

anxiety or tendencies and dangers incident to the movement. They believe that in many places there is a stupor among professing Christians, and a gross neglect of religious ordinances on the part of the masses that may be broken in upon by a series of services framed as to time, locality, form and circumstance to that specific end; and they would rather put up with a few extravagances if need be, than remain in their former dull and non-aggressive mood. The demand for zeal is so imperative in the kingdom of God that they must welcome it anywhere and everywhere. But at the same time they are not insensible to the importance of toning down extravagance by an infusion of church sobriety, and of gathering up the reputed results of Evangelistic effort for permanent service in the church. As observant cautious men, they cannot fail to notice, in the almost invariable incidents of Revivalism, a tendency to abnormal emotional developments; a growing craving for smart sensational utterances; an obvious unwillingness on the part of the prominent to recognize Church authority and order; a disposition in many converts to evade quiet continuous instruction; and, where church fellowship is sought a sudden infusion into the full rights of membership of persons whose sincerity may be unquestioned, but whose aptitude for taking part in the government of the Church is not highly developed. In view of the evils thus recognised, it is thought that a counterpoise to their presence may be found in the countenance and co-operation of the more intelligent members of the various Churches, and the adoption by pastors of a well devised scheme by which converts may become thoroughly instructed in religious doctrines and Christian duties.

We thus find ourselves in the midst of three parties, each claiming to be influenced by a supreme regard for the Kingdom of God among men: 1. Those who advocate and practice Revivalism. 2. Those who object *in toto* to the Revivalism now in vogue. 3. Those who, while not concurring in all that is done, desire to utilise the movement as best they may.

Now, I am not disposed to ally myself on the present occasion as a partizan to either of these parties. My sole object is to suggest considerations that may modify the opinions of all.

That there should arise sometimes in the history of the Church a revival of religion seems to me to be an inevitable result on the one hand of man's natural tendency to lose interest in even the most sacred things, and on the other of the mercy that will not allow our degeneracy to proceed to utter decay, and, therefore, aversion to revival in every form is unphilosophical. If perpetual steady progression in holiness, zeal and love be not the record of the Church's life from the first,

then, if Divine promises are to be realized there must come a season of renewal. In fact revivalism is found in all the highest departments of human effort and enjoyment. Literature revived after centuries of decadence, in the days of Erasmus. There was a period when Art came forth once more to enrich the world with forms of beauty; and in the age of Lord Bacon the human intellect was aroused from its deep slumbers to pursue afresh, with firmer step and under truer guidance the lofty path of science. Nor can we doubt, whatever opinions may be entertained as to the ultimate form it assumed, that it was a true and Heaven-born spirit that last century worked through Wesley and Whitfield and saved religion from being almost strangled by the hand of a hard, unreflecting formalism. We surely are not so content with what we have already attained to and done as not to feel the need of a life more consistent in its tone and its aims with the solemn verities we profess to hold and the personal allegiance we have sworn to our Lord. Neither as individuals in our private walk with God, nor as parents among our children, nor as men of business revealing our spirit to our fellow-men, nor as members of the church of Christ professedly devoted body and soul to the interests of Zion, are we as we ought to be; and if we would but estimate things according to their intrinsic worth, we should count it a signal mark of Divine mercy if there were to fall upon our hearts a baptism of the Holy Ghost, so real and complete in its effects, as to enable us to realize more perfectly the ideal of Christian life that ever shines before the sincere mind. And though there may be something of the world's feverish restlessness, and, also, no little proportion of its outward display, blended unconsciously in the feelings and acts of many advocates of modern revivals, I cannot but credit many of them with a measure of spiritual renewal after which we may all most earnestly strive. When we only reflect on that holy, self-denying blessed life spirit among men eighteen hundred years ago; when we think of the sin and woe still bearing men far away, and remember the fleeting character of our stay here below, we may well be ashamed of ourselves before God, and crave from the depths of our soul a mighty quickening to a truer and nobler life. And if we give due heed to the lessons of that ancient story concerning "one who followed not with us," as well as bear in mind the diversities created in human life by the mental and social habits engendered by early education or lack of education, I am sure we shall take care lest, in the expression of our inability to accept the style of spiritual excitement others so readily appreciate we should by a harsh word or scornful look, wantonly wound the hearts of one of Christ's disciples.