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REVIVALS
AND REVIVAL WORK.

BY

REV. W. T. HOGG.

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

REVIVALS

AND

REVIVAL WORK.

REV. W. T. HOGG.

“Wilt thou not revive us again that thy people may rejoice in thee?”

Psalm lxxxv. 6.

BUFFALO, N. Y.:
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January, 1890.

TO ALL THOSE
who lament the generally
prevailing declension
of spirituality throughout the land,
and who, in their deep
heart-yearnings for a returning
manifestation of
pentecostal life and power
in the visible Church of Christ,
are crying out,
like Israel's prophet of old,
"O LORD, REVIVE THY WORK,"
this little volume is affectionately
Inscribed.

PREFACE.

The subject matter of this little volume was prepared originally as a new chapter for the author's work on Homiletics and Pastoral Theology, and, as here produced, was printed from plates made for that work. Owing to this fact, the form of its present appearance is different from what it otherwise would have been, and the foot notes, some of which refer to the preceding chapters of the larger work, necessarily appear in this volume. Of course, an exhaustive treatment of so important and broad a subject as that which forms our title would be impossible within the limits of so small a volume as this. Trusting, however, that, with all its imperfections, it will be found to contain some inspiring thoughts for devout readers, and some valuable hints and suggestions to those who aspire to be useful in winning souls, this unpretentious contribution to the literature of revivals is now commended to the Christian public by

THE AUTHOR.

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CHAPTER I.

THE LAW OF RELIGIOUS PROGRESS.

Revivals of religion are by no means of modern origin. Their history is coeval with that of revealed religion itself. They are clearly recognized and approved in the sacred Scriptures. They breathe in the prayers of ancient Israel, as when the Psalmist exclaims, "Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?" or, as in Habakkuk's ardent cry, "O Lord, revive thy work." They murmur in the cheering and assuring strains of prophecy, as when Isaiah sings: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose," etc.;* or, as when Joel predicts, eight hundred years in advance, the glorious scenes of Pentecost.† They form to a great extent the burden of Scripture promises: as when Jehovah says, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses;"‡ or, as in Ezekiel's words, "Thus saith the Lord God; I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock."§

* Chapter xxxv. † Joel ii. 28-32. ‡ Isa. xliv. 3, 4. § Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

The progress of religion in all ages has been due in large measure to those great awakenings, or seasons of extraordinary religious interest called revivals. Every great epoch of religious history and of spiritual life has been ushered in by such an awakening. Evidence of this abounds alike in sacred and in secular history. The Scriptures furnish numerous and striking instances of revival manifestation and reformation. We need only to call to mind the days of Moses and Samuel, of David and Solomon, of Asa and Jehoshaphat, of Hezekiah and Josiah, of Ezra and of John the Baptist, in order to be reminded of the fundamental relation of revivals to religious progress under the Old Testament economy. And we need only to refer to Pentecost to be reminded that Christianity itself was born of a great religious awakening, in which thousands were converted in a day. The apostolic age witnessed a perpetuation of the Pentecost revival; and the radiation of its influence into all the populous regions of the Roman world. The rushing fires of Pentecost caught in Samaria, and, upon the dispersion of the disciples occasioned by the persecution that arose about Stephen, the revival flame broke out in the remoter parts of Judea, and rapidly spread abroad until it had extended as far as the territories of Greece. In fact the whole progress of religion, so far as it is recorded in the Bible, seems to have been due to the influence of revivals.

Nor has the case been otherwise in the later stages of the church's history. She has always progressed by revival steps, or failed to progress at all. "Take away that part of her history which appertains to revivals, and you have about annihilated her history." That

period of church history which was most barren of spiritual progress, and most prolific in religious error and in the growth of ecclesiastical despotism, was the period known as the Dark Ages,—a period in which revivals were comparatively unknown. The Reformation which awoke all Europe from the night-mare of the ages was born of a religious revival; and the pure faith of the gospel, which was revived under Luther, has been kept alive and propagated by the same law. The flame of Reformation fire “caught in France, Denmark, Holland, Switzerland, the Low Countries, the mountains of Scotland, the north of Ireland, and in Britain, by the revival law. And such has continued to be the fact in these countries ever since. At an early day, in this country under the ministrations of Whitefield, Coke, and Asbury, and their coadjutors; also, Brainerd, the Edwardses, Davies, and the Tennents, the church was saved from all the icy horrors of formalism by means of revivals. And but for the revivals that have characterized the first half of the present century, where had been the evangelism of America?”*

The fact of the matter is, revivals are necessary to religious growth and progress. This is the law of religious life alike in individual experience and in the history of the church. Without revivals religion would soon petrify into mere forms; the church would become an ice palace; evangelism and missionary zeal would cease; and Protestantism, instead of being the embodiment and conservator of vital godliness and spiritual liberty, would soon become as fossilized and unprogressive as Romanism itself. Despoil the church of the trophies

*Helps to The Promotion of Revivals. pp. 212, 213.

she has won through revival effort within a single generation past, and she would have but little left. Cause her to cease from all revival effort for a generation more, and that little would entirely disappear. Only by the law of revivals is her growth and progress possible. When she experiences these gracious visitations no more, Ichabod will be written on her wa^l's, and the glory will have departed from her.

CHAPTER II.

THE ANALOGY OF NATURE.

Revivals of religion are in perfect accord with the analogy of nature. The world in which we live is a world of revivals. Throughout the realms of nature, life in all its forms is governed by the revival law. Every recurring springtime is a general revival in nature—the bringing forth of new life where wintry death has reigned. Barren branches put forth their foliage and blossoms, as indications that a new life has touched and filled them. The germination and growth of every seed is a revival in nature. “That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die.” It dies that it may live a new life. Alternations of growth and decline may be observed everywhere. Nature is progressive, but revival is nature’s law of progress, as it is also the law of progress in religious life.

This is the general law alike in the realms of physical, intellectual and spiritual life. What is true of individuals, in this respect, is true also in the experience of the body of men—of communities, churches and nations. However any individual may keep “the even tenor of his way”, he experiences at times a particular impulse or quickening, which gives him a forward start, and awakens him to the consciousness of

a new stimulus, a new energy, and new possibilities in life. So with communities of men; there come seasons of awakening, in which the ordinary routine and quiet of life are interrupted, the public mind is aroused to a deeper sense of the meaning of human life and destiny, and the action of mind on mind is intensified in a high degree. A revival of religion is such an interruption of the highest order. It is extraordinary, but not abnormal in its character. It is not a derangement of the divine order, but rather a fulfilment of it. It is not at variance with either the analogy of nature, or the conception and constitution of the Christian church, but in fullest accord with both.

It is according to the very nature of things, therefore, that some such phenomena as revivals of religion should always be looked for in the church, if the church be not unnaturally taught respecting this matter. And it is a matter to be profoundly regretted, that, under the pretense of doing honor to religion, men have so often and sadly divorced it from principles of sound philosophy. There is in many quarters a conservatism respecting the matter of special revival seasons and efforts that seems better content to witness no accessions to the church, no spiritual growth, no aggressive efforts at evangelization, no excitement of religious fervor and zeal than that these things should be realized through the employment of those extraordinary and somewhat irregular efforts which involve a temporary interruption of the ordinary routine of ecclesiastical procedure. All this is through fear of undue excitement and unfavorable reaction.

That abuses and extravagances frequently accompany these seasons of religious excitement is admitted;

and that the effects of that religious ultraism which is always a possible accompaniment of thorough religious awakenings are very difficult to be counteracted is also readily allowed. But shall we prefer formalism, stagnation, and death, because life carries with it the possibility and often the actual manifestation of irregularity and extravagance? By no means. "Better a living dog than a dead lion." Rather should we say as John Wesley once did concerning certain extravagances accompanying some of the revivals in his day: "Lord, if thou canst work the same works without the defects, do so; but, if not, then, Lord, *work the same work.*"

It is often said by those who look with more or less disapprobation upon special revival work, that "the church ought always to be in a state of revival." Such a statement may sound well, but, when urged by way of objection to special revival seasons, it is wanting in philosophical soundness and force. Special religious excitements are not only in perfect harmony with the established order of things in the natural world, but also with the true philosophy of human nature. Man's spiritual emotions, like every other class of emotions, are controlled by laws similar to those which control the winds and waves. They rise to a high pitch and then recede to gather strength and come again with greater energy. As a matter of fact it is not the law of human nature to be equally excited upon the same subject at all times, no matter how momentous that subject may be. Nor is it the law of human nature to be moved with the same ease and to the same degree at all times, even by the same subject, and with all things equal as to the mode of its presentation. In fact, an equal degree of susceptibility to excitement at

all times, and a ceaseless and unvarying interest upon the same subject would, in the very nature of things, render all revivals forever impossible. The life of the individual, the community, the church, would present nothing but the manifestation of ever unbroken monotony. Surely this would be contrary to nature, which, though governed by rigidly uniform laws, nevertheless displays infinite variety and most marked contrasts in the fulfilment of the same offices. The summers differ in temperature and length. The rain-fall is much greater in one season than it is in another. Winters are not all equally long and cold. Winds do not always blow from the same direction nor with the same velocity. Not all cloudless summer nights distil the same amount of dew. In fact, there is no monotony in nature. And now to ask why the church is not always in a state of revival, is as absurd as to ask why all summers are not of equal temperature and length, all winters of equal severity, and all rains and drouths of equal continuance. Revival is the law of progress alike in nature and in grace.

CHAPTER III.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES RESPECTING RELIGIOUS EXCITEMENTS.

It has been very correctly said that, "Ministerial wisdom may generally be estimated by one's principles and practice concerning excitements on the subject of religion. From want of will or capacity, some never distinguish between those which are genuine and those which are spurious. They have witnessed some excitements in which enthusiasm was the dominant quality; and so they condemn all earnest and general attention to religion. This is unphilosophical and unscriptural. Others suppose all great engagedness in religion to be commendable, even if men are serving God with wild and violent passions." This extreme may be less common, but it is by no means less dangerous, than the other. The most careful discrimination and the most judicious management are necessary concerning these matters.

As an aid to determining the right course of action concerning a subject of so great importance and difficulty, the following observations, borrowed in part from Dr. Plumer's "Helps and Hints to Pastoral Theology," may be of considerable value:

(1) The human mind is so constituted that it must be excited in order to act. In fact, excitement is nothing more nor less than that state of mental activity which is produced by the operation of certain motives upon the mind.

(2) Although man is an active being, yet his action is produced by his volitions, and his volitions depend upon his affections—desires or aversions—and these affections are nothing but excited feelings.

(3) The energy of one's actions is always in proportion to the strength or intensity of the feelings excited.

(4) All true religion has its seat in the affections, or, which is substantially the same thing, in excited feelings. What else are the fear of God, love to God and man, peace in believing, and joy in the Holy Ghost, but affections of the mind which are excited by corresponding motives?

(5) *Purely* religious affections can never be too greatly excited. In this matter capacity is the only limit of duty.

(6) Such is the relation between soul and body and the reciprocal influence of each upon the other, that all excitement of the mind produces corresponding effects upon the body. Sorrow wastes the physical vigor. Fear blanches the countenance. Anger quickens the pulse and flushes the face. Joy transfigures the countenance into radiance, and sends a health-giving glow through the whole physical frame. Religious, as well as natural emotion, produces sensible and visible effects upon the body. Moses was so excited at the manifestations of God's holiness and majesty on Mt.

Sinai, that he said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." * David, in giving expression to religious joy, "danced before the Lord with all his might." † Jeremiah became "like a drunken man," ‡ in the presence of Jehovah. Habakkuk's "lips quivered; rottenness entered into his bones, and he trembled in himself." § Paul, in his third-heaven rapture, became unconscious of his bodily conditions and surroundings. || And when John the Revelator, saw the glorified Son of Man, he describes the effect it produced upon him, by saying, "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead." ** Nor is there any reason to suppose that these bodily agitations were at all improper or injurious. They were the natural effects of highly excited religious emotions. Similar effects may be produced by similar causes in any age and in any country. Nor should we seek to avoid in ourselves or oppose in others those physical effects which are produced by purely religious emotions.

(7) Certain dangers are to be carefully guarded against, however, in connection with those physical manifestations which purely religious excitement may naturally and legitimately produce. The first of these dangers is that of *forgetting that precisely similar effects may be produced by causes which are very remote from religious excitement*; and that, therefore, these bodily effects are of themselves no evidence that a so-called religious excitement is a genuine work of God. The second danger is *that of substituting these physical effects for genuine piety*. Such phenomena are by no means essential marks nor infallible tokens of spirituality. They can never be

* Heb. xii. 21. † See 2. Sam. vi. 14-22. ‡ Jer. lxxiii. 9. § Hab. iii. 16. || 2. Cor. xii. 2. ** Rev. i. 17.

substituted for integrity of heart and righteousness of life. A third danger in connection with these bodily agitations is, *that they are liable to become epidemic*; and when they do they are generally regarded as supernatural visitations, thereby becoming a fruitful source of fanaticism in spirit and in practice. In view of these things it is certainly not wise to encourage such manifestations by placing any kind of premium upon them. Nor should they ordinarily be discouraged and resisted. If, however, they are in any case put in competition with true spirituality, those having the oversight of the Lord's work should, with mildness and wisdom, but with courage and firmness, restrain them, and direct the erring ones into a more excellent way.

(8) From the foregoing considerations we may reasonably conclude that ministers of the gospel are not justly censurable as enthusiasts because these bodily effects occur under their labors, provided they preach only reasonable and evangelical truth, and maintain such a spirit and decorum as become the gospel of Christ. Such effects occurred under the ministry of Paul and Silas, Wesley and Whitefield, Edwards and Finney; and, in fact, they are very likely to appear under the earnest and faithful preaching of Scriptural truth by any minister, in any age, and in any country.

(9) Notwithstanding all that has been said in favor of those religious excitements which are likely in a greater or less degree to produce various physical manifestations, let it ever be remembered that *nothing is to be more dreaded than a spirit of wild fanaticism*. It is sometimes claimed that formalism is a greater evil; but such is not the case. It is easier to revive a whole church of formalists, than to control one genuine

fanatic. Thoughtless persons sometimes assert that "wild-fire is better than no fire." The statement is utterly foolish. As well might we contend that a house on fire is better than no fire in the house. Who can fail to see the absurdity of such a statement? Where there is no fire a fire may be kindled that will be productive of much good and no harm; but where there is wild-fire or fanaticism it will destroy or seriously impair every prospect of good, and produce widespread confusion and disaster.

(10) The minister who would maintain the honor of Jehovah and the purity of religion, must learn to discriminate between genuine religious emotion and popular delusion; between the saving effects of purely religious excitement and the workings of a distempered imagination. The freedom of the Spirit should always be encouraged, but the vagaries and fanatical ravings of shallow or distempered minds should be as firmly resisted.

CHAPTER IV.

FALSE RELIGIOUS EXCITEMENTS.

It has already been stated that purely religious emotions cannot be too greatly excited. In fact, every motive that can be drawn from heaven, earth, and hell should be urged in order to the excitement of such emotions in the minds of men. Such excitement is absolutely indispensable to a revival of God's work in any church or community. And, if the emotions excited are *purely* religious, no serious consequences need be apprehended, no matter how intense the excitement may become. But excitements which are not purely religious are possible and somewhat frequent accompaniments of revival efforts; and it is from these spurious excitements that the most serious consequences are to be feared, if they are allowed to run their full course. Hence every pastor should be able to discriminate between a genuinely *religious* awakening and those *false* excitements which often pass for revivals of religion, but which, when their course is run, are found to have demoralized the religious condition of the church rather than to have improved it. It may be proper, therefore, before proceeding further to note a few of the characteristics which distinguish false religious excitements:

1. One of the invariable marks of a spurious religious excitement is *its irresistible character*. Such excitements, when once under way, generally become entirely unmanageable. There is an element of obstinacy in those who are their principal subjects and abettors that challenges all authority, and resists every effort at persuasion. They misinterpret their own self-will as a divine impulse which it is dangerous to resist. To plead for the genuineness of such an excitement because of its intense and irresistible character is most unsound reasoning. The Jewish Sanhedrin was intensely excited when, as a religious measure, it condemned the Son of God as a malefactor, and procured the sentence of his crucifixion. And Judas Iscariot was excited when he threw down the money received for betraying his master, and confessed that he had betrayed innocent blood. But he went away and hanged himself. So the intensity of an excitement is no proof of its genuineness, and may be the very reverse of this.

2. Excitements which have to do principally or exclusively with *moving the animal sympathies* are spurious, in so far as they partake of this character. In many so-called revivals the appeals are almost exclusively made to the sympathies of the hearers rather than to their hearts and consciences. Nervous sensibility, pouring itself out in floods of tears, paroxysms of anguish, and mingled groanings, shoutings, and bodily agitations, has often been mistaken for conviction, or conversion, or both. Yet all these things may occur in one who has no clear, abiding and intelligent conviction of sin whatever, and much less any of the marks of a true conversion. These phenomena may,

and doubtless often do, occur in those who are genuinely converted; but the proof of their awakening and conversion will be in other things rather than in these sympathetic accompaniments. A judicious pastor, who is acquainted with the history of such movements, and with the laws of the human mind, will ever guard against unduly working upon the mere sympathies and passions of his hearers, knowing that no permanent impressions for good can be produced thereby, and that the most serious consequences are liable to ensue from such a course, both to individuals and to the church of God.

3. As a counterfeit is always made to resemble the genuine coin as nearly as possible, so the subjects of false religious excitements generally profess to have a *high degree of spiritual enjoyment*. The stony-ground hearers received the word of the kingdom with joy. But they had no root, no stability of character, in themselves. Herod heard John gladly, and did many things that were required; and yet he caused the beheading of John, at last, because of the faithfulness of his ministry. The devil knows how to please as well as to disgust people in matters of religion. And surely nothing is better calculated to gratify the carnal mind than a strong delusion that leads one to regard himself as a Christian, while his lusts are undisturbed, and carnality is as surely entrenched and thoroughly dominant in his heart as ever. "There is an indefinable sorcery in fanaticism." An inspired apostle has assured us that even "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." It is no strange thing, therefore, that even very bad men should profess to have abundant joy.

4. Those religious excitements are to be regarded with suspicion which *influence their subjects less in*

their private relations than they do in the social and public gatherings in the church. "When any man or number of men can pray fervently and very earnestly in a social meeting, yet when alone have few few words or little earnestness and less fervor, they may know that their hearts have deceived them. A great prophet teaches that when a revival should occur under the reign of Messias, it should drive men and women to their closets, to mourn apart." *—Zech. xii. 10–14.

5. Finally, all religious excitements which make men careless or superficial in the matter of self-examination; vain, conceited, boastful, or rude in spirit and behavior; desirous of opposition and disappointed if it is not provoked; reckless, extravagant and needlessly offensive in their methods of presenting the truth; all such excitements are spurious manifestations, and unworthy of being called revivals. They are productive of more harm than good. And probably nothing has done more to bring genuine revival work into reproach and disfavor with sensible people than these spurious imitations.

The remedy for such errors and follies, however, is not to be found in cold and heartless indifference, but rather in deep spirituality, and in wise, earnest, aggressive and faithful engagement in the promotion of true revivals.

*Dr. W. S. Plumer.

CHAPTER V.

THE NATURE OF A TRUE REVIVAL.

A genuine revival of religion is never the result of *accident*. Revivals never happen. They are governed by no arbitrary law. As well might one expect to get rich by dreaming or to master the arts and sciences without thought or study, as to expect a revival of religion to occur without appropriate efforts to secure it. There are certain laws governing this whole matter, in the practical ignoring of which a revival is no more possible than is a harvest without plowing and seed-sowing, and in the proper observance of which wise and faithful efforts can seldom utterly fail of success.

Nor is a revival of religion a *miracle*, as that word is generally understood. There is, indeed, a supernatural and divine side to every true revival; but the supernatural and divine power is realized only in connection with human agency and the employment of natural means. It is in this much as it is in agriculture. A higher law, a powerful spiritual agency, operates in connection with the natural means and human efforts

employed for the production of a harvest. Neither agency, however, will produce the desired result alone. President Finney says, "The connection between the right use of means for a revival and a revival is as philosophically sure, as between the right use of means to raise grain and a crop of grain. * * * *

* * * * I believe there are fewer cases of failure in the moral than in the natural world."

A true revival may be defined as *a religious awakening among the people, produced by the Spirit of God, through the agency of the church co-operating in the use of appropriate means, and which results in the spiritual quickening of believers and in the conversion of sinners.*

The word revival implies its starting point. It intimates the existence of some life, and a possibility of increasing and intensifying it. It intimates the existence of things spiritual, though they may be ready to die. The true revival begins in the church, and, through the quickening of the church in her individual membership and in all her activities, reaches out and exerts its saving influence upon a perishing world. Under its quickening impulse believers become blessedly conscious of an increase of love to God, faith in his word, growth in all the graces of the Spirit, solicitude for the salvation of lost men, and a willingness to enter upon earnest and aggressive personal work for their immediate conversion to God. The church thus "becomes a quickened mass of spiritual life, and the very atmosphere becomes electrical with spiritual influences. The social principle is brought into action, and man becomes a missionary to his fellow, neighbor, child, or kinsman, under circumstances of very great advantage, the Holy

Ghost being present to impart power from on high, just in proportion to our faith and effort." God is the author of all true revivals, but man is a responsible agent in their promotion. The power that produces them is all of God, but the means for their promotion are within the reach of the church, without whose co-operation in the employment of those means, a revival will not occur.

Any conception of a revival, therefore, which does not take into account the inter-working of both human and divine agencies and the employment of appropriate means, must certainly be a false conception. As in the production of a harvest, God and man must work together, so in the production of a revival there must be the co-operation of man with God—a Paul to plant and an Apollos to water, while "God giveth the increase."

The only power adequate to the production of a genuine revival is the spirit of God. Human efforts and mechanical means, without the presence and operation of the Holy Spirit are wholly inadequate to the accomplishment of such a work. "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." The agency of the church is requisite, to be sure; but the church, to be efficient in the promulgation of truth and in the salvation of men must be "endued with power from on high." To the primitive disciples the Master said, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." The gift of the Holy Ghost as an "endowment of power from on high," therefore, is the only adequate furnishing of the minis-

try and of the church for successfully carrying on the work of God.

But while it rests with the "Lord of the harvest" alone to give or to withhold prosperity, he has chosen to honor and employ human instrumentality in this great and important work. Accordingly he has so arranged it that, whenever his people co-operate with him in the employment of suitable means, their own spiritual quickening, and, as a result, the awakening and conversion of others, may be expected to follow; while such a visitation of God's grace can not reasonably be hoped for without necessary preparation and the employment of proper means, on the part of the church.

We must insist upon the importance of considering revivals as the result of the use of appropriate means, so far as man's part in the work is concerned. "If we consider them as miracles—as occurring arbitrarily—as being confined to particular seasons of the year, we are in great danger of losing sight of our responsibility in the case; of *waiting* for a revival instead of *working* for it. The Holy Ghost is always ready, but man, though always equally needy, "is not always equally ready." The fact is, the responsibility in this whole matter rests very largely upon the ministry and the church, if not wholly so. True, it is not our efforts that bring the blessing, as the power to bless and save belongs to God alone; yet it is equally true that, without our efforts, and without the use of proper means, the blessing will never be realized.

This being the Scriptural character and the true philosophy of revivals, it logically follows that such

awakenings are generally possible of realization in any place, at any season, and under the labors of any minister, on condition of the faithful, judicious and diligent employment of proper means. Some have stated the case much more strongly than this, maintaining that, on the fulfilment of the foregoing conditions, a genuine revival of religion will *always* occur under the labors of any minister. And, if this premise is correct, it logically follows that, if a minister fails to witness a revival on his field of labor, he alone is responsible for the failure, which has as frequently been alleged. Many plausible things may be urged in support of this theory, nevertheless it is contradicted alike by the records of Scripture, history and the experience of many faithful and eminent servants of God in more recent times. Did not the ancient prophets, did not Jesus, and did not the early apostles of our Lord use the proper means faithfully, judiciously and diligently? And did revivals of religion invariably follow? Did not Isaiah exclaim, in view of his failure to move men, "Who hath believed our report?" Did not Jeremiah cry out, "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night over the slain of the daughter of my people?" Did not even Jesus fail of accomplishing many mighty works in Nazareth because of the people's unbelief? And was not Paul's experience greatly varied in respect to success in the conversion of men? Who will have the effrontery to say that in any of these cases failure was due to a want of faithful, judicious, and diligent use of appropriate means? The plain facts in the case before us are these: As a *general rule* the revival of God's work in a

marked degree will follow the faithful, judicious, and diligent use of appropriate means; but, to this general rule there are exceptions, such as justify the statement that ministers are *not* always responsible for their failure to realize revivals under their labors.

Noah's ministry of one hundred and twenty years resulted in the salvation of none outside his own family, and yet it was a faithful and heaven-approved ministry. "By it he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Ezekiel was commanded to warn the people "whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear." And when he thundered the truth of God in their ears, they remained unmoved, and said, "Ah! Lord God, he speaketh in parables."

Fellow-servant of God, if thy labors seem barren of success, look for the cause of failure in thyself first of all; and it is probable that the secret of failure will be discovered in this search, if it be honestly and thoroughly made. But if, upon careful self-examination, thine own heart assures thee that thou hast been faithful to God, to men, and to thyself, be not discouraged, even if no fruit of thy prayers, and toils, and tears be visible. Sometimes in the plan and purpose of God one "soweth and another reapeth." It may be that thou art sowing and though the fruit of thy labors do not immediately appear, that others may in the future enter into thy labors, reaping where thou hast sown, "that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together."

CHAPTER VI.

HINDERANCES TO REVIVALS.

Satan is the arch-adversary of God and man. As he contended with Michael the arch-angel, resisted Joshua the high priest, and hindered the apostle Paul, so he ever seeks to interpose barriers in the way of the evangelization of the world which is under his power and dominion. Hence there are always hinderances to be met and overcome in doing the Lord's work; and if we hesitate to engage in revival effort until all the barriers have disappeared we will not be likely ever to witness a revival in connection with our own labors, however greatly we may desire it. It is our duty to search out and remove, if possible, the hinderances to success in revival work; and when, in any considerable degree, these hinderances have been removed, the revival will have already begun. Let us, therefore, briefly consider a few of the chief hinderances to success in revival work:

(1) The most common and one of the most effectual barriers to revival work is *the prevailing unbelief of the church*. Isaiah is not the only prophet of God who

has found occasion to exclaim in view of apparent failure, "Who hath believed our report?" The want of a living, active, energetic faith on the part of the church is the greatest obstacle to success that confronts the ministers of Christ everywhere, in all ages. This is a matter of fact not only as it relates to the eternal verities of religion generally, but it is especially true as it relates to belief in the reality and attainability of the special blessing and revival needed. It has been well and truly said that, "if we would have a revival, we must have a faith in the specific thing, not a vague general notion of we know not what. Here is the starting point; this is the means of all other means, standing in the relation of parent to the rest." And yet how often it is the case that, throughout the church, the ministry not excepted, there is a practical skepticism concerning the present possibility of a revival, which is like a stone upon the well's mouth that must be rolled away before the sweet and fertilizing waters can be brought forth! This spirit of unbelief must be overcome or every effort will end in utter defeat and discouragement.

(2) *A spirit of worldliness in the church* is another effectual barrier to revivals. A secular spirit is doing more in our day to diminish the power of the church for its mission of evangelizing the nations than any other evil which has gained a foothold within her sacred enclosure. The first great declension of the church resulted from her violation of her betrothal vows to Jesus Christ, the heavenly Bridegroom, and playing the harlot with the kings of the earth, whereby she enriched herself with worldly goods and arrayed

herself with worldly pomp and glory at the sacrifice of her spiritual purity and power. A similar spirit prevails in a large degree throughout Christendom to-day. "Adopting worldly maxims, catering to worldly tastes, corrupted by worldly leaven, there has been a gradual letting down of the standard of New Testament piety, and a constant effort to robe the gospel in worldly charms, in order to attract worldly men to the church.

* * * * *

"These worldly expedients have proved very successful in secularizing the church, but have sadly failed in evangelizing the world. They do not even draw the people except so far and so long as their novelty attracts curiosity seekers, or feeds the morbid appetite for excitement. It is time all such measures were abandoned as helps to the work of evangelization. They are rather hinderances; for they destroy the peculiar character of *God's* people as a *separate* people, they divert attention from eternal things, and they grieve the Spirit of God, on whose presence all power depends."*

(3) Another common but by no means ineffectual hinderance to revivals is that of *dissensions in the church*. It was not until the members of the infant church "were all with one accord and in one place" that the pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit came upon them. When they had reached the point of absolute "accord," the Comforter was "*suddenly*" manifested and "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." But such effusions of the Spirit are

* Arthur T. Pierson, D. D., *Evangelistic Work*, pp. 92-94.

never bestowed upon a church that is rent by strifes, bickerings and divisions. The Spirit of God, without whose presence a revival is impossible, always shuns scenes of strife, and delights to manifest himself and bestow his grace where "brethren dwell together in unity." Divisions must be healed and contending parties reconciled, if the church would witness a revival visitation.

4. It is a melancholy and humiliating fact that *sectarian bigotry and rivalry* have often hindered or seriously marred the work of God in connection with revival effort. Mr. Wesley defines bigotry as "too strong an attachment to or fondness for, our own party, opinion, church or religion," and adds, "therefore he is a bigot who is so fond of any of these, so strongly attached to them, as to forbid any who cast out devils, because he differs from himself in any or all these particulars." He also further says, "Examine yourself: Do I not indirectly at least forbid him on any of these grounds? Am I not sorry that God should thus own and bless a man that holds such erroneous opinions? Do I not discourage him because he is not of my church, by disputing with him concerning it, by raising objections, and by perplexing his mind with distant consequences? Do I show anger, contempt, or unkindness of any sort, either in my words or actions? Do I not mention behind his back, his (real or supposed) faults, his defects, or infirmities? Do I not hinder sinners from hearing his word? If you do any of these things, you are a bigot to this day."*

* Sermons, Vol. 1, P. 345.

Alas, in how many instances have we seen the work of God hindered by the manifestation of such a spirit as this! Bigotry is sometimes manifested also by railing and denunciation against other religious denominations, and by proselyting, and seeking to out-rival others in gathering in members and in making a great show of success. All these things grieve the Holy Spirit and so of necessity hinder the work of God.

5. Last but not least among the more common hinderances to revivals, may be noticed *a spirit of lightness, frivolity and pleasure-seeking among Christians*. These things are not compatible with true spirituality. They grieve the Holy Spirit of God. They give the lie to his profession who indulges them. They exert a bad influence upon unconverted people. They virtually say to the unregenerate, there is no truth in religion; it can not satisfy the soul. Nothing is more common than for Satan to attempt to forestall or defeat revival effort in a church or community by the introduction of socials, entertainments, parties, fairs, festivals, or young people's literary societies, lyceums, etc., etc., the natural and inevitable tendency of which, at such a time, is to divert the minds of the people from that deep and serious attention to eternal things which is essential to the revival of God's work. And, so unspiritual and worldly are the masses of professing Christians in our day, that, instead of resisting these innovations, they "love to have it so." Hence the work of God is hindered by those professing to be its friends and helpers.

Every one who would be successful in promoting revivals of religion should learn how to detect the principal hinderances to the work, and should, at the

beginning of his labors in any place, apply himself diligently and wisely to the task of removing them. Otherwise much of his time and effort to promote the work will be expended in vain.

CHAPTER VII.

MEANS OF PROMOTING REVIVALS.

It is highly important that the minister of Christ should settle beforehand the principles of action which shall govern him in revival work, determining in his moments of calm reflection what is proper and what should not be allowed in himself or in others, and then, in time of intense excitement, never to be betrayed into any course of action which his judgment would disapprove upon mature reflection. As an aid to settling these important matters the following remarks concerning the means to be employed in promoting revivals may be found of value:

1. As to the general character of the means which may be legitimately employed to awaken a general attention to religious matters, it may be said that they should be (1) *Scriptural*. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." No endorsement, therefore, should be given to any measures not countenanced and warranted by the sacred Scriptures. (2) Characterized by gospel *simplicity*. The utmost frankness should appear in all the measures resorted to for carrying on the work. Trickery and guile are never in place, and are always injurious. Duplicity and arti-

fice are revolting to all intelligent people. (3) Marked by *sobriety and good order*. Religious hilariousness and dissipation are always out of place, but they are especially objectionable and injurious in revival meetings. (4) Such as will be most likely to produce *permanent results*. Mere sensationalism may attract gaping crowds, and influence some to "make a start," in the religious life; but it is almost invariably followed by a reaction which sadly injures the work of God, if it does not wholly destroy it. Regard should be had to the ultimate consequences of any measure before deciding upon its adoption.

2. The particular means to be employed in promoting revivals are so numerous that only a few of them can be noted here.

(1) The chief instrumentality to be employed in calling men's attention to the business of securing their own salvation is that of *the earnest and faithful preaching of the gospel*. This is God's own arrangement. "For after that, in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." * There is a species of revivalism common in our day which almost wholly ignores this divine arrangement. Contrary to the word of God, which enjoins that he who is sent forth to teach and preach the great truths of the gospel should be "not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil," the most inexperienced are put in charge of the work of God, and unintelligent harangues, sentimental ditty-

* 1. Cor. i. 21.

singing, tambourine-playing, and general sensationalism takes the place of plain, intelligent, sober, earnest, and faithful preaching of the gospel. Little of permanent value is accomplished in those so-called revivals in which the preaching of God's word is ignored or put in the background, while much harm is often done. We are commissioned to "*Go into all the world and PREACH THE GOSPEL to every creature,*" as a means of saving the perishing. "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" The chief means, therefore, of calling men's attention to the matter of their own salvation, and so of reviving God's work is the preaching of God's word.

As a fundamental prerequisite to effective revival preaching, there must be on the part of the preacher *a deep, heart-felt yearning for the salvation of lost men.* So Paul was burdened with anxiety for the salvation of lost men, when he declared, "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved," and when he "warned men night and day with tears" at Ephesus. So Whitefield's heart was burdened when he was overheard to cry out in prayer, "Give me souls or take my soul." So it was with Alleine, who is said to have been "infinitely greedy of the conversion of souls;" with Doddridge, who said, "I long for the conversion of souls more than for anything else. Methinks I could not only labor, but die for it with pleasure;" and with Caughey whose agonizing for souls frequently continued during the whole night, to be followed by the conversion of scores on the following day. When such a spirit gets control of a preacher's

heart, he will not be long barren in his ministry. "Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee."

Revival preaching should generally be limited in its range of subjects to those Scriptural truths and doctrines which are especially adapted to accomplishing the specific ends aimed at in the revival effort. One needs to use careful discrimination alike in determining what to preach and what not to preach on such occasions. For want of wisdom in this respect many a work with a very promising beginning has been sadly marred or wholly neutralized. Those ministers whose labors have been most abundantly fruitful in permanent revival influence have generally limited their preaching during these times of awakening to the old and tried doctrines of the Bible, such as the sovereignty of God, the responsibility of man for his own moral character, the fall of our race, the utter sinfulness of human nature, the atonement, repentance, justification by faith, regeneration, sanctification, confession of Christ, obedience to God, the resurrection, final judgment, the rewards of the righteous, the doom of the wicked, heaven, hell,—all of which, in fact, are comprised in the three words which were once found written in Rowland Hill's Bible,—“ruin, regeneration, redemption.” Probably the time will never come in the present dispensation when preaching which is limited to this range of themes will not be best adapted to revival work. Sin and salvation comprise the whole.*

* Concerning the topic now under consideration, pages 326-332 of this work are so appropriate that the reader is referred to them in this connection.

(2) As a further means to promoting revivals of religion *the social element of the church should be utilized and Christian fellowship cultivated.* A revival is the result of united effort on the part of spiritually intensified individuals. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name," said Jesus, "there am I in the midst of them." The revival must commence with the individual and work socially through the church. In our larger towns and cities the social element of the church is seldom utilized to spiritual advantage as it should be. The cultivation of Christian fellowship and the cultivation of the social principle should be carried on together. It was a characteristic of the revival which began at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, that the brethren all "continued in fellowship." They banished all strife, envying, jealousy and ill-temper, and cultivated a spirit of kindness, forbearance, meekness and brotherly love. They were bound up in one bundle of love; and so religion prospered as it can and will in such circumstances only. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."*

(3) Another means to the promotion of revivals, and one which should by no means be overlooked, is that of *Christian liberality in support of religious and*

* Psa. cxxxiii.

benevolent enterprises. This was a special characteristic of the early church during the period of its greatest purity and progress.* To the Jewish church God said, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, and prove me now herewith, if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it."† The same principle is still in force and until our churches begin to recognize it in a more practical and general way, they must continue to prove by sad experience that "they who sow sparingly shall also reap sparingly."

(4) It is not irrelevant to state in this connection that *the maintenance of proper discipline in the church* is indispensable to the church's continued efficiency in promoting revivals of religion. The Achans must be detected and so disposed of as to exonerate the church from blame for sanctioning their ungodly deeds. The church is the temple of Jehovah—a habitation of God through the Spirit. But when this temple is defiled by the addition or retention of unholy members the divine inhabitant will retire, and leave it to the finger of desolation to write Ichabod upon its forsaken walls. As well might the priests of Israel have expected the symbol of Jehovah's presence to have continued resting upon the mercy-seat, had all the impurities of the sacrificial victims been profanely swept into the Holy of Holies, as for a church which grossly neglects the maintenance of Scriptural discipline among its members to look for manifestations of revival grace and power in its midst. The leaven of

* See Acts ii. 44-46. † Mal. iii. 10.

ungodliness must be purged out before God will manifest his presence and power among his people in any marked degree.

(5) Direct and earnest *personal effort* to win souls to Christ should not be overlooked as an efficient aid to the promotion of revivals. It is this personal work by those who are anxious to save men that is more directly effectual in bringing sinners to Christ than anything else. Ministers and lay members alike should engage in it, if they would see success in any marked degree. Our Lord's most efficient ministry was of this character. His discourses to Nicodemus and to the woman at the well are instances. His disciples should follow their Master in this important matter. The personal element is one of the most important factors in all gospel work. Said an eminent clergyman, "All the later years of my ministry I have kept a record of the experience of those who have united with the church, for the purpose of learning the best means of reaching men. One of the questions asked was, 'What was the instrumentality by which you were brought to Christ?' And in almost every case some person was the means."

In doing this kind of work derelict professors, backsliders, awakened persons, and impenitent sinners should be visited personally, and conversed with earnestly, tenderly, and wisely upon their spiritual and eternal interests, with a view to securing their immediate action in submitting to the claims of God. Such labors will often be more eminently blessed of God than the most earnest and able preaching which is not supplemented by earnest personal effort.

(6) It should ever be borne in mind that all other

means for the promotion of revivals, to be effectual, must be accompanied by *prayer and fasting*. What has been said on this topic in discussing the subject of Pastoral Piety* is equally applicable in this connection. As in the days of Elijah and St. James, so, even now, "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." "There is no way" says President Edwards, "that Christians in a private capacity can do as much to promote the work of God and advance the kingdom of Christ as by prayer. By this even women and children, and servants may have a public influence. A poor man in his cottage may thus have an influence all over the world."

A revival spirit is always "a spirit of grace and supplication."† The Lord says, "I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock."‡ The church, then, would she have a revival, must resort to earnest, unceasing and importunate prayer, saying like Jacob at Peniel, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me," thus prevailing first with God, that she may have power also to prevail with men. The absence of this spirit of prevailing prayer is the generic cause of the absence of revivals, and the prevalence of spiritual languor and death in the church of God. Moreover, as in our Saviour's time so it is now a fact of experience in doing the work of God, that certain kinds of evil spirits can be overcome only "by prayer and *fasting*." Few genuine revivals, if any, have ever been known but what were born of such soul travail as made

* pp. 283-288. † Zech. xii. 10. ‡ Ezek. xxvi. 37.

those who felt the burden of the work upon them “forget to eat their bread” in the urgency of their supplications before the Lord. Fasting may be carried to the extent of vain superstition, and be made an injury alike to mind and body; but fasting in the spirit and manner enjoined in Scripture * will always be a means of greatly increasing the church’s power with God and with men.

* See Isa. chap. lviii.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PASTOR IN THE REVIVAL.

1. In view of the important relation revivals sustain to the general progress of religion every pastor should cherish a high estimate of their value, and seek by every legitimate means to qualify himself for efficient labors in promoting them among the people to whom he ministers. That God calls some men to devote themselves specially and exclusively to evangelistic labors we have no doubt. And that there is a wide field and a constant and great demand for the labors of such men is readily admitted. But with the idea that revival work in our churches generally should be left to professional "evangelists" we have no sympathy. Every pastor should "do the work of an evangelist" within his own parish, if he would "make full proof of his ministry." God has in no way relegated success in revival work to any special class of persons. Every minister who cherishes a proper estimate of their value, and who, in the proper spirit and in the use of the proper means, labors for their promotion, may be assured that his labor shall not be in vain in the Lord.

2. Among the best qualifications for such work on a pastor's part the first in importance is *a special anointing of the Spirit upon himself*—a spiritual quickening in his own soul—a revival within his own heart. Such a spirit will spread like a contagion. Without this personal quickening a minister's labors are very likely to become more or less perfunctory and mechanical. A pentecostal baptism of the Spirit on the minister will generally be followed by a pentecostal awakening among the people. Pentecost was the model in this respect of every true revival in the church of God.

3. Moreover it will be of special advantage to the pastor who would be wise and efficient in the work of winning souls *thoroughly to acquaint himself with those books which are especially adapted to instructing one in this department of ministerial labor*. He will find much help in reading the biographies of men who have been eminently successful in revival work. He should carefully observe their methods of work, and the sources of their effectiveness. He should be much in communion in his reading with such men as Wesley, Whitefield, Edwards, the Tennents, Caughey, Finney, Redfield, and numerous others whom God has signally blest with success in the evangelistic field. He should also make himself familiar with the best literature on the subject of revivals. "Every minister," says Dr. Etter, "who wishes to become imbued with the spirit of revivals should read such works as Gillies' *Historical Collections*, Kirk's *Lectures on Revivals*, Headley's *Harvest Work of the Holy Spirit*, Earle's *Bringing in Sheaves*, Tracy's *Great Awakening*, Fisk's *Hand-Book of Revivals*, Humphrey's *Revival Sketches and*

Manual, and Thompson's *Times of Refreshing*." It may be added also that every minister should repeatedly and carefully read Finney's *Revival Lectures*, and his revival sermons which have been collected and published in a volume entitled, *Gospel Themes*. These are excellent specimens of Mr. Finney's revival preaching. Caughey's *Revival Miscellanies* and Rev. J. V. Watson's work, entitled *Helps to the Promotion of Revivals*, are also worthy of general perusal.

4. The pastor should *consider himself responsible for the general oversight of all revival work in his church or parish*. As a rule it will be better for him to conduct the services and do the preaching, especially if the revival began under his own labors. Where extra services are protracted a considerable time, however, he may be necessitated to secure the assistance of others. But let who will be called to his aid, the pastor should ordinarily keep the general charge of the work in his own hands. He should use his own judgment as to the number of meetings, their length, and the general manner of conducting them. He should allow no measures to be introduced by others which his own judgment disapproves. In fact, while he should be humble and unassuming at all times, he should also at all times let it be seen that he is the pastor of the church, and that he considers himself responsible before God, not only for what he may teach and do himself, but for what he may allow others to teach, and do as well.

5. In carrying on revival work the pastor should *utilize the working talent of his church*. It is both foolish and injurious for a minister to endeavor to do

all the work himself. Yet there are some who continually commit this folly. The non-success of many ministers in revival effort is due to their failure to enlist the united labors of their people in the cause. A skilful general is one who wisely organizes and commands his soldiers, thereby so uniting and directing their movements and operations as to utilize all the elements of power at his command to the best advantage. "If a minister attempts to go to work alone, calculating to do it all himself, it is like attempting to roll a great stone up a hill alone. The church can do much to help forward a revival. Churches have sometimes had powerful revivals without any minister. But when a minister has a church who are awake, and knows how to set them to work, and how to sit at the helm and guide them, he may feel strong, and often times may find that they do more than he does himself, in the conversion of sinners."* He should study also to know how to keep the people at work as well as how to set them at work.

6. Great wisdom is required of those who would engage successfully in revival work in the matter of *dealing with seekers of religion*. This is true both as it relates to the measures to be adopted in securing their public committal of themselves as seekers, and as to the methods to be pursued in leading them to a proper exercise of faith in Jesus Christ when the public committal has been made. Too vehement and protracted urging of sinners to "arise," or "go forward" for prayers is unwise. Get more conviction on them and less urg-

* Finney, *Revival Lectures*, p. 169,

ing will be needed. In beginning revival services it is a common mistake prematurely to press immediate action upon the people who are not yet thoroughly awakened. It is better generally to wait until some visible signs of awakening appear. And it will generally be found necessary then to begin with church members who have been backslidden at heart and formal in their religious profession and work.

Seekers at the altar or in the inquiry room should be guarded against the distracting conversation and questioning of "cranks" and "novices" who are ever ready to make themselves officious on such occasions. Nor should any be allowed to engage in this department of the work except those who are known to the pastor to be clear in personal religious experience, acquainted with the scriptural plan of salvation, and judicious in dealing with inquirers. It is the pastor's duty to select his workers for each department of the work, and in no other department should he exercise greater wisdom and care in this matter than in that now under consideration.

7. The pastor who would be successful in revival work must carefully and diligently study *the individual condition and necessities of his hearers and adapt his preaching accordingly*. Random firing brings down no game. Sinners must be pursued into their hiding places, driven from their intrenchments, and made to feel that their false refuges can never afford them protection from the swift-winged judgments of God. False professors must be unmasked, and back-slidden professors brought to repent and do their first works, lest their candle-stick be suddenly removed out of its place. Says Finney: "*A minister ought to know the religious*

opinions of every sinner in his congregation. Indeed, a minister in the country is generally inexcusable if he does not. He has no excuse for not knowing the religious views of all his congregation, and of all that may come under his influence if he has had opportunity to know them. How otherwise can he preach to them? How can he know how to bring forth things new and old, and adapt truth to their case? How can he hunt them out unless he knows where they hide themselves? He may ring changes on a few fundamental doctrines, on Repentance and Faith and Faith and Repentance, till the day of judgment, and never make any impression on many minds. Every sinner has some hiding place, some intrenchment where he lingers. He is in possession of some darling LIE with which he is quieting himself. Let the minister find it out and get it away, either in the pulpit or in private, or the man will go to hell in his sins, and his blood will be found in the minister's skirts." *

8. *Common sense* is absolutely indispensable in the work of winning souls. The want of this often defeats the very ends of the Christian ministry. Many good men, talented men, educated men may be found in the ranks of the ministry who nevertheless lack the common sense requisite to *win* men to Christ.

9. The wisdom that results from deep and thorough personal experience in the things of God is also a fundamental requisite of success in this great work. The ministers of Christ should be able to speak from per-

* Revival Lectures, pp. 190, 191.

sonal experience in addressing others on the important subject of salvation—to say with Wesley,

“What we have felt and seen
With confidence we tell;
And publish to the sons of men,
The signs infallible.”

10. Are we conscious that we lack the requisite wisdom to win souls? Do we look back upon past failures with sorrow? And in view of our lack and our responsibilities do we inquire, “Who is sufficient for these things?” Let us not despair. There is an unfailing source from whence our lack may be supplied. For it is written, “IF ANY OF YOU LACK WISDOM LET HIM ASK OF GOD, WHO GIVETH TO ALL MEN LIBERALLY AND UPBRAIDETH NOT, AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN HIM.” *

* James i. 5.

CHAPTER IX.

AFTER THE REVIVAL.

The subject of revival work should not be dismissed without a brief consideration of those new and increased responsibilities which devolve upon the pastor and his people when the special revival season is over.

1. Much wise and careful management will ever be found necessary, at the close of a revival, *to prevent the ensuing of such a reaction as will undo all the good that has been accomplished.* The human mind is so constituted that when a cessation from extraordinary mental strain or excitement occurs, it naturally rebounds, and settles into a state of comparative stupor. A condition of general weariness and mental dullness usually

succeeds a series of revival meetings, which inclines the people to settle into inactivity and lethargy, such as is adverse to their growth in spirituality and the continued intensity of religious life in the church. From this reaction numerous other evils occur. A spirit of fault-finding and criticism is often begotten. Strifes and jealousies are engendered. Revival heat and enthusiasm are succeeded by coldness and apathy. Converts experience unlooked-for temptations, and, in some instances yield to discouragement, while in other cases they give way to doubts and fears. Some, who were only stony-ground hearers, turn away from the gospel and bring reproach upon the cause of Christ. There is always danger that the church as a whole may suffer a relapse, and so "the last state thereof become worse than the first." The pastor who does not take the precaution wisely to guard against this general reaction from the excitement of the revival, will be likely to see such distraction and declension as will give him much sorrow, and tend to lower his estimate of the value of revivals, or destroy his faith in them altogether.

How to guard against these unfavorable consequences most successfully can not be stated in any rule that will apply universally. The circumstances of each particular church or community will have to be considered in determining this, and the pastor will have to use his own judgment in determining what measures are best adapted to the necessities of each particular case.

As a general rule it will be found an excellent preventive of unhealthy reaction to *organize and plan for continued, systematic and energetic gospel work,*

in which old and young alike shall be regularly employed, and the revival spirit be perpetuated and turned to the most practical account, instead of being allowed to subside and be followed by a general decline. One of the best ways to keep converts from backsliding and church members from becoming formal and fossilized is constantly to give them something to do.

The increased and intensified spiritual life produced by a revival, as also the increased membership of the church and attendance upon its services, should be utilized by the pastor in more aggressive and effective measures for the prosecution of all the various departments of the work. Wherever practicable mission work should be opened up. Nothing better conduces to the conservation of revival influence than this. Plans for benevolent and charitable work should also be devised and carried into execution. In larger towns and cities arrangements for the systematic visitation of the sick, and those who are in prison, will be found both practicable and profitable. Visiting committees to secure recruits for the Sabbath-school may also be employed to good advantage. Missionary bands or societies should be formed, and as many as possible, of the young especially, should be enlisted in the cause of Home and Foreign Missions. In all these activities of the church the pastor should be the leading spirit—the organizer, the commander-in-chief, the confidential adviser, the helper and friend of all.

2. No greater responsibility devolves upon a Christian pastor in connection with after-revival work than that which relates to *the proper instruction and training of young converts*. There is a great disproportion

between the number of conversions reported among our churches annually, and the ultimate results so far as increase of church membership is concerned. This, of course, is due partly to other causes, but may we not justly believe that the principal occasion of this disappointing and discouraging fact is the want of proper nursing extended to young converts? They are but "babes in Christ"—uninstructed, weak, and full of doubts and fears. And as well might we expect a babe left to itself to live and flourish, as to expect a young convert to make spiritual progress without careful and proper nursing. "Feed my lambs" was our Lord's twice uttered command to the apostle Peter. And surely this work is as much the duty of every pastor, and of the Church generally, as of the great apostle. And every revival of religion under a minister's labors places him under greatly increased responsibility in this respect. It is as important to keep men converted as to get them converted. In fact, it is more important to take care of those who have been gathered unto Christ than to secure more at the neglect of those already within the fold.

(1) A goodly proportion of the pastor's *preaching after a revival* should be adapted to the instruction and encouragement of converts. They need to be thoroughly indoctrinated with the great essential truths of Christianity. They should be urged and assisted to a thorough acquaintance with the Bible, and taught to reverence its authority and practice all its precepts. They need to be taught concerning, and fortified against, those devices of Satan whereby he has been most successful in overthrowing young Christians.

They should be thoroughly instructed respecting the essential nature of true religion—that it consists not in profession, church-membership, works, the observance of ordinances, sacraments, and ceremonies, in ecstatic frames and feelings, or in any external appearances; but in the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, and manifested by obedience to all God's commandments.

They should be taught that the duty of self-denial is one of the leading features of the New Testament religion, and shown wherein true self-denial consists and may be practiced. They should be diligently instructed concerning the doctrine and experience of sanctification, and not only urged on, but *led* on into the experience. Nothing else will so fortify them against backsliding, and conduce to stability of character and usefulness in service, as this. They should also be taught that the great end for which God has saved them is that they may diligently and effectively serve him in labors for the salvation of others, and should also be instructed as to how they may win souls, and so be of that number that "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars forever and ever." "The great object for which Christians are converted and left in this world," says Finney, "is to pull sinners out of the fire. If they do not effect this they had better be dead. And young converts should be taught this as soon as they are born into the kingdom."

(2) It is desirable that *the pastor should form the personal acquaintance of all who are converted under his labors*, that by personal intercourse he may the more fully gain their confidence, ascertain their difficul-

ties, strengthen them against temptation, and encourage them to renewed efforts when in trial or discouragement. This, however, will often be found impracticable. What, then, aside from the stated instructions of the pulpit, can be introduced to make up in some measure for the pastor's inability to give frequent personal instruction and aid to those who have been converted in the revival?

Two things will be found invaluable aids to pastoral work in this respect. (a) *The selection and appointment of experienced and competent persons to be leaders of bands or classes formed from among the young converts.* These leaders thus become assistant pastors, and may greatly lighten the minister's burdens, aid the newly converted, and help to build up the church of God. In the economy of Methodist churches, the system of class meetings, and of probationary membership, is admirably adapted to this end, and may answer every purpose. But where no such order is prescribed by the discipline of the church, the wise pastor can easily improvise a system suited to the needs of his church and people. (b) *The circulation of wholesome religious literature.* The Scriptural injunction, "Give attention to reading," should be constantly urged upon all, and especially upon young, Christians. "Religious reading is necessary to make up the complement of that happy combination of moral and religious influences that should ever be kept, like a life-infusing atmosphere, about the young convert." Is not this a source of strength which hitherto has not been duly appreciated? Is it not a duty also which every pastor owes to the church he represents, and to the individual souls

entrusted to his care, to circulate among his people the books and periodicals of the church? A faithful performance of this duty by the pastor will furnish the young and inexperienced with much needed instruction and help, and will prove an invaluable supplement and aid to all his pulpit and pastoral ministrations.

The practice of the early church in respect to the thorough instruction of converts in the principles of Christianity, by a system of catechising, has been in disuse for ages, and possibly would scarcely be practicable in the present age. But what ancient pastors were accustomed to do personally and verbally in this respect, modern pastors may even much more successfully accomplish by the judicious dissemination of pure religious literature—*if they will*.

CHAPTER X.

CONCLUSION.

How great and imperative is the need of a widespread and thorough revival of religion! "Like the land of Israel in the days of Elijah the churches are withering away for the want of a revival shower. The exceptions are rare. All acknowledge these facts with regret, and look out and abroad for relief, whether they commence to work *at home* or not." Well may the Church of to-day cry out, as did the prophet Habakkuk in the days of Israel's decline, "O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy." *

Moreover, while the need of a revival is so general and imperative, God is willing and waiting to shed on

* Chap. iii. 2.

the church the spirit of revivals in proportion to her needs. He says: "I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock." And again: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" With these facts before us, if the church does not experience a revival, whose fault will it be? Let every minister and every church member ask himself this question. Am I in any degree responsible for the church's failure to experience a revival of God's work? "Lord, is it I?"

Every Christian, should be a soul winner. This is the great end for which Christians are left on earth after their own conversion. They are "the light of the world," and "the salt of the earth." And, unless they are diligent in their efforts to enlighten and save others, their own light will turn to darkness, and their salt will lose its savor. Responsibility rests not only upon the church as a whole, but upon every individual member of the same. If the church is to experience a revival it must begin with individual members, and work outwardly through the church, like the leaven in the meal. And it must be perpetuated by the united effort of spiritually intensified individuals. How great, therefore, is the responsibility of every Christian touching this important matter?

Every minister of Christ in particular should have faith in revivals and should cherish a high estimate of their value. He should also be continually imbued with the revival spirit. He should study diligently to know the best means of promoting revivals. He

should be faithful in season and out of season in endeavoring to promote them. He should never be satisfied with small results, nor with a superficial work. He should ever work with eternity in view. He should deal faithfully, wisely and lovingly with all the subjects of his ministry. He should be able not only to win souls, but so to build them up in holy character that he may be able at last, to "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." He should alike know how to feed both the sheep and the lambs of Christ's fold. His whole being should be absorbed in this work. A passion for souls should be the ruling passion of his life. Like the Master, he should be able to say, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." Thus, and thus only, can he make full proof of his ministry, and "show himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth."

And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to make you able ministers of the New Testament. And may "the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

LORD, REVIVE US.

Savior, visit thy plantation,
Grant us, Lord, a gracious rain;
All will come to desolation,
Unless thou return again.
O revive us, Lord, revive us,
All our help must come from thee.

Keep no longer at a distance,
Shine upon us from on high,
Lest, for want of thine assistance,
Every plant should droop and die.
O refresh us, Lord, refresh us,
With rich showers of heavenly grace.

Let our mutual love be fervent
Make us prevalent in prayers;
Let each one esteemed thy servant
Shun the world's bewitching snares.
O baptize us, Lord, baptize us,
With thy Spirit from on high.

Break the tempter's fatal power,
Turn the stony hearts to flesh;
And begin from this good hour
To revive thy work afresh.
O revive us, Lord, revive us,
While in Jesus' name we pray.

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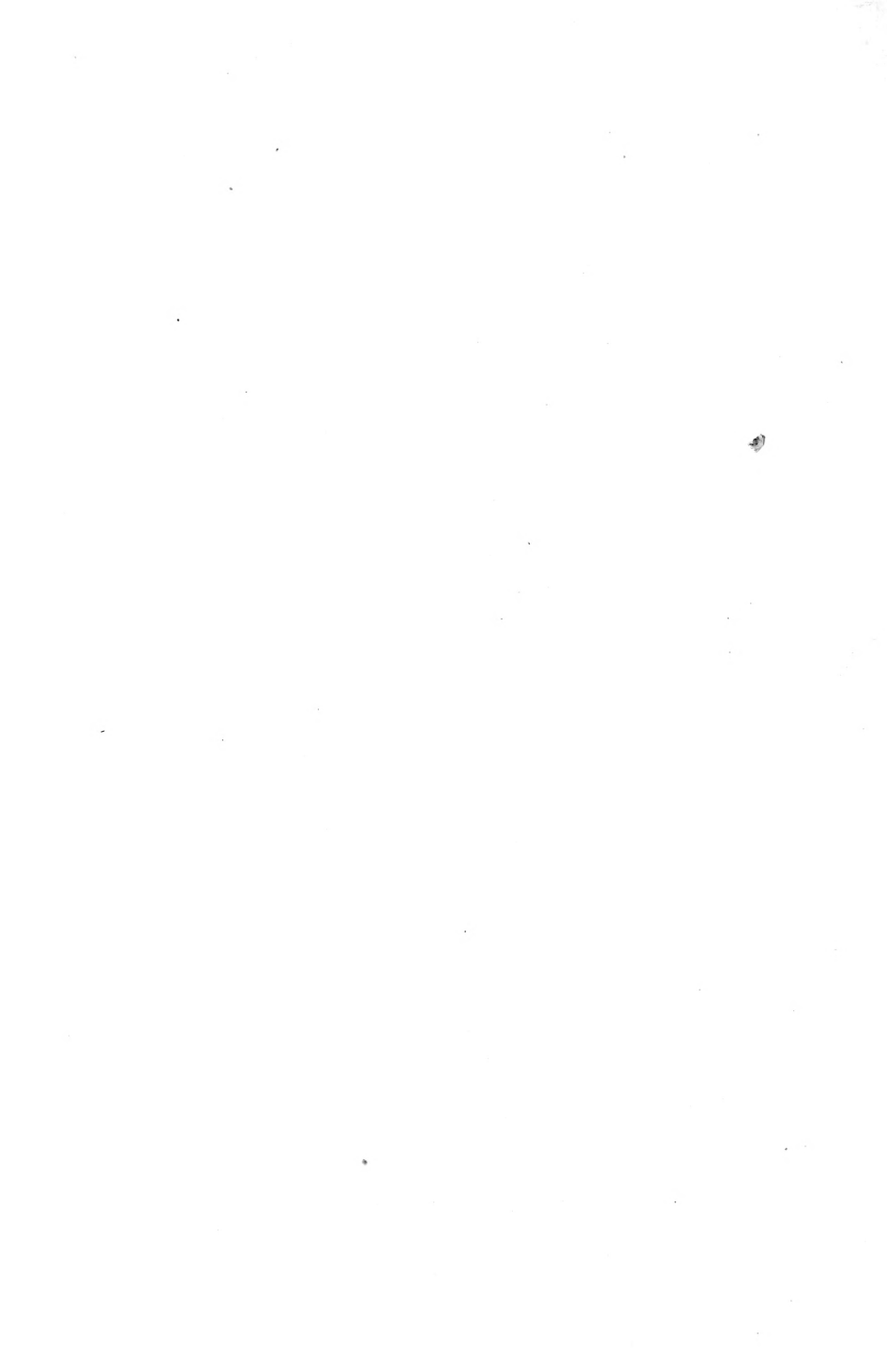
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