passing away, when its force was spent, without any regard to human obedience in the use of means. People began to feel that, though bound to live godly lives, they had very little if anything to do for the purpose of obtaining a gracious visitation of the Spirit. The impenitent learned to feel that they should be converted at the appointed time, and that they could only wait for God to renew their hearts, if he should ever see fit

to accomplish so great a work. And thus the idea of personal duty to labor for the conversion of souls became weak in the minds of Christians; thus the sense of duty to give their hearts to God, without the delay of a moment, became almost powerless in the minds of the unconverted. Not that this was universal, by any means, but that this state of mind was common,—so common that there was a lamentable and paralyzing absence of the conviction of personal duty.

The doctrine adapted to meet and remedy this state of things, is contained in these words of holy writ: "My son, give me thy heart;" or these: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart;" or these: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes: cease to do evil; learn to do well;" or these: "Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby you have transgressed: and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Duty to love, serve, and honor God, was the needed truth; and this was the truth which the Spirit employed. Sometimes it was expressed in one form, and sometimes in another. Now the direction was: "Give your heart to Christ;" and now: "Submit yourself to God;" and yet again, it was: "Throw down the weapons of your rebellion; repent of your sins; believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." But whatever the form of words, the great theme was the same, *duty*; personal duty to love and serve God. Other doctrines were not renounced, or omitted, or slighted, in the preaching of that day; but the prominent doctrine was the duty of submission to God. And the inquiry of the converted was: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

Evils attended and followed these revivals. One was a feeling of self-sufficiency on the part of impenitent men. The doctrine of human ability was unduly exalted by some, and they flattered themselves with the false notion that they were safe because they could repent and believe, at any time, without the in-working of the Holy Spirit. There is reason to fear that many have gone to remediless ruin under the

mistaken fancy that they should repent before death, simply because of their natural ability to obey the commands of God. Notwithstanding these evils, the general results of this revival era were favorable. Its influence is felt to this day, in hundreds of churches which were founded or strengthened during its prevalence; and also in all the channels of benevolent activity. Indeed those revivals have been succeeded by these of our own immediate time, which in our opinion are the most free from fanaticism, from one-sidedness, and from liability to reaction, of any in the history of our country; and it may be, of any, in the history of Christianity. The great revival of 1831 made practical Christians, as we might expect from its peculiar doctrinal type; and ever since the question has been asked, with increasing earnestness: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" "What shall I do in regard to intemperance?" for the great temperance reformation was synchronous with the revival. What shall I do in regard to Sabbath desecration? What in regard to profaneness, to licentiousness, to slavery, and to war? What in regard to the poor, to the foreigner, and the unfortunate of every kind? There is a growing determination to apply the gospel to every form of evil, until human society is renovated. Meanwhile the benevolent operations which grew out of the great revival of 1797, have not been neglected. There is, as we might expect, a growing interest in the work of foreign and home missions; in the conversion of Jews, Romanists, and other immigrants, and in the salvation of our native population. And generally, owing to these last two periods of revival, there is now, in spite of the immense immigration of foreign papists, rationalists, and infidels, a larger proportion of the people of our country in connection with evangelical churches, than there was at the beginning of the century. And what is of equal importance, the standard of piety has been considerably elevated during the last sixty years. Some are disposed to doubt this, because they judge of the piety of the past from a few picked specimens, as Baxter, Bunyan, Henry, Edwards, Brainard, and others of the same stamp, whose lives or writings form a part of our cur-

rent religious literature. Such a criterion is fallacious, and leads to an erroneous conclusion. We have not space to give a tithe of the proof that the state of practical religion has been improving, but will, in passing, refer the reader to those general facts, which bear on the point. In the first place, intemperance has been expelled from the church. There are very few members in evangelical churches who use intoxicating liquors as a beverage, or trade in them as an article of merchandise. This is an immense gain of power to the Christian cause, both as it removes a reproach, and as it takes away an impediment to the increase of piety. Again, the cases of discipline for scandalous conduct have greatly diminished, as any one may convince himself by the examination of ancient church records. And thirdly, the benevolence of former times can bear no comparison with that which has been developed since the coming in of the present century. These are pregnant facts to which must be added another, that the church has received a great access of courage. She is no longer on the defensive, but goes forth in the strength of her Leader, the Captain of her Salvation, to combat with every form of error, of vice, and of wrong, whether individual or organic; and is, without fanaticism, or presumption, bending herself to the great work of bringing the whole world into willing allegiance to Jesus Christ.

It did not fall within our original design to speak of the great religious movement of the past year, 1858, which will be memorable in all future time as the fourth revival era of our country. The time has not come for us to understand its whole significance. Being yet in progress, and destined to continue, as we hope, until still greater results are secured, it is too early to philosophize about it as a completed work. But it may not be out of place to offer some suggestions in relation to it, especially since others, both in the pulpit and the press, have made it the topic of remark. The chief value of every great work of the Holy Spirit is to be sought, of course, in the number of souls that have been converted, and in the increase of spiritual force in the

church of Christ. Every work of the kind, however, has its peculiarity. It originates, on the human side, in peculiar circumstances, and has a peculiar office to fulfil. What is there that distinguishes this movement? Some tell us that the design of it is to promote brotherly love within and between the various denominations of Christians; and they point to the numerous union prayer meetings which are held in most of our cities, towns, and villages, for the proof. It is one of the precious results of the revival, that the hearts of Christians are drawn out towards each other, to an uncommon degree; but this spirit of union has been growing for years, and has only gained a fresh development at the present time. Others seem to think that the characteristic feature of the revival is found in the readiness of the lay brethren to labor for its promotion. There has been, undoubtedly, a great gain to the force of the church in this respect. While the ministry have been devoted and efficient, they have been aided and cheered by the unwonted activity and coöperation of the brethren. And yet it may be said truly, that this result had been sought for by the pastors for several years past. One of the most common themes for discussion in ministerial and church conferences has been: How can we bring the latent power in the brotherhood of our churches into more efficient activity? As there was an awakened desire on this subject, when the Holy Spirit came with power, the natural effect was seen in the uncommon facility of private Christians in the work of leading sinners to Christ. According to our view, however, the significance of the revival is not seen in this result, though so beneficial in itself and so full of promise for the future. Others, again, speaking on the side of caution, allege as a peculiar feature of the present work of grace, and as they suppose its characteristic defect, that those who have been the subjects of it have not felt the deep conviction of personal sinfulness which is desirable. While not stigmatizing the work as spurious, they do not cherish very strong confidence that its results will be permanently beneficial; or, at least, they rejoice with trembling. They fear that many of

the supposed converts, even if really born again, will be weak and sickly.

If we would learn the meaning of a great spiritual reformation, if we wish to know what God designs to effect in a revival era, we must first ascertain the state of the church and of the public mind before the commencement of the work, and thus get a correct idea of the needed change. We must see the doctrinal errors, and the practical evils and defects that prevail. By this means we come to a knowledge of what is wanted. Then we must turn our attention to the means actually employed by the Spirit,—the doctrines, the measures, the Providential dispensations—to effect the change. In this way we may learn much of the significance of such a movement as the present, without waiting for the full development of its force in the final results.

What then was the peculiar sin, fault, or evil of the church, at the beginning of the present revival? There is but one answer to be thought of: it was *worldliness*. It was not heresy, nor intemperance, nor licentiousness, nor Sabbath desecration, nor war, nor slavery even, for the churches which have felt the chief power of this work were not cursed with this sin except by implication. The sin of the times was worldliness, which threatened to engulf the church. And this was natural, in fact inevitable, unless God had lifted up a barrier against the flood-tide of wealth. The power of man over nature has increased to an astonishing degree, since the revival of 1797; this increase has been far greater in proportion to the time, since the revival of 1830–35. Between these two periods, steam was applied to navigation, and to some extent to manufactures; but the great capabilities of this agent hardly began to be realized twenty-five years ago. Our ocean steamers, commercial as well as naval, have scarcely ceased to be a novelty. Machinery, in a thousand ingenious forms, has come to the aid of man in producing wealth. Nor is there any assignable limit to the progress of invention and discovery. Chemistry in its application to agriculture, will increase the productiveness of the earth, in the process of time, until swamps

and sandy plains will become as gardens. In the mean time the gold mines of California and Australia have been laid open to the search of that great race which is foremost in commerce, and in manufacturing industry. These mines are a real value, because gold is useful to man. It is money, or a medium of exchange, simply because it is an intrinsic value in a condensed and portable form. The prospect is now, that the influx of gold has but just begun, and that wealth in this form, as well as by the means above specified, will be increased a hundred, yea a thousand, fold. The church had already begun to feel its corrupting power. The Christian world needed a new enforcement of the words of the beloved disciple: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." Fashion, luxury, and pride were fostered by every fruitful season, made more so by scientific cultivation, by every improvement in the arts, by opening new regions to commerce, and by the steady influx of the precious metals from newly discovered mines. What could save the church from corruption and prospective ruin, unless God should interpose in its behalf?

As the danger grew out of increasing wealth, it is easy to see where the corrective must be applied. The church needed to learn how to make a right use of riches. The remedy was not to be found in drying up the sources of wealth, for all things were made for man, and the "meek shall inherit the earth," with all its resources. It was to be applied rather by teaching us the true value of wealth in its useful employment. And the lesson to be learned was twofold. First, the right use of property in our own behalf. We have a right to enough for the supply of our proper wants; to enough, if we can obtain it honestly, to make us comfortable in life. But how shall we use the surplus, if anything remains after meeting our wants and supplying our comforts? How shall we distinguish between that which goes for show, fashion, and luxury, and that which

procures us the elegances of life, the beauties of art, the productions of genius? There is a broad distinction, though the defining line may be faintly traced. One disciple may waste an immense sum on entertainments, equipage, dress, upholstery, luxuries, without any addition to his comfort, but with a positive injury to his family. Another, with half the money, will fill his house with books, statues, pictures, with objects of beauty, and means of instruction, which will be his own solace, while they all contribute, by every-day association, to the education of his children and the comfort of his guests. This is a matter of much interest and importance, and it will assume greater prominence as riches increase, and the facilities for self-indulgence are multiplied. But it is almost insignificant compared with the question: How much shall we devote to benevolent purposes? The wealth in the church is increasing, and now what proportion of it shall be given to the poor, to sustain religious institutions, and to publish the Gospel among all the nations of the earth? If the rapidly accumulating wealth, and the growing power to create wealth, are made subservient to luxury, or pride, or ambition, the piety of the church will suffer a disastrous eclipse, while the nations will be left in their darkness, to go down to death. If this wealth shall be devoted to the cause of Christ, the piety of the church will be greatly augmented by the exercise of self-denial, and the means will be furnished for publishing the Bible in all languages, and supporting missionaries in every land. Thus worldliness will be avoided, and that which threatened the ruin of the church of Christ, will be made the instrument of the spiritual renovation of the world.

Such being the danger of the Christian world, and such the lesson it needed to learn, the question arises: How could the church, including the old members and the new converts, be taught the true value and use of property? In no way but by enforcing the truth or doctrine adapted to meet and remove the prevailing evil; since doctrine is the indispensable instrument in effecting all beneficial changes. The comprehensive truth is conveyed in such passages of inspi-

ration as follow: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." "Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, what shall we drink? or, wherewithal shall we be clothed? But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ; yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." Putting the doctrine into the form of a proposition, it might read thus: Christ as an object of love, and as the portion of the soul, is infinitely better than the world.

Such was the doctrine needed; how should it be preached? For preached it must be; either by the lips of man, or by the voice of divine providence. Reformations are generally secured through the instrumentality of men; but the present one found the ministry unprepared for the crisis, or unable to meet it. We do not mean to intimate that the evangelical clergy were less devoted to their work, or less sound in the faith, than in any former period. We believe, on the contrary, that there never has been a time since apostolic days when the prevailing theology was so scripturally symmetrical, or when there was so much biblical knowledge among church-going people. But this is the point. The time had come when it was necessary for the purity and growth of the church, that it should rise to a higher plane of action in regard to property. This was seen by many in the pulpit, by some who have the control of the religious press; but they could do very little to stay the tide of worldliness, which came in like a flood. And if they made an effort, perhaps the appearance of their own families, would laugh them to scorn. They felt the spirit of worldliness in common with other Christian families. It may be said that a large majority of these Ministerial families had very little wherewith to gratify the worldly spirit; very scanty means

to indulge the pride of life! True enough; but it is equally true, that this spirit was rife in the "shady-side literature" that deluged us a few years since, and gave it at least half its emphasis.

The truth — the needed doctrine, then, must be preached therefore by some other instrumentality. Or if this is going too far, let us say that the doctrine must be enforced by a power greater than that of the pulpit. Then came the tremendous stroke of providence by which thousands who were trusting in uncertain riches, were ruined in their business, and tens of thousands were thrown out of employment. To the great mass the blow came like a thunderbolt from a clear sky. To-day they were prosperous and hopeful; to-morrow they were buried under a heap of ruins, caused by a commercial earthquake. Winter was coming on, and multitudes knew not which way to turn for food, clothing, and shelter. Men were filled with distress, their hearts failing them for fear. They saw the vanity of the world; they learned to feel the need of a better portion. Then the Spirit was poured out from on high, and they began to inquire: "Who will show us any good?" As soon as this inquiry was raised, the ministers of Christ pointed to him as the only refuge, and exhorted men to heed his invitation: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." They listened, and were persuaded; they believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and found that he was the "chiefest among ten thousand," and that he was indeed, "altogether lovely." They found the world would not answer their purpose. It could not save from sin, nor give them rest. They viewed it in contrast with Christ, and deliberately chose him as the object of their supreme love, and the hope of their souls for time and eternity. With all deference to the opinions of others, we humbly suggest that such is the peculiarity of the present revival era. Will the results correspond to this view, and prove its correctness? We devoutly hope that they will. We believe that they will, if the ministry shall be prompt to follow up the work so well begun by the providence and the Spirit of God.

Already the signs are favorable. The past year was a disastrous period, as far as business is concerned ; and we are but just recovering from embarrassment, yet the institutions of religion have been better provided for than usual, and the contributions to benevolent objects, taken as a whole, have suffered scarcely any diminution. The recent converts connected with the churches which sustain the American Board, have undertaken, as a special effort, to pay off its debt of forty thousand dollars. With the returning tide of prosperity, we have a right to expect that the gifts will flow into the treasury of the Lord, beyond all precedent. And if this shall prove to be so ; if the power of covetousness, that subtle, respectable, deceptive sin, has indeed been in a measure broken ; if the church of Christ has thrust out, to any considerable degree, the worldly spirit ; if the recently converted members have, in choosing Christ, given him all they possess, then a new day has dawned upon the world. Mighty obstacles to the spread of the pure gospel will be taken away, and at the same time, the means will be secured to send the heralds of salvation to the ends of the earth.

In our view, therefore, each of these revival eras was designed by the Head of the church, to counteract a great evil and prepare the Christian community for an important work ; and in each case, a particular truth or doctrine was employed in producing the result. In the first, the prevailing evil arose from false notions of the ground of a sinner's justification before God. Good works and ordinances took the place of reliance upon Christ for salvation, and was turning the church into a herd of pharisees. The doctrine used to purify and strengthen the church, was Justification by faith in Jesus Christ. It was mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds of Satan, and it enabled the church to live through the terrible trials of the Revolution. The design of the second revival, that of 1797, was to enthrone Jehovah in the minds and hearts of a godless generation ; and the truth employed was the Sovereignty of God. Then the desire to establish the kingdom of Christ in all lands received a new impulse from the Spirit, and the

Missionary Enterprise began to be prosecuted with vigor, while kindred works of benevolence were set in motion. A kind of sanctified fatalism which had stealthily crept into the churches caused the demand for the great revival of 1831, and the Spirit removed the prevalent evil by enforcing the doctrine of personal duty to love the Lord our God with all the heart, and our neighbors as ourselves. As a natural consequence, the church has ever since been searching out practical evils, for the purpose of removing them. And now the great and alarming sin of worldliness has met with a terrible rebuke from the hand of God. Christians, old and young, have been called upon with unwonted emphasis, to consecrate themselves and their possessions, to the Redeemer of the World.

If the above views are correct, the lessons suggested by them are numerous, and of great practical importance. They are, however, too obvious, to require special remark, and it would be a sorry reward for the patience of any who have read thus far, to speak of them in detail. We feel constrained, nevertheless, to refer to one or two points, which are sometimes overlooked.

One of the lessons to be derived from this review of revival history, if we read it aright, is this: We should not condemn or undervalue one or another type or style of revival, because it does not square with our preconceived notions, or coincide exactly with our own experience. It is well to remember that though "there are diversities of operations," yet "it is the same God that worketh all in all." A minister of much experience once stated that the first religious awakening in his parish, after his settlement, was a "divine sovereignty revival." Each subject of the work had a contest more or less prolonged, with God. After conversion, the sovereignty of God was a precious fact. After a few years the parish enjoyed another season of refreshing, and the minister was led to preach much of Christ, and of the way of salvation. The sovereignty of God was scarcely referred to in the progress of the work. Many were led to

the Saviour, though the persons who were converted in the former period, could scarcely believe in the piety of the new converts, at first, because they had not quarrelled with the sovereignty of God. And yet, he remarked that these Christians wore as well as the former, and exhibited a rather lovelier type of piety.

The other lesson respects the relation truth holds to the increase and sanctification of the church. All the facts that have been presented, concur in proving that doctrinal truth is essential to spiritual life and growth. The Spirit works effectually by the use of truth, which is the sword of the Spirit. This point is so clearly illustrated by a passage in the life of Parsons of Lyme, Conn. (afterwards of Newburyport), that a brief recital of the facts will be pertinent. He was settled in 1731, at which time his theology partook largely of the Arminianism of the day. During the following year there was "a great effusion of the Holy Spirit upon the people. There appeared to be an uncommon attention to the preaching of the Word, and a disposition to hearken to advice; and a remarkable concern about salvation." Old and young inquired: "What must I do to be saved?" The young people turned "their meetings for vain mirth into meetings for prayer, conference, and reading books of piety." The result was, that, "in less than ten months, fifty-two persons were added to the church." Very few however continued to give evidence of piety. Speaking of them, some years later, he says: "I have no special reasons to make me think that many were savingly converted to God, in that season of concern." Somewhere about the year 1734, he renounced Arminian principles, and in his own words, turned "quite about in some of the most important doctrines of the Christian religion." This change in his views led to important results. At first, he aroused the opposition of many by saying that he could not consider all who joined the church to be sure converts, and that he feared "few had really been converted during his ministry." He was now prepared to welcome the news that came from Northampton, Hartford, and other places, of a wonderful

work of the Spirit. In 1741, Gilbert Tennent passed through the country on his way from Boston to the South, preaching as he had opportunity. Good effects followed his preaching in Lyme. Parsons had already prepared the way for a great work, and he continued to labor with great zeal and energy. He was now a decided Calvinist, and his preaching was after the manner of Edwards. A great revival followed, the account of which is one of the most interesting passages in our religious history. We have only room for the results. The larger portion of the converts were young; though three or four were upwards of fifty, two near seventy, and one ninety-three years of age. Reviewing the work, he says: "I have reason to hope, about one hundred and eighty souls belonging to this congregation, have met with a saving change, since the beginning of the late glorious effusion of the Holy Spirit among us, besides the frequent and more than common quickenings and refreshings of others, that were hopefully in Christ years before." One hundred and fifty members were added in nine months, ending February 4, 1742. Some of the converts were members of the church who had been received in the former revival. The great mass of these new converts remained faithful unto the end. What then made the difference between these two seasons of religious awakening? Why did most of the conversions in the former prove spurious, and why did most of the converts in the latter prove to be sound? Is not the cause of these different results obvious enough? Was not the truth present in one case, while it was obscured, or presented only in part, and with a mixture of error, in the other? In short, the *influence* of the Spirit must be attended by the *word* of the Spirit, in effecting the *work* of the Spirit. Now, as well as in apostolic days, the truth is just as essential in the regeneration of the soul as in its sanctification. Our Saviour prayed in these words: "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth;" and his apostle wrote: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures."