

girding for the work, the preacher is ready to do the one thing he is just now called upon to do as a preacher. *That one thing is*, to direct his Gospel message, immediately and persistently, to the members of his congregation, saints and sinners, in precisely the doctrinal aspect and form required to meet their sins and the sins of the age, and to arouse and quicken conscience.

This assumes that all revivals begin with the awakening of the church members, and extend from them to the sinners beyond. This is a commonplace with those familiar with revival work. It assumes that the preaching should be intelligently aimed at the desired results, and that the preacher is warranted in expecting that such preaching will, by the grace of God, be followed by such results. None but a hyper-Calvinist has any ground for doubting this. It assumes that there are certain great doctrines, or forms or aspects of doctrine, that the Holy Spirit is accustomed to use and bless, in stemming and turning back the tide of sin, and in saving sinners. This may not be so readily admitted; but this is the point to which special attention of the preacher needs to be directed.

1. In making ready for this kind of work, now so imperatively demanded, the preacher needs, therefore, to *study the principles of genuine revivals of religion*, in the light of historical and inductive observation, in order to their methodical and practical application in his own work.

It is as true in revivals as elsewhere, that "history is philosophy teaching by example." Their history constitutes an object-lesson of peculiar instructiveness. There have been Three Great Eras of General Revival in the history of the American church, each of which has been characterized by certain *peculiar features*.

First, there has been, in each case, a providential preparation, in the revival of faith in the dogmatic authority of the Sacred Scriptures as the Word of God, a genuine and general religious revival being apparently impossible with shaken or shattered faith in divine revelation. This revival of faith in the Word has brought the church and the world to the test of the "Law and the Testimony," and awakened and roused them by the exposure of current errors, the uncovering of churchly formality and hypocrisy, and the judgment and condemnation of all sin.

Secondly, there have been, in each case, special phases of error and sin, having their clearly marked differences, and calling for peculiar and appropriate treatment.

Thirdly, there have been, in each case, specific differences in the doctrines presented by preachers, and blessed by the Holy Spirit in remedying the evils by rousing the church and saving sinners—these doctrines being exactly suited to counteract the peculiar errors and sins of the period.

The First Era of American Revivals was that under Edwards and