

them even for a short time. As long as he can compete with the latest burlesque actor he will draw, because it is cheaper to be amused in the church than in the music hall.

There is another kind of sensationalism which is equally harmful, namely, that which is produced by perfervid appeals to the feelings, loud shouting and all the paraphernalia of the ancient camp meeting joined with the modern feature of prostration. One need not believe with a pious Plymouth Brother of my acquaintance, that the last named manifestation is due to the power of the devil, in order to be convinced of its baneful result. A constant craving for unhealthy excitement in religious worship is as injurious to true spiritual life as the desire for grotesque humor, or for startling, whimsical, and bizarre effects. It is true that the perception of the full import of revealed truth and its bearing on the eternal destiny of the soul must be accompanied with a high degree of aroused feeling. But this is a very different thing from seeking to stir special agitation by artificial means, and cultivating a taste for the constant intoxication of excitement which finds the ordinary duties of life irksome and longs for the evening hour or the Sabbath meeting in which it can plunge again into the exhilarating whirl and forget the prosaic routine of service.

It is to be feared that prohibition and questions of moral reform have too often secularized the tone of preaching. In the heat of a political contest on these matters, speeches are delivered in the pulpit which ought to be reserved for the hustings. The tender conscience of a good man feels afterwards that there was an incongruity between the place and the theme, between divine purpose of the pulpit and the use to which it was that day supplied. The preacher himself often feels humiliated and is willing to confess that he has sinned. No one is more competent than he to understand that a few words of introduction, connecting the subject in a loose way with some sacred text, and a few pious reflections at the close, will not raise an exhibition of the iniquities of "Mowat, Hardy & Co.," to the dignity of a true sermon.