

Whitefield and their successors, contemporaneous with the movement in England under Whitefield and the Wesleys, and dating back to 1740. In the Great Awakening, as it has been called, Edwards, Belamy, and their contemporaries planted themselves solidly on the assumption and distinct reaffirmation of the authority of the Word of God. They met the ultra-Arminianism and churchly legalism by appealing to Paul's doctrine to the Romans in analogous circumstances—the doctrine of *justification by faith* in the Divine Redeemer. This was the one common burden of the preaching of the day. As essentially connected with justification, tremendous stress was laid, in this era, upon the condemning power of the law, and the lost condition of the sinner, in order to leave the sinner hopeless, unless he could obtain justification through the righteousness of the crucified Savior, and find refuge in Him; while the necessity for the new birth was emphasized, in order to bring the formal and godless professor to despair of deliverance and salvation except by the power of the Holy Ghost. These were the distinctive dogmatic features of the first era of revivals, and these were the specific doctrines blessed by the Holy Spirit, in connection with the Great Awakening.

The Second Era of American Revivals—that in which President Dwight, Dr. Edward Dorr Griffin, and others were among the leaders in its earlier phase; and Drs. Nettleton and Finney the leading revivalists in its later phase—may be reckoned from 1797, and it extended well into the nineteenth century. A period of backsliding and moral defection followed the Great Awakening. The errors and sins of this period were again of a peculiar character. The leaders in the reaction—such men as Dwight, Griffin, and the elder Mills—fell back once more upon the Bible, assuming, affirming, or proving by unanswerable arguments, its divine authority, and they directed their preaching intelligently against the prevailing errors and sin. The peculiar dogmatic feature of this era, appearing to a large extent in all the preaching, was necessarily the *sovereignty of God*. The people had largely revolted against God, and needed to be made to feel to the utmost that there is an infinite God, above all and controlling all, and the arbiter of future destiny. The Spirit of God made use of this doctrine of the sovereignty of God in the preaching of that age of revival; and in the teaching of the strong men of the day it became a trumpet-call to repentance and judgment. The message was: "Submit to God, your rightful sovereign." "Throw down the weapons of your rebellion."

The churchly and personal errors and sins of the times were met by emphasizing the doctrines of repentance and of a holy life, and the personal duty to love and serve God with all the soul, might, mind, and strength. The message became: "Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions." "Son, give me thine heart." "Devote yourself and your life to the service of God."