

them—and I am just as anxious as any of them for a true revival. But that I know must come from God. The proof that many so called revivals in this country have hitherto been mere outbursts of natural feeling, is afforded by the subsequent conduct of the persons themselves. Generally they give no scriptural evidence of a change of heart. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

Another evidence of the unsoundness of such conversions may, I think, be safely drawn from a consideration of the means by which they are *got up*. You must allow me to use this expression though I cannot defend it as orthodox—for really they are *got up*. Weeks or months beforehand, the leading persons of the congregation determine that they must have a revival, at such a time. That they shall succeed is with them scarcely a matter of doubt. As for God's sovereignty in the matter—that does not disturb their calculations, in the least. They have, as they think, a scriptural argument for disposing of that. "If two of you shall agree," &c. Now, say they, we are agreed in asking for a revival, and we will have it. But do they never fail? No—not in their opinion. Sometimes they do not accomplish as much as they do at other times. But they always profess to have had "a good time."

One marked feature of the revival efforts to which I have just referred, is the absence of the means which God has especially appointed for "turning sinners from darkness to light and from the power of satan unto God."—I mean a preached Gospel. This is the ordinance of Christ for saving men. Now I do not say there is no preaching. An address, professedly founded upon some portion of the word of God, is usually delivered. But the noticeable fact is, that this part of the service is always deemed the least important. Many of those who are "*greatly exercised*" at these meetings manage to come in about the time the preacher has got through with his discourse—while others, who take a very prominent part in the subsequent exercise of "speaking," will get up and very deliberately, and self approvingly, tell that they were thinking of such a thing during the time the preacher was engaged—and that thing which had engaged their thoughts, to the neglect and exclusion of the preachers address, has been something altogether different from the subject under consideration. In the New Testament we have several accounts of remarkable revivals but the means employed were just the means that modern revivalists hold most in contempt. It is said (Acts ii. 37) "Now when they heard this they were pricked in their heart." It was the hearing of Peter's sermon. Lydia's conversion is beautifully described in these words—"Whose heart the Lord opened that she attended to the things which were spoken." In another place, it is said. "While Peter yet spake these words the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word, Acts x. 44. Now mark the contrast between this and many of the revivals of the present day—which nevertheless are trumpeted as an extensive and powerful work of the spirit of God. In the cases to which I refer, nothing remarkable appears during the time of preaching. At that time, a spectator would see little or nothing different from an ordinary congregation. And not until they have introduced their own favourite machinery, will you notice any thing out of the ordinary way. With some, the great effort is to induce people—especially those for whose conversion they are labouring, to get up and speak. Generally, every one that they can prevail upon, in any way, to rise up and say a few words is pronounced a convert. Some others have another mode, even more ingenious, and I suppose equally successful. Their labour is to get sinners to come forward to the altar, as they call it, to be prayed for. From the earnestness with which they labour for this, a person would be disposed to think that, in their opinion, no place except the edge of their holy ground—the "altar" could possibly be visited by that divine Agent whose work it is to change the heart—and, on the other hand, that none who come to the spot so carefully marked out could possibly fail to receive the blessing. But perhaps the most unaccountable part of this strange device is the mode of operation after they have come forward. Of course, the *uninitiated* like myself are not able to give a very intelligible account of this part of the operation. But we can testify to what we are permitted to witness. Well then, the parties are kneeling close to the altar rail. The officiating minister then calls on one or two of the Brethren to pray. During the prayer, the minister inside the altar rail is passing from one to another—speaking in