

preaching was excessively clamorous is largely an error. There were "sons of thunder" in those days, and there are such still; but the leading examples of the early style, while characterized by much unction and suaviseness, were not less characterized by dignified self-command and calm power. Asbury seldom rose into declamation; McKendry was powerful, without noise; Capers was gentle in speech; Soule was remarkable for the steady, tranquil dignity of his discourse; Hedding was simple as a child and wise and measured as a patriarch; Summerfield was serenely powerful; even Maffitt, with his Irish floridity, was never clamorous; Bascom was declamatory, but never noisy; Fisk, Bangs, Olin, were powerful, but never declamatory—never, at least, in the unfavorable sense of the word. And all these men were, as I have shown, formed in the early school of Methodist preaching, and were representatives of the ministry within the first half century after the organization of the Church—the period to which we attribute the "old style." The American ministry was, in fine, a reproduction of the English, or at least modelled after it; it was, in fact, at first considerably composed of men from the latter. The Wesleyan ministry, led by the Wesleys, Benson, Adam Clark, Nelson, Bunting, Newton, and similar characters, could not generally fall into excesses; nor did their brethren of America. Wesley denounced clamor in the pulpit, and one of his most notable letters is a rebuke of this kind addressed to an English Itinerant who had passed over to the American ministry.

While, then, there were exceptions, they were such as prove the rule. But if the ministry was not generally clamorous, the people, it must be acknowledged, were frequently so; and "Methodist meetings" had the reputation of being "noisy." The popular elements gathered in these meetings, and the lay activity which Methodism encouraged in them could hardly fail to produce some eccentricities; but if the Church, in the later period of its history, can boast of more decorum, it may also well acknowledge that it owes much of the freedom and fervor of its worship to what it considers the somewhat blamable ardor of its fathers. The liberal and consolatory character of their Arminian Theology touched the sensibilities of the people; their humble places of worship, and their colloquial and anecdotal way of preaching made the people feel "at home," and they spontaneously became responsive to the preacher, their ejaculations often rising into "shoutings," and the meetings often becoming "sensational." Extraordinary physical phenomena attended them. Sturdy men fell, as if shot down, under the word of the preacher, however calm, though pathetic, he might be. Especially was this the case at "camp meetings." The camp meeting was not of Methodist, but of Presbyterian origin. The Methodists quickly borrowed it as a convenience on their great frontier circuits, for their chapels were few, and the people