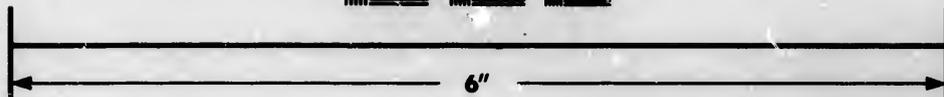
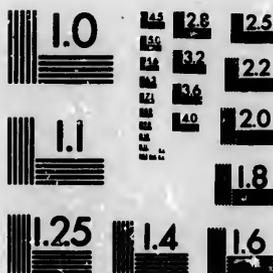


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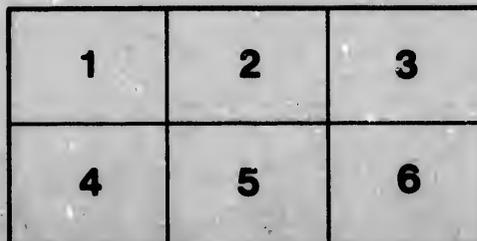
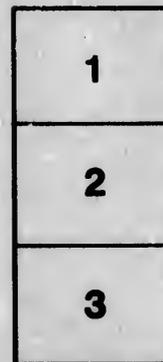
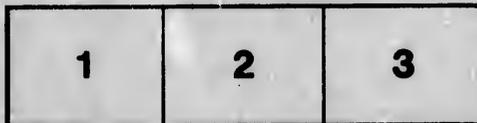
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REVIEW

OF

A SERMON

ON THE

**Danger of Excitement,**

BY

T. WATSON SMITH.

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HALIFAX, N. S.

PRINTED BY WILLIAM MACNAB, 11 PRINCE STREET.  
1869.

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## REVIEW, &c.

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To a bundle of pamphlets, always burdensome at times of removal, we have lately—by purchase—added another. This new pamphlet, from the "Colonial Standard Publishing Office," bears the title—"Sermon on the danger of excitement," preached by the Rev. James Anderson, at Six Mile Road, Wallace, N. S. The whole work contains about sixteen pages, seven of which are covered by the sermon; the remaining nine are used for covers, fly-leaves, and a solitary note.

The note alluded to is the connecting link between that pamphlet, and the one now in the reader's hands. In it the author states, that in consequence of the misrepresentation of the sermon, by some who were present, he has by request of friends, published the sermon, in order that his congregation "may have in their hands the means of contradicting these base misrepresentations." As these "base misrepresentations" are believed to be but the simple statements of Methodists, principally resident on the Six Mile Road, who formed the larger part of Mr. Anderson's congregation on the occasion to which he refers, and who felt deeply grieved by the course he adopted, we, who had a seat near the desk at the time, cannot allow the imputation to pass unnoticed.

The step now taken, is not taken willingly. The burden of care, which the work of the ministry always involves, has been in the past, in no small degree lessened by the fact, that in our several spheres of labor, we have enjoyed the friendship of worthy co-laborers, connected with the various branches of the christian church. If now, an act of unlooked for, unprovoked opposition—justified, rather than regretted, by the party responsible for it,—obliges us, like the Jews of old, to become at the same time builder, and defender, and to take up weapons, to the use of which we are not at all accustomed, we do not assume the responsibility. During the weeks which

have elapsed since the preaching of the sermon about to be reviewed, every proper effort has been made to cast oil on the troubled waters; for the sake of peace, falsehoods in circulation have been allowed to pass with mere private contradiction, and sincere satisfaction has been felt because of a seeming abatement of public interest in the matter; now however, the publication of a part of the sermon, and the aforesaid "note," renders farther silence unadvisable.

Copies of the pamphlet, now on my desk, may have fallen into the hands of persons quite ignorant of the circumstances under which the sermon was preached: to aid such in ascertaining the probable aim of the preacher, the following facts are stated. (1.) That during a three years' residence at a distance of only three miles from the Six Mile Road school house, he had preached in that neighborhood but once before. (2.) That it is the general custom, when numerous ministerial engagements admit of only an occasional sermon in a certain locality, to take advantage of the opportunity to enforce some leading doctrine, or some rule of christian practice, liable to be forgotten, where public religious services are "like angels visits, few and far between." (3.) That at that time extra services, with a view to the revival of the work of God—such services as have been the means of the conversion of thousands in Presbyterian as well as in Methodist churches—*were* being held on the Six Mile Road. Of excitement, such as characterized the revivals in McCheyne's church, in Scotland, or those in the Presbyterian Churches in Ireland, a few years since, or that in connection with Theodore Cuyler's church in Brooklyn, two or three winters ago,—if we may judge from a prayer-meeting we attended in that church some months after—there was, we fear, not enough. We needed more kindling-wood at the time, not water. Of "proselytizing" excitement there was none. Not a word, with a view to this, was spoken, and during the services it was publicly stated, that while we felt it to be the duty of every man who was earnestly seeking, or had found peace with God, to connect himself with some branch of the church, we considered no man bound, because of benefit received in these services, to become a member of the Methodist church. No notice of closing had been given—for rumors

we are not responsible—when a message came on Sabbath asking for Mr. Anderson the use of the school house on Wednesday evening. The request was at once granted, the intended service announced on the following evenings, and on Wednesday evening the sermon on excitement, the largest part of which most of my readers have had in print before them, was preached. (4.) Had Mr. Anderson wished to warn members of his own congregation against excitement, he had the opportunity of doing so on Sabbath at the Kirk in Wallace, where his people on the Six Mile road attend.

These facts presented, the reader is of course free to draw his own conclusions. From the same facts nearly, if not quite, all the Methodists present—who had of course the advantage the hearer possesses over the reader—that of being able to judge by voice, gesture, &c.—drew the inference that the intended purpose was to crush out the revival. Let it be remembered, that the inference was drawn by a congregation strongly prepossessed in the preacher's favour, some of whom had not hesitated to shew their personal regard for him by tangible proofs, when tangible proofs were needed.

We have spoken at length concerning the intention of the discourse; let us now inquire into the correctness of its teachings. Two passages from the Gospel according to Matthew, make up a double text. The one, Matt. xxi. 9, describes the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem; the other, Matt. xxvii. 22, the clamor of the Chief Priests and the multitude for his blood. The two scenes are pourtrayed and placed in contrast with each other; it is taken for granted that those who shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David," and they who cried to Pilate, "Let him be crucified," did not only "belong to the same race and city, speak the same language, and profess the same faith," but, with a few exceptions, were the same individuals. On this assumption are based sundry exhortations to beware of "mere excitement."

It is stated, see page 1, that

"These passages have often been quoted to describe the character of the religious professors who under the solemn and holy influence of the service of the sanctuary, have been moved to vow and resolve allegiance and attachment to Jesus Christ; yet who have been found when the solemnity of the occasion, and the warning, earnest words of the man of God have become things of the past, as harden-

ed and callous as ever, etc.....There are other passages and incidents in the Bible which set forth and illustrate the strange and sad phase of human nature, but none so clear and forcible as our text."

For the honor of the pulpit, we hope that it is not true that these passages have been *often* quoted to teach "the strange and sad phase of human nature referred to." If so, there is little cause for wonder that such pulpits have been powerless for good. Do these passages, we would ask, illustrate *at all*, "that phase of human nature?" The more pleasant scene of the two—all the more pleasant because seldom witnessed—that in which Christ, as the King of Kings, receives homage from man is thus described :

"Looking back through the vista of eighteen hundred years, we see Jerusalem on a certain day pouring forth from street and lane, exultant thousands to welcome her King to his capital 'Hosanna, to the Son of David.' Such is the cry of welcome, etc..... Now this jubilant multitude belong not to one class. It has representatives from all classes and conditions of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The occasion has allured the young and the old, the rich and poor. Merchant and artizan, lawyer and client, teacher and pupil, crowd and jostle with one another to get a sight of Jesus, and to pay court to him who is called King of the Jews?"

The passage is fine, we admit, but is it *true*? We have sought in the Bible for any foundation for it, but in vain. Whether the germ of the idea is to be found in Ingraham's "Prince of the House of David," we cannot say. That book was once on our library shelves, but is not there now. This much we gather from the Evangelists, concerning the scene, "Much people (according to Matthew a very great multitude) not of Jerusalem, but who were come to the feast, where they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, "took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna, Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord." John xii. 12. When these had escorted him into Jerusalem "all the city was moved, saying Who is this?"—Matt. xxi. 10. Who the actors in the scene were let Luke answer, "And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; saying Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord;

peace in heaven, and glory in the highest."—Luke xix. 37-8. We know of no other actors in the scene than the disciples; Pharisees were there, but afraid of excitement they did not "praise God with a loud voice," but went with injured countenances to the Master and said, "Master rebuke the disciples."—Luke xix. 39. Let those who see in this scene a "mere excitement, the result of a wave of unintelligent popularity," remember the Master's answer to the Pharisees, "If these should hold their peace the stones would immediately cry out."—Luke xix. 40; and his answer to the chief priest and scribes, who, offended when children in the temple caught from worshipping disciples the strains of praise, and chanted "their young Hosannas to His name," sought from the Master an order for silence, "Have ye never read, out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise."—Matt. xxi. 15. These passages escaped the preacher's eye. The earnest pleading of a child of God on earth with Him whom he is taught in the New Testament to regard as his Father in Heaven, are spoken of in the discourse as "forwardness," "unbecoming familiarity," "presumption." Do not these terms more fitly designate the conduct of those who speak of "perfected praise," and of utterance so heartfelt, that silence would cause even the stones to cry out, as mere excitement, a "wave of unintelligent popularity." "What *God* hath cleansed that call not thou common or unclean."

At page 3rd the reader is asked to turn his eye,

"To the disorderly and infuriated rabble that rage around Pilate's judgment hall. . . . . Instead of Hosannas to the Son of David, the cry that vibrates in the air is 'Let him be crucified.' How tremendous the change in every look, and tone, and gesture! The eye that a little before beamed reverence and respect on Jesus, *now* flashes with anger and malice; the lips on which a little before played the smile of good-will and welcome, now tremble with hatred. Surely the actors in both these scenes cannot in any way be related? But let us look at those crying 'Let him be crucified.' And as we pass our eye from individual to individual we observe not only similarity, but sameness of features. True we miss the disciples of our Lord, and a few friends. But strange, we recognize many of those who exclaimed vociferously 'Hosanna to the Son of David.'"

We are short-sighted mortals; we cannot see clearly as can some through the "vista of eighteen hundred years;" mists are floating about near the hither side,

which shut out our view. We therefore rest upon the testimony of those who lived when the stirring events of which our author wrote were taking place. A man "on that side of the bank of the river" tells us whence the "Hosannas" proceeded—from the "whole multitude of the disciples:" in his narrative of the second and sadder scene, he tells us of timid disciples who fled, and even of one who with curses denied his Master, but gives us no intimation, however slight, that a single disciple, who shouted Hosanna, lifted up his voice in that terrible outcry which startled heaven and earth, "Let him be crucified." A man on "this side of the bank of the river" confuses us. He writes, "true we miss the disciples of our Lord, and a few friends." Thus the *disciples*, the very men who shouted "Hosanna," are dismissed from the scene, and yet, as he compares the triumphal crowd with the *rabble*, those who gathered around the Saviour at the descent of Olivet, and those who clamoured for his blood at Pilate's judgment hall, he "observes not only similarity but sameness of features." As if a little lad should say, "take two from two and two remain."

A noted divine of a former generation, with no small labor, prepared and published an edition of Pilgrim's Progress, with notes, intended to aid the uneducated reader. Meeting one day a man of this class, into whose hands the work had fallen, the author asked his opinion of it; and was not a little surprised by the man's reply, that he liked the main part of the book very well, but could not understand the notes! Just such is our own difficulty; we can understand the text, but not the notes.

He errs, we think, who supposes that among the multitude who followed the Saviour to the cross, there were no bleeding hearts except those of the women, and of the twelve who had courage to face that sad death scene; no cross-bearers toiling up the ascent of Calvary save Simon the Cyrenian. Had Simeon and had Anna left no followers of their faith?

Of the common people, who had heard him gladly, or of those who saw his miracles, or to whom and to whose friends he had given sight, hearing, speech, and given back the life that had fled, were there none among the "much people that were come up to the feast" to shout his praises and weep over his death? There was a Joseph

of Arimathea, a Zaccheus, one home at Bethany contained Mary, Martha and Lazarus, between whom and Christ there existed a mutual attachment; were these the only disciples, beside the twelve? Forty days later, when the shepherd had been smitten and the sheep scattered, one hundred and twenty persons met in an upper room at Jerusalem, to await in a prayer meeting the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Where then is the necessity of assuming that the multitude who offered to Christ praise in the day of his triumph, was the one which clamoured for his blood in the day of his humiliation?

We pass by the question, "whence the sudden change," for the simple reason that *no* sudden change took place, but duty forbids us to pass without notice those severe denunciations of excitement which make up the remaining part of the discourse. And here let us pause to say that we have read the discourse, and have had it read to us, and yet cannot bring ourselves to believe that it is in every respect the same sermon as that to which we listened so attentively at the six mile road school house a few weeks since. With any additional embellishments we find no fault—we do not *remember* the "solemn picture gallery," or the "balloon"—for custom permits a minister to take his sermon home and polish it up, and the politician to revise his speech, and then publish it as the sermon or speech delivered at such a time and place; as far as the welfare of the general reader is concerned, we are rather pleased than pained by the suppression of certain strong language; but as the sermon is placed in the hands of Mr. Anderson's congregation, to enable them to contradict certain "base misrepresentations," they should have it, not as it was written, but as it fell from the preacher's lips, or not at all. An ordinary reader would read the printed sermon in fifteen or twenty minutes; we believe that the delivery of the sermon occupied twice that length of time. Suffice it to say, that the denunciations of the lip were stronger than those of the pen.

Had the preacher that evening remembered that "overdoing is the devil's way of undoing" and expressed his fears, warning against the evil, while he took care to encourage the good, he would have attracted towards himself the christian love of anxious hearts, who might

have remembered his name in connection with their religious experience throughout their term of service in the church militant, and through the eternity of joy in the church triumphant. We had that day, in another part of the circuit, committed to the grave the remains of one whose religious life commenced during a revival, many years ago, and who from his bed of death had taught us by his patience and meek, yet unwavering confidence, new lessons concerning the supporting power of the Redeemer, in pain, and in death; an aged friend, at whose fireside we had taken a seat for a short time, on our way home, had been telling us of the conversion in a revival, of some of his children, who had since passed away, leaving behind them a good testimony; so that it is possible that we were less prepared to listen to wholesale denunciation of religious "excitement," than on an ordinary occasion. As it was, we felt that the preacher was that evening pursuing a dangerous course; and now with his admissions in the pamphlet before us, we feel our conviction to that effect strengthened. The danger in such cases, is a two-fold one. "A religious revival" is said in the sermon, to be "the work of God;" "a religious excitement," "the result of man's plans and purposes;" Man plans and purposes, when evil, can only be prompted by the devil, who, it is admitted in the sermon, may "appear as an angel of light, and take of the things of Christ to further his own evil purposes." "A religious revival" then, is the work of God; a religious excitement the work of the devil. Yet, remarks the preacher, "the appearances are alike, the difference lies in the heart." Then, if the difference lie in the heart, that mystery of mysteries, who should venture to judge, save God alone? It was the rash declaration of envious Jews, "He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils," which brought out in the teachings of Christ, that most solemn and startling of all the lessons he taught, that on the sin against the Holy Ghost. There is a danger in this direction, but there may also be danger in another direction. Words, like small things generally, are mighty in their influence—too mighty to be strung together like beads, and thrown at random into a crowd. Wholesale denunciation of wrong may possibly blind some to what is right; advice unguardedly given, may possibly lead some friend

into dangers of which we never dreamed. So we have thought, while reading some sentences on the fourth page of the pamphlet before us. A few of these sentences we transfer.

“Take, for example, a man of quick feelings, and see how soon he is wrought upon; a hymn beautifully sung will make him quiver. When the love of God is spoken of or the glories of the New Jerusalem described; when the sufferings of the martyrs, or the deathbeds of the saints are described, he is moved with much feeling, and perhaps tears trickle down his face, and then he persuades himself that, because he is the subject of these emotions, his heart is religious, and that he is converted, or being converted.”

Too much prominence cannot be given in the pulpit to the truth taught in the passage. Right glad shall we be if here, our readers will pause, and ask as in the sight of God, the reason of the hope which is in them. Yet though these passages are followed by exhortations, a hidden danger lurks near. Is it not possible that hearts softened by these influences, and ready to pray, may remember the above quoted utterance, and say, “this is only excitement,” and rush back into paths of heedlessness? Take hymns, for instance, even “exciting” hymns, spoken of in another page. Who that has marked their influence upon the Reformation of the sixteenth century, or their influence upon individual hearts in every branch of the Church, can overrate their value? A singer in one of our church choirs,—like too many in that position, trifling and thoughtless, suddenly pauses as his lips are about to utter those words of Watts, “Let those refuse to sing, who never knew our God;” he cannot sing them; he asks himself why? The reason is soon found, and henceforth he seeks pardon of sin, and worships while he sings. A Scotchman, unmindful of the teachings of a pious Presbyterian mother, goes on in crime till he is found awaiting in prison the extreme penalty of the law; a minister who visits him, finds him deaf to all entreaties and arguments, when one day he sings “O Mother dear Jerusalem” and the fountains of the deep are broken up, as the criminal remembers childhood’s prayer at a mother’s knee; henceforth his heart is open to receive the teachings of the gospel. An actress, attracted by the music, enters a Methodist church, in one of the largest cities of England, just as the congregation are singing “no room for mirth or trifling here,” is convinced of sin, experiences pardon, and leads henceforth a new life.

Would Mr. Anderson be willing to tell any member of his congregation, who, awakened by some such "exciting" hymn, should come to him for spiritual guidance—that such feelings were "mere excitement?" We hardly think that he would, and yet we might infer so from the remarks we have quoted. Or "when the love of God is spoken of" especially the manifestation of it in the death of Christ, which led a Greenlander to weep, as the missionary related it, and to say, as tears trickled down his cheeks, "tell me that again," and to become the first fruits unto Christ in that land, and a feeling of sorrow came over the heart, must a man repress that feeling which may be the first dawn of repentance, for fear of excitement. Or if on some certain occasion the "glories of the New Jerusalem" are described, or "the sufferings of martyrs," or "the death-bed scenes of saints" described, and some voice within prompt the hearer to pray for an interest in the blood of Him, who has prepared for men the mansions above, and has enabled martyrs to shout in the fires, and poor fallen men like himself, to die triumphantly, must he refuse to pray until he has satisfied himself that he is not "excited." On this point there should be no uncertain sound. A watchful pastor, who has become acquainted with the religious life of his people, will often be surprised at the influences which have led them to a life of faith in the Son of God.

Here and there an admission is made which startles us. Here is one. "In nine cases out of ten such religion—(religion that has its growth in the hot-bed of mere excitement)—is only temporary and vanishing before the serenity of life's journey." We are glad to hear it admitted, though for our part we are delicate about judging in such matters, that one in ten of those who start for heaven from "the hot-bed of mere excitement," walks worthy of his high calling. Admitting this measurement to be correct, any attack on the "hot-bed" should be carefully planned, lest through our indiscretion even that tenth "brother, for whom Christ died, should perish." Farther criticism might be indulged in here, but we forbear. It is admitted that the results of excitement are precisely the same as the results of the Saviour's labours on that occasion when he cleansed ten lepers, only one of whom returned to give glory to God. Is it not possi-

ble that the condemnation of the one may involve the condemnation of the other?

If at any time we may even suspect, what some may call "a revival of religion," to be mere excitement, let us take the advice of one learned in the law, "Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught; but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." Acts v., 38-39.

With great pleasure we learn from one of the concluding paragraphs that Mr. Anderson does believe in revivals; yet as on the last three pages of the sermon there are candid statements of doubts and fears, such as would have prevented him from standing boldly with Peter and the rest of the apostles on the day of Pentecost, or from holding up the hands of brethren worn down by excessive labor in Scottish and Irish revivals of which we have read, it will be to us a not unpleasant task to notice these difficulties, and, if possible, remove them. When Nathanael asked Philip, "can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip answered, "come and see." The acceptance of a like invitation, which with all our heart we tender, would render our task an easier one. It would be wrong to speak of these suspected dangers in a trifling spirit; attendance on even the ordinary services of the Sabbath has its dangers, in no way avoided by him who for this reason neglects them; the ministry of the preacher whose sermon we review is to the congregation he addresses a ministry of condemnation, if not of salvation.

Yet we are in no part of scripture taught, that because earnest labor involves increased responsibility, and consequently increased danger, we are to relax our labors; on the contrary, the example of Paul, struggling under his burden, and groaning out, "who is sufficient for these things," yet girding himself up for fresh efforts, "if by any means he might save some," teaches us plainly in what direction our path of duty lies.

The first difficulty we note is the fear of *excitement*. Yet why, we ask, should a minister be so fearful of excitement? "Is it not enough for the servant that he be as his master?" Surely the life of Jesus will not be condemned; or his works be lightly spoken of because they were not done in a corner. Excitement surrounded his

cradle ; it was seen in gifts bestowed by wise men from the East, in the terror and anxiety of Herod's court, in the weeping and wailing of Jewish mothers who refused to be comforted for their children whom Herod had ruthlessly slain. When He threw himself heart and soul into "His Father's business," friends sent out to lay hands upon him, because, they said, "He is beside himself." When He cast the devil out of the child brought to him by an anxious father, the devil threw the child down and tore him, and bruising him hardly departed from him. Excited multitudes listened to him in the streets, and followed him from place to place, to be relieved of their evils, or to see others relieved by his miraculous power. When men honoured him with shouts of praise, he defended their excitement against the cold, hard-hearted Pharisees. He cried "It is finished," and gave up the ghost in the midst of excitement, in which not only good men and bad men but even the heavens and the earth participated. Roman guards, stern, bold men, and disciples, weak and timid, were excited by his resurrection. When, according to his promise, the Holy Ghost, the comforter, descended on the day of Pentecost on the "blest disciples," on-lookers declared "these men are full of new wine." That chapter in the early history of the Christian Church, the Acts of the Apostles, is but a repetition of stirring, exciting scenes, compared with which the highest pitch of religious excitement in the present day is dullness itself. And just as long as there is a soul unsaved whom Jesus seeks for another trophy of his love and power, and whom Satan seeks to lead to eternal banishment, there *must* and there *will* be excitement. Let no true minister be fearful of it. You can do little with men in matters secular or sacred till you have succeeded in arousing their feelings. "Let us pray," says the author of the sermon, "that God's Spirit may descend to awaken souls from the sleep of sin." We respond Amen. But as travellers who in some unexplored regions, overtaken by the darkness of the night, have lain down to sleep on the brink of some precipice, are excited when the dawn of morning shows them that there has been but one step between them and death, so men awakened from the sleep of sin, to find that

"A point of time, a moment's space  
Removes them to that heavenly place,  
Or shuts them up in hell,"

will be excited ; and ministers will find that " daily in the temple and from house to house " they must, like the apostles, " cease not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ."

It is feared that excitement may lead to *unbecoming familiarity* (1.) in prayer. " The actors in these exciting scenes," it is said, " show a forwardness and presumption of communication in their addresses to Almighty God which a man would not dare show his next door neighbor." What the preacher may have heard in another land we of course cannot say, but within the range of our own experience the danger has never been realized. We have listened to child-like prayers uttered by those who had been taught the New Testament doctrine that a Christian is a child of God, dependent upon a Father in heaven, who is not offended by being asked for " daily bread." We have heard earnest prayers with deep satisfaction, because we remembered " that the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force ;" imploring prayers seldom if ever equalled by the pleading of the Syro-Phenecian woman, " truth Lord, yet the dogs eat the crumbs which fall from the children's table," or the entreaty of the blind man, " Thou Son of David have mercy upon me ;" and we have heard stately prayers, such as addressed to a next door neighbor, would lead him to ask, Is the man in earnest? Of the two kinds we admit a strong preference for the former. It is just possible that there may be irreverence in prayer, irreverence amounting even to a trespass upon the fourth commandment, but the danger is much greater where cold, lifeless souls ask for what they do not mean, than when souls in earnest ask for what they feel they must have, and are entitled to claim according to the promises of a Father in heaven.

Respecting familiarity, 2ndly, in speaking of the hope that is in us, a few words may be said. It is remarked that " man cannot without loss expose to every curious gaze the holiest feelings of his soul, or talk often of his secret experiences without these becoming things of the past." There are treasured up in the memory of all earnest Christians recollections of joys and experiences of which they cannot speak: if they would, for they are " unspeakable and full of glory ;" they only can be spoken of freely, when the mortal shall put on immortality ; yet,

of general Christian experience, confidence, supporting grace and hope of the glory of God, any man in whose heart there has lodged a spark of the Saviour's burning charity will feel that if even a natural interest in the welfare of others may not lead him to search to make another happy his duty as a "witness" for God will cause him to speak out. If in so doing the fountain of feeling be dried up it cannot have been supplied from the river of water of life. Against the quotation by which the idea just alluded to is sought to be sustained, and which, like much poetry in our day, is poor theology, let us place the words of a keen observer and reader of human nature.

"Thoughts shut up spoil,  
Like bales unopened to the sun."

Is the reader into whose hands this little pamphlet has fallen, conscious of decline in spiritual life? We leave him to answer a solemn question. Was the first symptoms of decline a more than usual willingness to speak for Christ, or was it a blush to own His name? At the same time we ask our unconverted readers whether the reticence of Christians, respecting the gospel they profess so highly to esteem, has not been one of the greatest stumbling-blocks in their way?

It is feared that this excitement may be *deceptive and injurious*. That there is a fearful possibility of self-deception all must admit. Against this danger, frequent warnings were sounded by Christ and his Apostles. Pastors of the present day need carefully to follow their example. At those special periods, when parties present themselves for church-membership, whether during the special services of the communion week, or those more extended services, such as were being held when the sermon under review was preached, no uncertain sound should be uttered. If it be possible that any dream of conversion, because of a "mere momentary elevation of feeling," no remissness of the pastor should encourage him to dream on; on the other hand, care should be taken lest some weak, yet sincere soul, with his face heavenward, should be disheartened by a comparison with some advanced christian who has reached, we will not say an Alpine height,—the idea is too cold,—but some one of those Pisgah heights, whence he may catch near glimpses of the promised land. To the "freshet" illustration we

object. It has been our happiness to spend several years of ministerial life on the banks of the beautiful river which winds its way two hundred miles and more through the rich lands of the neighboring Province, and we know that when the drought of summer has parched the highlands, and rendered the supply of food for man and for beast, uncertain, the farmer casts a hopeful glance upon those rich intervals over which a short time before the waters of the spring freshet rolled grandly along. Still more decidedly do we object to the idea intended to be conveyed by the illustration "that religious excitement sweeping over the soul of man, leaves it harder than ever." We commend to our readers the timely remark which follows: "The world, which is very quick-eyed, learns and weighs christianity, not so much from the pulpit and the press, as from the character of its professors." Let this truth be carefully borne in mind, at the present season, so often devoted to frolicking and dancing, for carelessness on the part of church-members will "give occasion to the world to curl its lips in derision, and to point the finger of scorn at religion and its professors."

The assertion that "excitement gives but a very *partial* and *one-sided* view of the truth as it is in Jesus," we have never heard before. We have always been accustomed to pulpits whence rang out full and clear the doctrine that godly sorrow for sin, and a firm determination by Divine aid to go and sin no more, must precede pardon for past sin. It is a fact worthy of note that in general a consistent conduct, and a godly conversation are more frequently urged upon members in those churches where a certain amount of religious excitement finds favor, than in those where it does not.

To the next paragraph we have already devoted a few lines of this review. We therefore only pause to ask, Does the preacher really mean to teach his readers that religion is like a plant *indigenous* to the soil, and is not an *exotic*?

Words are sometimes used to conceal, not reveal our meaning. There seems to be an effort so to use them in the sentence, "Sin easily forgiven easily committed." It is possible that this obscure sentence is intended to mean that sin quickly forgiven, or forgiven at any pre-

cise time, is more likely to be committed again. If s  
 may be replied, that the great sacrifice for the sins of  
 world has been offered: the message of God to man  
 "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt  
 saved." By Him all that believe are justified from  
 things from which ye could not be justified by the law  
 Moses." If forgiveness of sin did depend upon penit  
 ial sighs and tears, it might be long withheld, but it  
 depends upon Him who dying upon the cross cried, "It  
 finished." Therefore, as a New Testament saint writes  
 from experience, "if we confess our sins, He is faithful  
 just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all  
 righteousness." Sudden conversions are the rule, not  
 exception of the New Testament. Sin is repented  
 faith in Christ is exercised, God according to promise  
 pardons. How easily, it is not for man to say.

From experience we can confirm one remark in  
 sermon, "very mysterious" indeed "is the way in which  
 God uses man for his own eternal purpose."

The author of this hastily written review, cannot  
 down the pen, and hand his manuscript to the printer  
 without acknowledging his deep indebtedness to the  
 author of the sermon on excitement.

He has been led to look into the philosophy of revival  
 to mark their results upon the Church at large and upon  
 the lives of private individuals, to call to mind many mem  
 bers of the Church above and the Church below, who  
 lives of faith and labors of true Christian love commended  
 in seasons of religious excitement; he remembers that  
 branch of the Church with which he esteems it to be  
 honor to be connected has grown up and prospered  
 spread around a goodly influence, mainly by means of  
 revivals, and he returns from the unattractive work of  
 fence to the pleasanter work of building up, well pleased  
 if he may be the instrument *by any means*, of saving souls  
 and thankful to the writer who has been the agent  
 "stirring up his mind by way of remembrance."



