

REVIVALISM IN AMERICA—ITS SOURCES AND OPERATION.

(By a Correspondent of the British Magazine.)

Different nations have different modes of action and thought, and various development of character. National character is, in fact, as various as personal. This will give a far greater variety to the religious operation of a country than is commonly imagined, especially when the character is not completely formed, but in progress. And so it is with the American nation. Our national character has, in a great measure, within the last twenty years, entered into and controlled all the religious operations of the various sects who stand apart from the church—that is to say, the vast mass of all who at the commencement of that period were professors of religion. I do not intend to enter into a disquisition upon our national character; it is sufficient that in almost all Americans I can discern two elements, and that these two seem to me to be those that make the difference between those in Europe and those who belong to the various non-episcopal denominations. The first is the practical. It cannot be denied that whatever charms the abstract, or the contemplative, or the poetical, may have for individuals, as far as regards the national mind this great and leading element outstrips all the rest—the practical—the desire to do and to have. Second only to it comes the desire for excitement or strong feeling. This last, though it may be partially attributed to our political situation, undoubtedly is in a greater degree constitutional, and owing to climate and the various other influences that operate upon the frame of man. The first characteristic has been more traced to our Anglo-Saxon descent. But however we may philosophize upon the facts, I think it is undeniable that these two instincts at present are leading ones in the national character, seen as well in every individual as in the general course of action.

Bearing this in mind, and taking it with us through the whole course of this essay, we shall plainly see the origin of revivalism. We shall see that it was a natural direction of these two feelings, from that which was permanently unreal to that which for the moment was real. We shall also see, that as those two tendencies are ever in search of the real, they have now so interwoven themselves with the popular religion as to give the greatest hope for the church. That these are the origin of that unwelcome movement over all denominations whatsoever, which one may see most plainly to be a movement, perhaps most fervent where they are most unconscious of it, towards the sacerdotal, the sacramental, the authoritative. And though Mr. Caswell may be of another opinion, still I will venture to say, that the secret of the Mormon success rests in the advantage which has been taken of the general working out of all sects towards something that shall give them the realities of a church.

The very notion of sectarianism in opposition to the idea of a church is selection; the choosing out (hence) of that which fills our mind; the selection by an individual man of a dogma or a practice, which to him is a fundamental, upon which he builds, or from which he deduces, all the other articles of his belief. The very fact that sectarianism originates with individual men secures this result in it, of singleness in fundamentals and secondariness in all other articles.

Yet still there may be, in outward things, many circumstances that can conceal this poverty of fundamentals, that can make men believe that instead of taking one notion, and making it the "key" of the whole "written word," they are taking the whole of scripture truth as it is. There is a tradition, too, of the church he left, that clings about an heresiarch, and prevents the personal operation upon himself of his own scheme. Even at the time that he is tending away one doctrine from the body, and setting it up as a standard, he cannot become free of the tradition of the others. Their tradition works upon him; his tradition only upon his followers. Heresy is not perfected in the first generation. After a time it becomes so, and its adherents come to stand upon the narrow ground of the one doctrine that is distinctive, which has been the cause of separation. Such is the process that has gone on with all separatists whatsoever, ancient and modern. The originator of a sectarian scheme is generally a man of great energy, possessed of one idea, and in its strength bearing down all before him. But a succession of such men—there lies the difficulty. To master one idea, and to be mastered by it, so that a man's whole life shall be but an exposition of it, this is a gift or a curse of which but few men are capable. Such a state seems to vest the possessor of it with a sort of authority, and a power of bearing down other men. But still this peculiar authority, of which we may in history see the strongest exemplification, is not transmissible. A ministry is instituted by the leader, they think that they are his successors; after a few generations it is discovered that they do not possess it. The very condition of sectarianism, as a religious organization with but one fundamental, renders a MINISTRY OF AUTHORITY an impossibility that every day shows itself more impossible. It becomes a ministry of PERSUASION and PERSONAL INFLUENCE.

External pressure will do a great deal to keep such a body as this together, though its unity as a ministry is evident; antagonism will do a great deal, too, and some dissenters in England are aware that "found abuse and sharp invective against the Establishment" is a good way "to keep up the dissenting interest." Here in America, as all sects stand upon the same ground, such external support fails, though men strive strongly after it. How is the line to be kept up? One step more must be made downward. The ministry of influence must yield to the MINISTRY OF TALENTS. Two ways have they of operating—the way rhetorical, the way impassioned. The latter is a dernier resort, and so they try the first.

Great is the glory of the Gothic races. They first introduced, as the representative of Death the deliverer, a ghastly skeleton, instead of the pale and calm image of youth, which classic fancy imagined to represent the brother of Sleep. In modern times we have transcended the old Goths. "Skeletons" as a representation of "sermons" is a superior invention. The modern Goths outstrip the old ones forty rods. Yet still a skeleton is the foundation of the human frame, and though no living man can clothe it again with flesh, and that which has become a skeleton must remain so, still, in despite of the analogy, many men there are who, with the aid of such an article, succeed Sunday after Sunday in presenting a tolerable image of religious instruction, consisting of Simeon's skeletons, covered with something as much like muscle and sinew as the preachers can command. However, to recapitulate.

When an organization has quitted the church with her succession of doctrine, authority, and sacraments, all which the retiring body must leave behind them, we find that at the first the zeal and ardour of the originators can keep them up abundantly; they have even a superfluity of strength, as insane men always have, and will valourously reject ordinary aids and ordinary support; they boast and brag, as drunken men will do, and desire to show their spirituality, as these their sobriety, by standing alone. A few generations pass by the succession from Wesley, or Calvin, or John Knox, or Roger Williams. They find something must be done to counterbalance their want of a church. Rhetoric is the first resort. And to it they go, with "Simeon's Skeletons," "Preachers," "Treatises on Preaching," "Pulpit Assistants," "Ho-

milies," "Reformed Pastors," "Pastor's Vade Mecum," and an immensity of other engines patented for the manufacture of sunshine from cucumbers, and wheaten flour from bran bread. Preachers are made as easily as spinning-jennies, and sermons turned off with a rapidity truly astounding. There are in these United States, where this manufacture (ut nunc posito laudemus) has attained the greatest perfection, two miles and a quarter height perpendicular of sermons made annually, the sermons being reckoned as laid flat upon each other, six to an inch. In the course of time, however, when the manufacture has been brought to perfection, though the produce in quantity is quite adequate to the immense demand, still in quality it is found to be rather wretched and insipid. Certain phrases, that would have aroused ancestral conceptions into ecstasies, lose the power they had of giving pungency and flavour; and the final decendants of the very men that in days of old could listen to "dear holy brother Schwedler, from the borders of Silesia, preaching a six hours' sermon," (vide Zinzendorf's Life), or attend upon Sundays Matthew Henry's ministrations for six or eight hours, find it rather difficult to listen for an hour to the "great preacher," Dr. Ironside Slaverson, though he give them all the variations upon the single string—extempore praying, extempore preaching, and singing that ought to be extempore—such sad stuff are modern hymns.

Men naturally get tired of such preaching; they long for something real. It is in vain that the realists of the early British Essayists, to a Miss Johanna Bentley, acted and spoke, is thrown around the stuff; they taste Simeon through it all, all the deliriums and blarneyisms of rhetoric cannot hide the porridge taste. "Everything," quoth the madman, "is so delightful in my palace; nutmeg, beef, fish, all of fine flavour, and beautifully cooked and served; but somehow, they all taste awfully of porridge."

They want something that can print them out what to do, and how to FEEL. When we look at the modern Christian or schismatic, and compare him with the primitive Christian, a more ragged and destitute animal we cannot conceive. As regards the Catholic, his being surrounded by the supernatural and the miraculous was a fact that was perpetually forced upon his mind; the authority of the church, the nature of the sacraments, the respect that all men then had for high and holy character, the habit of fasting, the opinion held of alms-giving, in short, every matter of doctrine, discipline, and practice served to impress upon his mind the high nature of things unseen, and therefore real. All this the modern Christian has put aside; the eucharist is bread and wine, nothing more; baptism, a form with no spiritual efficacy; excommunication, merely religious blackballing; church authority is in the congregation; the commission of the preacher depends upon his ability to preach; fasting, to use the words of one of their divines, is "psychologically considered, ridiculous"; no person, no place, no time, no holier than another. With this utter negation of all those things that in the primitive church at once suggested and satisfied their spiritual wants, what are men to do? Are they, without power, barely to exist?

Societies are a ready way of doing, or seeming to do. Reports from them of the wonders they have effected seem to give the man who has contributed five dollars a share in holy doing; so papers and managers tell him. And upon these grounds has the whole country been covered with societies. I do not at present enter into this matter, though perhaps, at some future time, Mr. Editor, I may give you a slight account of these valuable inventions, which produce the maximum of effect with the minimum of cash, together with the great modern improvement, that the giver of alms is totally freed from all personal trouble, the managers taking that upon themselves, for a consideration. In fact, I cannot but look upon "societies" in religion to be as the steam engine in commerce. Think of the immense power generated! Only think of a gentleman in America, by his force jerking a dollar to the antipodes, in the cause of religion? But somehow, the doings of societies fill not the mind.—Reports of wonders in foreign lands, which Christians at home pay for, are rather monotonous reading after a while; and move as little as the rhetorical preaching was wont to do. It is felt and known to be so long before the collections begin to run dry. And so must we turn to the exciting. We must have our wonders at home, and red-hot ones, too. Men shall no longer listen to rhetoric; they shall hear the natural feelings of the heart poured out; the days of the apostles and of Pentecost shall be revived; and instead of humdrum preaching, we shall have FEELING and PAIN, and every pious man shall have a hand in it. This is revivalism, in fact, neither more nor less than the natural consequence that arises from the natural poverty of religion without a church; a struggle for the domain of the unreal towards reality; an attempt to get away from what Carlyle calls "Shams."

Such a thing had been what in the older societies of New England to occur now and then spontaneously, in the form of a greater desire after religious service, and a renewal of feeling and religious energy. These were called "revivals," but though they gave the hint, they are not the same with the "revivalism" of this day. The beauty of the latter is, that by a certain course of operation they can produce, at any time, that which in the other was spontaneous. To get up a revival is a part of the "tactics of religion," and an able practitioner was, some eight or ten years ago, highly prized, and in the way of making his fortune, travelling from one village to another, and working his marvels in a very business-like way. What do you think of one of these gentry employed or hired at so much per head for each conversion? This is a fact. They are now rather below par.

However, we shall give a description of the mode of operating. A congregation exists, say in the town of A; the minister thinks a revival of religious feeling therein to be necessary; he invites his brethren of B, C, D, and E. They may be of different sects, but it does not make much matter. All denominations agree, 1st, that we are justified by faith; 2nd, that we cannot be so justified without knowing it; 3rd, that hence there is a turning point between life and death that is discoverable to the consciousness of the individual. To bring individuals to this point is the object of modern revivalism; and so brought, they are said to be "converted," "regenerated," "new born," "passed from life into death," &c. Therefore the different denominations that hold this belief may unite; and perhaps there may be actively employed some five or six zealous laymen, and one who makes the stirring up of such scenes a trade—an evangelist, they call him; by my own experience of the words and deeds of such gentry, "travelling fire engine" would be the more appropriate name. The operations have all been planned beforehand; lists have been made out of those connected with the congregation that have

not "experienced religion"; all has been calculated. And it begins. Sermons are preached five or six times a day; prayer meetings, inquiry meetings, and other kinds of services, fill up the intermediate time. It is carried on every day thus, till even late at night; and as much variety is given as can be. After the tide has reached its full, and all are freed by the overflow of feeling from any regard to personal or individual rights; then it becomes cooler; individuals are assailed by personal entreaties to turn to the Lord.—The sermons and the prayers, of themselves the most exciting and denunciatory, are applied by a travel of preachers, and elders, and deacons, through the pew. The lines are strictly drawn between "the Lord's people" and the "devils." And often to this is added the solicitation of friends and relatives, "Why will ye die?" It would need a heart of iron to resist all this mechanical madness; for truly, if ever there was a scheme that realized Horace's fancied impetus of "madness platted out beforehand," (Ut si quis parat insani, ratione modoque), it is such a scene as this. Imagine to yourself four or five clerical men, and perhaps laymen as many more, all in the same state of raging enthusiasm, surrounding a nervous and excited girl, having prayed for her by name, and applied to her in their prayers, by implication, all the dreadful denunciations that are used in the Scriptures upon hardened and obdurate sinners. Many have been converted in this manner by these operations.

And then, when the intellect and the sensibilities have been harrowed by these means into a hideous storm of turbid emotion, a state of terror and confusion, that subdues and breaks down into submission both soul and body, then comes the sacrament of the revival—the sacrament of the ANXIOUS SEATS. Will she or he go upon the ANXIOUS SEATS? These "anxious seats" are a row of benches in front of the pulpit, for those that are willing to "get religion." The struggle between them and the "Spirit" is then reckoned at an end, when they are willing to go upon the "anxious seats"; their will has yielded. It is looked upon as the formal deed of surrender; the pulling down, in a manner, of Satan's flag. When they sit upon these sacramental seats they are prayed over, they are prayed with, they feel a wondrous and heavenly calm; they "are converted," have "passed from death into life." The process is carried on till all that can be gathered in by those fiery carriers are gathered in; the first converts marvellously assisting in the subsequent conversions by their "experiences," and the exposition of their wondrous "frames and feelings." They then sign the articles of the church, and in most cases are baptized immediately. In some cases they rage on for three weeks successively. Of course, I tell you only what I know of the way they are carried on in the west, the matters that have come to my own knowledge. They may be more in order in the east, and we must remember that there is a different thing from practice. Yet I cannot see for my life how these three propositions differ from the Lutheran (peculiar) doctrine of justification; yet there are some who hold it who would be astonished at such proceedings; and I may be permitted to doubt whether the practice is not a legitimate carrying out of the dogma, at least so far as it denies the instrumentality in man's salvation of a divinely instituted body, the Church.

I shall now introduce to your notice a passage from "Colton on the Religious State of the Country," a book published about six years ago, by an American minister, who had previously written a book in defence of "revivals," but who afterwards, when these excitements became "plots for excitement," and changed their character, united with the Episcopal Church.—You will at once see that when he wrote the passage I am about to extract, he retained his presbyterian theology. You will also see the operations he was a witness to were the same with those I have described, though he is a little less plain spoken than I, and deals a good deal more in generalities.

"I will admit, then, that souls are regenerated, and brought into a spiritual union with Christ by their instrumentality; that scores or even hundreds are; or any number that may be claimed by those who advocate this system, be it more or less; and even, on that ground, I can see abundant reasons for anxiety and regret that such a system, such modes of operation, have prevailed or ever been introduced in our religious world.

"Because I am reasonably convinced, by the widest scope of this question, and by all the relations and bearings of the spiritual practices, that they are in the way of the spiritual regeneration and salvation of the greater number of souls. Of course I allude to that system of operations which contrives to get up in any religious excitement the greatest possible quantity of religious excitement; which sets out upon the principle that it is possible to accomplish this object in the execution of a given plan; which goes to work with this view; which, in instances too many to be a subject of conjecture as to their number, has been known to succeed; which has a distinct theory by which to control and dictate its measures; and which, in its progress, is characterized by great violence.

"First, by violence to customary modes of religious operation. However pure, good, and unexceptionable they may have been, it sets them almost entirely aside, and introduces a new system, on the principle that novelty is an essential element of this moral machinery. It is perfectly philosophical for the end in view. It contrives to take the public mind by surprise, and thus gains an opportunity to descend upon it in an overwhelming manner. Every stage of progress is studied and arranged philosophically by considering what man is, individually and socially; how he is likely to be affected by a given treatment applied to his mind and feelings as a religious and accountable being. All the preachings, addresses, warnings, entreaties, exhortations, prayers, the time, place, number, and continuous succession of all the meetings, are studiously contrived and applied to the great end—excitement. The greater the excitement the better. And when the object of excitement is gained, when public sympathy is sufficiently roused, the most violent measures are employed to urge and press persons to the state of conversion. Great violence is done to ordinary habits of thinking and feeling, though they may be indifferent, or even approvable as to their character. No matter how good and through the Christian education of the subjects of this influence may have been, they must be startled, shocked; they must be invaded by some new and unexpected access to their imaginations, fears, hopes, passions; in short, their minds must be entirely disgloried from accustomed positions, and from all former good, however good and proper it may have been, and they must be compelled, in a moment of the greatest possible excitement, to yield themselves up to their intellect, their reason, their imagination, their belief, their feelings, their passions, their whole souls, to a single and new position, that is prescribed them.

"Now I do not deny that in many, nor do I feel any interest in denying that in most, of these instances the individuals thus subdued, as it is commonly called, have really been subdued to God, that they are genuine converts. But granting this, which is all that can be claimed by anybody, I must be permitted to express my distinct and deep conviction, that the mode of accomplishing this object is ever after injurious to those very minds, injurious to society, religiously considered, and an obstacle in the way of the conversion and salvation of the greatest number of souls.

"It is injurious to their minds. Granting that

their hearts have been subdued to God, it is no less true, in most instances, that their minds, their reasoning powers, have been broken down by man; their intellect has received a shock by this extraordinary and violent treatment which cannot easily be repaired. It is the very plan of this onset to subvert the mind as well as the heart. The theory of conversion with this class of reformers comprehends this scope, and is not fulfilled till this intellectual bondage is attained. A narrow circle of thinking and reasoning, in a few set and cast phrases, is prescribed to the converts, from which if they ever venture to depart, they forfeit the proper character of Christians, and are considered as being actuated by abandonment of principle, or by a return to their old ways, or by conformity to the world. The mind reduced to such a bondage can never afterwards be free; cannot be open to general cultivation and improvement. A false theory of Christian character is propounded and adopted; a false conscience is formed and nurtured; the intellect is enslaved; and the entire intellectual and moral character is vitiated, as compared with the highest and most desirable standard. A false theory of conversion is, of course, at the basis of all these defects; it is false in the minds of those who originate and manage these violent excitements; and false as it becomes steeped in the minds of their converts," &c.—Colton, pp. 176—178.

The author just quoted says, "that a false theory of conversion" is at the bottom of all this. No doubt he is right so far. But still it is a natural growth of that theology that takes for the sole fundamental, justification by faith (or feeling), and isolates it from the Church. There is not a branch, a leaf, or a twig, in the full-grown tree of revivalism that had not a clear and determinate existence in the germ as well as in the fruit, and from him received by John Wesley, Peter Bohler, and from him received by John Wesley. Yet, though, as a Churchman, I cannot but feel the natural reason, a desire to be done and feeling, instead of listening, that arose from the national mind—a protest against the old rhetorical system, a wish for a warranty above reason, for the spiritual state of the individual. And this desire, which I conceive to be natural in the religious mind, rushed in the only direction towards which it could go in the absence of a Church. For when the numbers and influence, the Church was small in numbers and influence. The desire for supernatural warranty above alluded to, this I conceive, as may be seen in a previous part of this letter, to have been given in the full in the old Church by her doctrine, her practice, and her discipline; and more and more in us every day, by the fact of our position, will be evolved the means of satisfying it. In the meantime, with regard to the denominations, the common sense of influential men who have seen the practical evils that go forth from the system of revivals, may succeed in putting it down for a season, even when they hold to it very principles in which it originates. But when the memory of its extravagances has passed away, and the memory of religious enthusiasm is shorter-lived than that of any other outrages whatsoever upon the rights of man, and when the old rhetorical system of mere preaching has again become utterly worthless, then will it, in spite of all obstacles, rise and rage as madly as before.

And what has been the effect as regards the Church? This you may easily see, from my estimate of the cause that lies at the bottom of revivalism, ought to be great. And it is great in a proportion that admits of no adequate explanation apart from that cause—an increase of numbers beyond all expectation, a current steadily flowing in of the calm, the quiet, the non-excitable. They have seen in us godly peace and quietness, and have taken refuge in the church as a haven of rest; they have known that we alone have been able to resist the torrent of fanaticism that swept away and shattered all beside; and this gives to them a warrant of that divine institution which we claim above the other denominations. And as we work nearer and nearer to the church model of primitive times, and more and more realize our position as standing alone, supported by no strength save that which is in us, the more shall this truth be blazoned to the eyes of men. I confess I look forward to that time with great hope, for there is such a thing in all organizations as maturity, the full embodiment of the fundamental idea, and then they are most efficient. The church in America has not yet attained, but is fast speeding towards it. Of this I might point out various indications, but as they are on the one side of the subject, I forbear, and go on to give you, the complement or sequence of what I bear upon. You will recollect that we brought "the converts" to the "anxious seats," to the time when they were overpowered. The ensuing part of this letter will contain a detail of the method from that point—"the praying over them and with them"—as I saw it myself in a camp meeting. There are some trifling differences in details, which I shall not mention; but the systems are the same.

Camp meetings are held principally by the methodists; in fact, this peculiar form of meeting originates with them. Revivalism, or the system of continuous meeting under the roof of a church edifice, as the other in the open air, in tents, is the rival system of the presbyterian and congregational sects. Yet both have as a foundation the three principles I have laid down, and in both the excitement is carried out to the same issue.

Some three or four years ago, when preparing for the ministry, I was spending the vacation with a friend in one of the eastern states. We became apprized that one of these meetings was going on some forty miles from us; and we concluded to visit the ground—not that we expected to derive any spiritual advantage from such a gathering; and yet I am certain that my motives were not those of mere idle curiosity, still less to laugh at them. Man, when engaged in any sort of worship, may be an object of pity, but never of ridicule or contempt. My motives were solely for the purpose of examining with my own eyes the practical carrying out of a system which my reason told me was faulty. I wished to see the means and appliances that should be brought to bear upon human nature to bring it to the point to which the theory of that system had determined it should be brought. And I must say that the practical operation of the system in the one meeting as in the other is very efficient. Human nature is capable of continuously-working impressions, even of the weakest kind. Men in a body, especially when that body is swayed by passion, will take a special which, singly, they would have shrunk from occupying. They will believe that which is brought to their own personal knowledge, on the faith of a multitude of witnesses; and the very marrow of the system consists in the bringing to bear upon men individually a multitude of continuous impressions, all witnessing to the truth of a system.

We proceeded on the railroad to the village of _____ Some little way from it was the camp ground. It was placed on a little eminence, clothed with dark pine. The time was midsummer, and to pass from the dusty road and the hot sun among the solemn green trees was pleasant. Down the side of the eminence a small rivulet of cool water trickled among the trees. The camp ground was a large area upon the top of the hill, cleared of all its trees, save a large maple in the centre. The space around this solitary tree was seated with rude benches of slabs and planks, forming an area capable of accommodating two thousand people; and from a branch of the tree itself swung a rude box, glazed around, as a

chandelier for the night meetings; and opposite the chandelier was a rough gallery, about ten feet high, communicating with a shed in the rear. This answered as a retiring room, as the other served for a pulpit, or, as it is called, "stand." Around the seated area, with a broad alley between, were tents, with the front apartment open towards the area—some twenty or more in number. The stand and seated area served as the cathedral for the preachers, the tents around for the prayer-meetings held in the intermediate times.

When we had taken a survey of the ground, we fell in with some persons acquainted with my friend, one of whom, an ardent methodist, informed him that "a great work of God was going on in the _____ tent"—that so many there "had experienced the grace of God"—that at present there was one in that tent "under conviction," of whom there "were great hopes." This was precisely the opportunity I wished. I wished to see the process by which the operation was brought to a close, and for this reason we moved in that direction. He had also informed us that one or two on the ground had already "had the power." "To have the power," in the floating theology of the sect, is a peculiar phrase for a peculiar blessing, which consists in a sort of hysterical condition of nervous weakness, in which the patient loses all strength, and drooping down motionless, remains as dead—a sort of coma that, in the opinion of the more ardent, is taken for the immediate overpowering influence of the Holy Spirit. As we proceeded along, we came to the negro tent. Here they were trying to "get religion," as the set phrase goes; and hard enough they did try in all conscience. The negro is most excitable; and these might be heard half a mile away. One peculiarity of this sort of meeting is, that when men are excessively excited, they pray at the top of their lungs, as loud as they can bawl! And sometimes—not very rarely, either, the flow of ideas ceases while the current of excitement continues, and then the operator utters what may be words and sense, but the intonations are huddled so fast upon one another, that the syllabication is hardly perceptible for the vehemence of the sound. This is technically called "hollering," "hallooing." "Brethren," said a preacher in Wisconsin, "I cannot preach so good a sermon as brother H., but can holler like sixty!" In this delightful and energetic sort of worship the coloured men were employed. I listened to them, trying to make out what they were saying, but there were so many going at once, and the din was so great, that I gave it up in despair, and proceeded to the tent in which "the great work was going on."

The front division was open, with a pine stick, breast high, as the sole barrier that divided the "meeting" inside from the people. There was a great crowd around it. I edged through them until I got a full view of all inside, leaning upon the barrier. The interior space, I should think, was perhaps twelve or fifteen feet deep, by twenty wide; the area all spread with straw, and seated next to the wall with forms. Close by the mouth was a gibbet, on which were two young women, who, I found, had just experienced "peace." They looked highly excited, now embracing, now shedding the right, all along the wall. Towards the right, all along the wall, were seated some twenty who had had more or less of the same "change." They had all more or less that hot, flushed look about the skin, and especially the eyes, which every physician knows to be an attendant invariably upon cerebral excitement. But my attention was soon called from them to a short, thick-set, bilious-looking individual.—he very model of a Tartuffe with the steam up, who was kneeling upon the straw, and praying with a vehemence that made the sweat stand in beads upon his brow, in a sort of low, energetic tone, each word sounding as it were a thump. The whole of his prayer had a personal application, but being new to this sort of thing, I was at first at a loss to follow it. He was kneeling as he prayed. But after a time I found out. Right before the preacher was a cloak huddled together, which, when I perceived it, I had imagined to cover a bundle of garments left negligently in the way. I was mistaken. This was the woman under conviction, as she had sunk down! Of this I became aware by the faint groans that issued from the heap. By and by, the exertions of the preacher wore him out; he became faint, and sank from his kneeling posture, till he sat upon his heels; and the latter part of his prayer, I grieve to say it, was perpetrated in the posture of a tailor at work, and then he gave out. A slight-built man then came forward, and knelt down on the straw in front of the subject, who still remained in the same posture. His action was too violent to outstretch his arms, so as to touch, or rather brush the straw, and then he sprang backward, till the back of his head touched it on the other side, praying with uncontrollable vehemence during the whole of these furious motions, till, finally, after a longer continuance, in his strange gesture than I thought possible, he lay stretched at full length, his face buried in the straw, unable to utter a word more. Another man then, remaining where he sat, and assuming no posture of reverence, poured out a prayer with closed eyes, no other part of his body moving save his lips, the words pouring out in one continued stream. Some three or four followed with prayers. The matter of all was the same; that is, addresses to the Almighty, and through him to the individual, pushing upon him the common-place theology as regards the process to be undergone after "conviction." The crowd about the tent, in the meantime, were looking on or chatting about their own matters, the only separation between raging enthusiasm and complete indifference being the single barrier of a pine-stick. This was a thing not to be borne; and so the old man who had made the last prayer—a very nice, sensible old man—got up to make an address, and a very good one it was, in the evangelical style, and very close. When he came to speak of "seoffers" "laughing at religion," "careless and prayerless," "coming on the ground for mere amusement," &c., the crowd outside began to move off, and gradually I was left alone, the only individual in the old gentleman's congregation. These things did not touch me, and so I listened with a good deal of pleasure to his oration. Another gentleman then got up. I turned towards him. He was getting along in a big base voice and an oratorical skill. The horn sounded, a signal well known in Massachusetts of dinner, but here of preaching. The orator ceased, and all jumped up to go to hear the sermon; and a large congregation was soon assembled. There were five or six preachers on the stand, one negro with hair as white as snow;—the country being abolitionist, the engineers of the meeting had brought him here. The presiding elder, a sort of methodist archdeacon, after prayer and singing, introduced him to the people. He preached and some two or three more. The sermons were unimportant to detail. You can hear the same in City-road, or any place else; and we left the meeting. The time during which this woman was under spiritual manipulation, in my own presence, could not be less than two hours.

Having now a bond fide knowledge of the mode of operation, you can see its effects upon society, and upon the individual. You can see how men of well-balanced minds and good common sense will naturally be cast into a sort of moral ataxia, seeing all sects walking in the same path. "As for religion, Mr. Tricross," said one of these men to me, "it begins by making men mad; it ends in making them knaves

I want to have nothing to do with it. It is the same in all churches." Hence, the class of non-professors, men unbaptized, and unconnected with any sect, is very great in this country, and, I will add, very respectable in morals and character. Then, again, this process cuts away all religious education; being itself all-in-all, it renders the ordinary ministrations insipid and tasteless; it cuts away, by a manifestly discernible working, that parochial visiting and catechetical instruction which was wont to be a habitual thing forty years ago among the New England presbyterians. In fact, it has struck me again and again that the general result of this, as well as of every other operation of the present day, is to interrupt, as far as may be done, that stream of natural influences by which the links and feelings of the fathers descend upon the children, to destroy, as far as may be, the all-natural tradition, and to fling the present time wholly upon itself for doctrine, practice, and all things else whose natural channel is the institution of a church.

As regards the effects upon the individual, you have testimony enough. They are, as far as I can see, wholly destructive, and work a change of the most corrupting kind upon the conscience and the will, and all the rest of those dimly-seen faculties and sensibilities by which we apprehend the knowledge of heavenly things when brought to us. And looking at the means by which this process is brought about, to the condition mental and physical of the persons that undergo it, and their craving for it and feelings afterwards, I cannot but think that the change upon the moral feelings and sensibilities, the conscience, imagination, and will, bears a most hideous and striking analogy to the change that a single departure from virtue is said to effect upon the same powers; and I cannot but think that spiritual whoredom is a name far more suited to the operation of the spirit of revivalism than "spiritual regeneration" or "new birth." Of course, I allude to the system under the distinctions laid down by Mr. Colton, and by no means attach more blame to the ministers of it than to the operators under any other false system. The position of men who are in earnest, and innocent of evil intention, in most cases exonerates them. And I should think that the position of most of the dissenters without a church, and without valid sacraments, naturally pushes them to the creation of excitement, without perhaps a thought of producing a regular system of plotted and planned operations. Still, while I exonerate them in general, and believe that in the east a revulsion is taking place against it, even in the minds of those who were its most ardent advocates, from a sense of the evil it has done,—I cannot but feel that the strong expression above used is the only full and adequate one to express its moral and religious effects. I should perhaps apologize for the repetition of the Scripture terms, with perverted meanings, employed by such people, but it is part of the plan of the secretaries; and the citation of such technicalities really employed go further to shew the nature of the thing than half a page of explanation.

I remain, yours, &c.,

JOHANNES TRICROSS,

Parson in the Wilderness.

THE DAILY SERVICE IN LONDON.

(By a Correspondent of the Morning Post.)

I have been much gratified this morning in attending the service at the chapel in Margaret street. The service was at eight o'clock, and there were about forty or fifty persons present, who, I understand, are regular attendants. Two ministers knelt within the rails, and another read the service at a desk, on one side. The presence of three clergymen at early week day prayer, had the best possible effect. All the clergy connected with the chapel attended regularly to lead the devotion of the congregation, and show them, by their example, that the worship of God is a duty and a privilege. The chanting of the Psalms was very simple and beautiful: the first verse was chanted by the officiating clergyman, and two chorists, placed near the desk; and the second by the full choir, and all the congregation, many of whom were evidently well instructed in the musical art. In some cathedrals, the Litany is chanted in this way by a priest and lay vicar. I remember, some years ago, from what I trust was not a blameable curiosity—in fact, simply for information's sake—attending the service at some Dissenting places of worship, in a town where I was unknown, and being much struck by the Psalmody, and longing that our own church congregations would take a leaf out of their book in this respect. Whatever may be the cause, I scarcely ever heard a whole congregation sing and respond heartily, and "with a fight good courage," in our churches, until I heard the chanting in Margaret Street chapel. We certainly ought to make more of the choral part of our service; and I am persuaded that it would have the most beneficial effect, especially with the poor, in attaching our congregations to their church, and saving them from the seduction of the Dissenters, and also in rendering their service more spiritual and acceptable to God.

There was nothing further that struck me as remarkable in the service at this chapel, except that I thought the Creed and the Lord's Prayer were repeated a little too rapidly; in fact, it was difficult for an unpractised voice to keep up with the reader. I am not at all an advocate for preaching the prayers to the people, or reading them in a pompous manner, as we sometimes hear, instead of humbly offering them to God; still it is very possible to fall into the contrary extreme. With this slight exception, the service at Margaret Chapel appeared to me the most affecting and impressive that I had ever heard, and truly such as might be followed with the heart and the understanding.

As I left the chapel, and saw the worshippers gradually dispersing and mingling in the busy crowds of the world, I could not help, in imagination, following the direction of their respective occupations. Here, in one direction, were two middle-aged men hurrying towards the city, or the courts of law, to pass the day, probably in the midst of business. How will their day's labour be sanctified and blessed by this brief hour spent in holy worship! How different will be their frame of mind from that of the money-making worldling! How ready to encounter temptations, and act honourably, firmly, and charitably! That person walking southward is, I know, a member of parliament. Would that the affairs of the country were more frequently placed in the hands of men who humbly kneel each day in God's house to supplicate His blessing! The statesman and warrior of former days did not grudge God His daily service. How is it, that we who boast of more enlightenment, and purer faith, so rarely pay it? How might our modern society be hallowed by daily worship! See there is a young lady, evidently of some distinction, returning in the direction of—Square, to join, it may be, the family breakfast-table, or to render service to an aged parent, or to engage in domestic concerns. How will her soul be guarded against the petty cares, and troubles, and vanities of life! How will the freshness of health and innocence be preserved by thus early rising to offer her matin prayers to God! Those two females are apparently of somewhat lower station—governesses, it may be, who have before them a day of toilsome labour. Yet how cheerfully will it be gone through! How eagerly will all the bitterest discomforts of life be borne after thus raising their thoughts to heavenly things! Ah! thought I, these are the salt and leaven of society! Who can calculate the good done by these Christian worshippers when they go each to his separate sphere, in which God has appointed them to glorify Him?