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ARTICLE I.

POPULAR REVIVALS.

We would observe once for all, that the following observations upon "Revivals" are designed for no one denomination exclusively, but are addressed to the candid judgment and prayerful consideration of Christians of every name. An especial appeal, however, is made to the thought, serious and earnest, of any brother who has ventured to engraft "means" and "measures" confessedly of human origin, upon an economy explicit, inspired, and unmistakable.

True revivals are very ancient. David prays for one in his day, but he clearly indicates the way to it. "I will hear what God the Lord will speak; for he will speak peace unto his people and to his saints; but let them not turn again to folly. Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him." But old ways, which prevailed in David's time, require too much genuine toil and self-denial for the present impatient generation. Every thing and every body in our time must travel fast. The masses, as well as certain professed teachers, love excitement. The "revivalist" is greatly in favor with the public. A sprightly brother distils his entire stock of discourses down to fifteen or twenty, and then sets out on a journey of spiritual knight-errantry. He has a special sermon for every class, and certain results are to

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follow inevitably in the course of five or six days. His arrival in every community is heralded from press and pulpit. Persons of every description, and from every conceivable motive, turn out to hear. Discourse No. 1 is usually devoted to a narrative of the wonders performed by this Boanerges in communities recently visited. A meeting was held at Mt. Horeb or Mt. Zion, and scores were converted. A series of sermons preached in such a city or village shook Satan's kingdom to the very foundation. Night after night the congregation increases. The preacher waxes warm, and his discourse abounds with frightful anecdotes, death-bed scenes, pathetic stories, and brimstone appeals. By and by, this heaven, such as it is, begins to work. Young persons are terribly alarmed, old ladies cry out, and at the auspicious moment, "the revivalist" claps his hands and calls for "mourners." When a liberal response is made to this appeal, the sensation greatly deepens. Persons in the back of the room crowd forward to see, others nearer the pulpit stand on their feet, whilst all over the house expectation is on tip-toe. The congregation are now exhorted to sing "something lively," and at this juncture a song is often sung remarkable neither for its rhythm nor its Christian sentiment. A brother furnishes the following couplet, in substance, as a specimen :

"The Devil, Calviii, and Tom Paine,
Assault the mourner's bench in vain ;
Their doctrine shall be downward hurled—
The mourner's bench shall take the world.
Glory hallelujah."

Frequently, a "mourner" is taken through a wonderful ordeal. Two or three whisper in his ear at once, whilst a third beats time on his back ; and if this plan fails to bring the distressed party "through," he is sometimes held up by several of the brethren and manipulated in diversified ways. Finally, nature is exhausted, and the half distracted soul feels prepared to say any thing that may be put into his mouth. Accordingly, questions asked at this juncture are answered to the satisfaction of the inquirer, and the announcement is forthwith made triumph-

antly to the whole congregation that one more soul has been "happily converted unto God." This swells the volume of phrensy, and for a few moments there is an intermingling of songs, prayers, groans, and shoutings, with many *et ceteras*. The meeting continues until sensible men have their doubts, simple ones grow weary, and the "revivalist" himself thinks it prudent to announce "the farewell sermon." At the closing service, there is a goodly share of self-glorification, as at the beginning. The spoils are now gathered, material as well as immaterial, and the remarkable preacher goes forth to other fields. Newspapers publish the wonderful revival, and the millennium seems to be coming on apace.

But the so-called revival over, what then ensues? We desire to speak in the fear of God and as we must give account. The experience and observation of the writer extend over twenty years, and the opportunities for judging during that period have been large; and it is his deliberate and profound conviction that every congregation is deeply injured that tolerates in its bosom, almost in any form, these popular excitements, yecept "revivals." Reaction is sure to set in speedily. The meeting over, and multitudes think that religion has occupied time and space enough, and that the house of God can be safely neglected now, while secular affairs come in for their share of attention. And thus it is a natural, not to say unavoidable, consequence that mental and moral drowsiness should supervene upon such a long period of wakefulness and nervous exhaustion. The plain gospel, without "measures," loses its charms; and when the pastor resumes regular labor among the flock, he finds out to his sorrow that poison, and not wholesome food, has been administered. In a little time all parties feel discouraged. True Christians are bewildered, spurious professors turn back, scepticism comes in like a flood, the pastor himself is often complained of and sometimes dismissed, while a church which, under faithful, regular, sensible gospel teaching, would have steadily and healthfully grown, is scorched and desolated by strange fires kindled on her own altars. Against all such fanatical contrivances, and every approximation thereto, the writer would enter his solemn and earnest protest.

Now, what is a revival? Let this question be settled in the first place, and the path becomes plainer. "To the law and the testimony." It is clear, from the etymology of the word, that the term revival cannot be applied to a religious interest which exists among *unconverted* persons. To *re-live*, one must have *lived* before, which is not true in regard to the unregenerate. The term revival, therefore, can be applied properly only to God's elect. Unconverted people may be *awakened*, but are never revived. A genuine revival must be sought in the church. It occurs when believers of the present day, like Daniel of old, "set their faces unto the Lord God to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting and sackcloth and ashes." Dan. ix. 3, 20. David says, "Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion; for the time to favor her, yea, the set time, is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favor the dust thereof." Ps. cii. 13-15. Hear also the testimony of Isaiah: "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Is. lvii. 15. It is also found in every genuine revival that the hearts of parents are turned to the children. Luke i. 17. The present age, however, is impatient, and machinery and quick work is the fashion in everything. But it will be demonstrated after a while that the mind and soul of man cannot be turned like a piece of wood. Excitement can only reach up to a certain point. After that comes paralysis. And hence many who once seemed to be consumed with zeal, are now rarely ever seen in the sanctuary. The most callous souls are those who in past days made the noisiest profession. These results are in accordance with established law. He who sows the wind must reap the whirlwind. To apply the term "revival" to a company of excited, half-distracted sinners, is a misnomer. There is nothing in such persons to revive. A true revival is the gracious, orderly, holy working of the divine Spirit in the hearts of *believers*. Of course, where this holy influence is experienced by the faithful, unconverted persons feel the power. We would not on any account utter a word of

discouragement in regard to those seasons of special interest which often occur where the gospel is faithfully preached, (and it may be necessary at such times to increase, prudently, the regular services,) but our purpose is to condemn extemporized, "gotten up" "revivals."

The following marks always accompany a *genuine* religious interest: 1. Faithful self-examination. Says Jeremiah, "Let us search and try our ways and turn again unto the Lord." The Psalmist prays, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

2. Secret prayer. Dan. ix.

3. Careful study of the word. It was for this that the Bereans were commended above them of Thessalonica.

4. Godly conversation in connexion with fixedness of purpose. Malachi iii. 16.

5. Systematic labor and self-denial. Phil. ii. 12.

From these acts and experiences there arises, as a consequence, the joy of the Lord, and the Church is *revived*. We can more certainly calculate the conditions of spiritual law than we can the laws which regulate physical nature. In the latter disturbing elements cannot be foreseen, and calculations are baffled. But in the spiritual world all is harmony; we reap what we sow. There is never an exception. To limit the Eternal, as is sometimes virtually done, to any month or season of the year, is blasphemous; for all seasons are his and the Church's power should be distributed through every period the year round. Better, like Enoch, to walk with God continually, than to drive six months furiously like Jehu, and then follow after the sins of Jeroboam the remainder. No shrewd sensible man of the world ever attempts to build up a permanent trade by spasmodic efforts. A genuine revival is a blessed thing, and its fruits like the "clusters of Eschol," but those popular agitations which fire the feelings only are greatly to be deplored. It is true that the wisest pastors are oftentimes at a loss when the pressure from without and within becomes very great. Many church members love novelty, prefer a different preacher every Sunday, and are ever

ready to find fault with any minister who advocates a constant adherence to a "form of sound words." But let the pastor be firm, even if he drives off permanently these "foolish and unlearned" intermeddlers. The Holy Spirit dwells richly in the hearts of a few in almost every congregation whose coöperation with the faithful minister will bring matters to a proper basis by and by. There are crises in the history of many pastorates when heroic courage is demanded, and at such a period cowardice is not only sinful and degrading, but extremely impolitic.

In the conversion and salvation of the elect, the Almighty appoints a bound, and there is no margin for improvement. The gospel is "*the power of God*" to this end. A faithful proclamation of the "glad tidings" is all the machinery that is needed in the salvation of those who are "ordained unto eternal life." The great commission distinctly indicates this: "Go ye into all the world and *preach my gospel.*" The true minister is an ambassador for God to proclaim Christ and him crucified. Here is a *perfect remedy* for every diseased soul: A certain moral effect is to be produced, and the gospel alone is the agent; it is "*the power.*" Let us reason just here by analogy. Suppose disease of a certain type fastens upon a human frame and the physician prescribes calomel. This dose and only this will arrest the sickness. But when the physician goes away a conceited nurse throws out a portion of the prescription and adds adulterations to the remainder! Is it any wonder in such a case if the sufferer dies, or else recovers so slowly and imperfectly that he remains delicate for life. For sin-sick, lost, dead souls, God prescribes a specific cure, *the gospel*; but religious quacks are for substituting every conceivable nostrum: revival songs, mourner's benches, with other clap-trap, are brought in as appendages. The "revivalist" understands the necessities of man better than that God who made and redeemed him! Who can imagine without a shudder the apostles Paul or Peter or John introducing such measures as have distinguished, not to say, disgraced, the "modern revival?"

And it is because of these spiritual adulterations that so many professed Christians of the present day are weak and sickly. Their

wounds have been healed slightly, for the medicine was diluted and deprived of its power. The truth, be it said, needs no adjuncts. It is simple, solemn, grand, and powerful. This weapon, which the Master has perfected for the pulling down of strongholds, is far better adapted to the purpose, when its own metal is depended upon, aside from and independent of all human devices. For the word of God, thus wielded, is sharper than a two-edged sword, and pierces even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. All armor beside, offensive or defensive, only adds to the warrior's burden, and will be as likely to damage the bearer as the enemy.

He who preaches mainly to the imaginations and fears of the people, and brings in certain unwarranted "measures" to his aid, will produce results, but the fruit in these cases will be like the seed. But let it be remarked that neither the Bible nor good men are responsible for that harvest of spurious conversions which is invariably reaped from such incautious sowing. The amount of gospel truth proclaimed by some public teachers is astonishingly small; and if any one should be converted at such times, it is in consequence of the Holy Spirit's operations through the word received into the mind at other places and in days gone by, and in spite of the present distracting disabilities.

If it is vulgar applause and newspaper renown that the itinerant "revivalist" seeks after, we would by all means advise "measures." It matters not that the fire which consumes the sacrifice burns up the altar likewise—it is but a trifle after all that the Master is wounded in the house of his friends; the end of the preacher has been gained—popularity with the multitudes, accompanied by certain tangible appurtenances!

We say that the gospel is a power that no creature, however great his influence, has a right to tamper with. A curse is pronounced upon the man that adds to or takes from its inspired teachings. Rev. xxii. 18. It is perfect and final as a revelation. It unfolds man's corruption and inability, but it provides an all-sufficient atonement, and points to the interceding Saviour, while the promise is distinct, that wherever the cross of Christ,

in its deep and broad significance, shall be proclaimed, there the Holy Spirit will set his seal. If, therefore, those hours consumed in bootless songs and senseless ravings were devoted to sound scriptural instruction, the results would indeed be permanent, as well as valuable to the Church of God. How long will it take the world to learn that the *gospel* is *the* sword of the Spirit, and that it is the truth, and the truth alone, that convicts and makes alive? Hence a revival is to be judged by the amount of gospel power that lies at the bottom. The gospel goes straight to its mark, and leaves a distinctive and distinguishing imprint. Man-devised and extraneous "measures" leave an impression too, but it differs from its counterpart as night differs from day. All effects produced by the artifices of men are ephemeral, but the word of God "endureth forever." In the Scriptures, the preacher is instructed, limited, and warned. He is commanded to preach the gospel, glory in the cross, and know nothing save Jesus Christ and him crucified. Any amendment to the divine charter is the dictation of a worm to its Maker, and shall be punished fearfully in the end. For the preacher thereby imperils himself and the souls of those who hear. Let the minister never forget that the saving of souls is the primary aim of all preaching, and that to accomplish this the gospel is God's specific. The "revivalist," in catering to his own ease and ambition, may substitute a few sensational discourses, in the place of those "things new and old" which are furnished to a congregation, in sweat and toil, through a series of years, but it will be found at the last that human hosannas and a purse of gold are miserable substitutes when an angry judge shall make inquisition for blood.

We entreat the young minister to lay the foundations deep and broad. To this end *occasional* effort not will suffice. Hard work in the study and closet, faithful pastoral visitation, and systematic Bible teaching for all classes; these are the indispensable conditions of permanent success. The word of life—from the pulpit, in private conversation, by catechetical instruction, and through the use of judiciously conducted inquiry meetings—must be carried in its tenderness, simplicity, and authority, to every one, from the highest to the lowest. For by this process

alone the *congregational* conscience can be reached and thoroughly aroused. Let it be understood, therefore, that enlistment in this service is for life, and that no straggling, either among officers or privates, will be tolerated. It must be distinctly taught, too, that a dispensation of some sort is intrusted to the very feeblest even, and none are to stand idle in the market-place or elsewhere. The Scriptures should be expounded so fully as to develop all truth, experimental and practical, as well as doctrinal. The people are to be taught what they are to do, as well as what they are to believe. The *whole circle* of human duties is to be unfolded and insisted upon. The faithful pastor should sound the trumpet and set the people, after their families, with their swords, their spears, and their bows, every one to repair over against his own house. Nehemiah iii., iv. Not the preacher alone, but every member must work.

God's gracious power is manifested through the Church. Ye are the light of the world—the salt of the earth. Every Christian is a lamp-bearer appointed to a post of danger. Officer or private, he must let his light shine, or the blood of those who perish shall be required at his hand. A true disciple should bring the savor of a holy life to bear upon a gainsaying and God-defying world. What is said unto one is said unto all—watch! An army is composed not simply of officers, but of non-commissioned soldiers likewise, and when the gage of battle comes, *every man* is expected to do his duty. Pastors are to lead, but the *entire* flock must do valiantly at his side. There should be no drones in this hive. When the Church, not simply in its ministers, but all its members, is sanctified and revived through the truth, then the shout of victory shall be heard along her lines in every direction. The ark of God, in one sense, is intrusted to the believer; and if the Church militant shall ever spoil principalities and powers and make a show of them openly, triumphing over them, then she must walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long suffering, with joyfulness. No man, however feeble or humble, is to live unto himself.

The people—*all the people*—must praise God by the gifts and labors which they bring to his altars. For it is through the Church, by its life, its spirit, its light, and its truth, that the world is to be saved. In view of this, therefore, let each professed Christian solemnly consider his own individual responsibility.

The gospel thus expounded is quick and powerful—the sword of the Spirit—and will pierce the enemy's harness, and be mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds. This Bible method, however, requires faith, patience, labor, and constant self-denial. But with many professed ministers there is no mind and no heart for such work. An ostentatious plan is adopted. But it is a great mistake to suppose that the so-called "revivalist" abounds in true zeal and good works more than a discreet and quiet brother, because there is noisy parade in the one case over against unobtrusive labor in the other. The apostle says that the elders that rule well are to be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine. For such a one does not enter the harvest to reap furiously for an hour, but engages for the entire day, to bear manfully its heat and burdens. The popular "revival" is *cheap and lazy*. It proposes to shorten the "old paths" by instituting methods through which seed-sowing, germination, and harvest, shall all be simultaneous. Hot-beds are prepared and stimulating "measures" resorted to, and mankind called upon to wonder and admire. The "revivalist" insinuates to a congregation that he can accomplish more in a few days than the pastor has effected in a score of years. And verily, in one sense, he can! But here, as elsewhere, like begets its like. The plant forced violently to maturity shows signs of decay even in its budding, while the leaf "sear and yellow," the fruit dwarfed and tasteless, are suggestive not of life in its vigor and wealth, but of a death whose presence was artfully insinuated in the very seed that was sown. Where might have been rich foliage and precious "clusters," had God's laws been observed, there remain to us now only disease and barrenness, the product of man's folly.

Jesus Christ was both educator and redeemer. He went about

Galilee and taught in their synagogues. He did the same in Jewry. He sat daily in the temple and taught. And in accordance with this is the great commission, "Go ye therefore and teach" (that is instruct, train, educate, disciple,) "all nations. . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." And hence we find Paul and Barnabas *teaching* at Corinth and Antioch, and afterwards at Rome. Of course their teaching was the public and private proclamation of the gospel. In no case, however, does it appear that any stimulus was ever used aside from the essential power of the truth. To disciple the world, or any part of it, training and education must be called into exercise. Faith must have an object, and the heart be fed through the understanding. The disciples therefore are commanded to go through the nations and hold up man's ruin, guilt, and inability on the one hand, but God's willingness to save on the other, provided the sacrifice of his divine-human Son is cordially accepted as a propitiation for sin.

The whole story was told not only of God's mercy and love, but of his sovereignty and justice likewise. Man's total corruption, his just liability to all the miseries of this life, to death itself and to the pains of hell forever, were distinctly pointed out. The preacher reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come; and when any asked the way of life, justification was held up as an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ, imputed to us and *received* by faith alone.

Now, intelligently to comprehend these lessons, an individual or congregation should be still and solemn. All things must be done decently and in order. Thorough teaching cannot be effected amid noise and confusion, and even reverence itself seems to command silence and awe when an authorised ambassador is speaking for God. For if it is the *truth* that saves, how important to observe the divine injunction, "Take heed how ye hear!" That preacher, therefore, will be most honored of God, and instrumental in the salvation of the greatest number of souls, who teaches the gospel lesson so plainly that the wayfaring

man, though a fool, need not err. There should, however, be propriety and composure among the pupils whilst the educator gives line upon line and precept upon precept.

Be it remembered then that the minister's chiefest work is to preach the gospel, to preach it earnestly as a seraph if he can, but to preach it plainly and tenderly—from the pulpit—at the hearthstone—by the bedside—to the rich—to the poor—to the sick—to the sorrowful—to inquirers, many or few—to preach it in his dark days as well as in his bright—in his life as in his words—to preach IT with conviction growing deeper and deeper as he nears the judgment, that “if our *gospel* be hid it is hid to them that are lost.”

It is a melancholy and often fatal blunder when an ambassador of God so far loses confidence in the message of his Master as to resort to falsehood in any form to awaken or deepen religious impression. God is stronger than Satan, and if we sail by the compass of our great pilot no fear need be entertained of wreck; the haven shall be reached safely at last.

The influence of every thoughtful Christian man is invoked to bring back the popular mind, on this subject, to the old landmarks. Our congregations should be taught that there are but three instrumentalities warranted by the word of God: the preacher, the gospel, and the Holy Ghost. The powers of the first are limited and guarded; the teachings of the second, in everything essential, easily understood; whilst the mighty influences of the third are promised whenever and wherever the conditions annexed shall be faithfully observed.

With many earnest reflecting minds, religion has been brought into discredit by the imprudence and fanaticism of its professed friends. Refined and sensitive minds shrink back from those scenes of confusion which rival everything of that description this side pandemonium.

The root of all this mischief is to be found in the neglect on the part of parents and guardians of the old fashioned plan of *home* instruction. The mind of the present generation was sadly turned to waste in its youth, and the soil made ready for the seeds of every vile and noxious plant. Hence the field is inviting

to every travelling empiric. Let reform therefore begin in the family, let the hearts of parents be turned to their children, and let every pastor guard well his flock, *taking oversight thereof himself*, and a harvest of precious fruit shall appear in due time. Let it be understood thoroughly by preacher and people that no amount of excitement constitutes Christianity, but the existence of this last is evidenced by faithful labor, self-denial, and holy living. Every day has its duties, and the Christian must learn to work and wait; for there is a period of seed sowing and germination, as well as of harvest. First the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear. Let no one feel discouraged because results are not discernible at once. All great deeds demand time. That which comes to perfection in a day will perish in a night. But while bread cast upon the waters may be lost to view for many days, yet the sure years of God shall reveal it at the proper time. Let it only be steadfastly settled in the mind, once for all, that it is the chief end of man to glorify God, not by spasmodic efforts, at long intervals, but by a daily consecration, whose blessed light shines more and more till life's solemn close and the great victory has already begun. Let the Church work *each day* as though it were her last, and Jehovah's time, yea, the set time to favor Zion is come; for, with the joys of this salvation restored and upheld by that princely Spirit, then shall she teach transgressors his ways and sinners shall be converted unto God.

Moreover, let it be borne in mind that the gospel has a distinct aim, and that its purpose is best accomplished when the instrument is least encumbered. Each word that it utters, every blow that it strikes, is designed to shake the soul's confidence in all sublunary refuges. The Scriptures are rich in assurances that Christ is the only foundation. We venture to affirm that no inspired apostle ever invited an anxious soul to any half-way place or authorised a sinner to go anywhere in the universe but to an almighty Saviour, and that immediately. Said the prodigal, "I will arise and go to my *Father*, and he arose and went." The Philippian jailer exclaimed, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And the reply was explicit and immediate, "Believe on

the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Said Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, "I determined not to know *anything* among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." The moment the gospel is preached, it is the sinner's duty to believe, and intervening measures of any kind are impertinent. The soul should be pointed directly to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. He must be directed to arise and go *at once to Christ*, and no "bench" or "seat" should be provided for the journey. In this way the reverential minister relies solely upon the simplicity that is in Christ; for this is God's plan. No other measures are revealed, and none others are necessary. Christ and his apostles depended wholly upon that truth which is the power of God unto salvation. Paul writes to Timothy and enjoins him "*to preach the word.*" Abraham replied to the rich man in hell, when petitioned to send Lazarus back to earth, "Thy brethren have Moses and the prophets; and if they believe not these, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." Not even a miracle then can add to the saving power of the gospel, much less the trickeries of poor weak man.

It is vain to say that good has resulted from the use of empirical measures of any kind. This remains to be proved. A faithful induction of facts on this subject, as the writer humbly believes, would be startling and melancholy. Cases of conversion do occur, no doubt, in spite of extravagances and unwarranted means, for the Eternal is sovereign, and can make the very wrath of man to praise him; but if God's plan were carried out in a meek and submissive spirit, the divine agent would always demonstrate by the results the infinite superiority of the simple gospel over every measure of "human devising."

Besides, any encroachment in this direction is dangerous. For if one unauthorised measure can be introduced, so may another; and when we place our feet upon the first round of [this descent, there is no obstruction down to the very bottom. If one man uses "anxious seats" and the "mourner's bench," why may not another introduce both fiddle and banjo? And if A adds appendages to the preached word, why cannot B be permitted to

bring in a few supplements to baptism or the Lord's Supper? It will therefore be seen at once that if a precedent of the nature described be admitted at any point, the field lies wide open for the introduction of every experiment that folly shall suggest. True wisdom indicates, therefore, a strict adherence to the "old paths." Beyond the law and the testimony, no teacher, in the pulpit or out of it, should dare to go. For He who made the human heart knows its necessities and has provided for them; and when the Scriptures say that *the gospel* is THE power of God unto salvation, they do not mean the gospel *and* human "measures," but the gospel, *simple, alone, and unencumbered*. Every effort to improve on the divine economy is futile and presumptuous. Said the apostle: "Christ sent me to *preach*, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of *preaching*" (not, however, by foolish preaching, but by *gospel* preaching,) "to save them that believe."

"*Obsta principiis*" is a maxim of true wisdom. The confessional, image worship, extreme unction, the real presence, together with other gigantic superstitions, are all the outgrowth of the first human invention engrafted upon the divine commission. The first departure might have been apparently insignificant; but a wrong principle once admitted, and the pathway leads direct to Rome or infidelity, or any where else that folly and presumption choose to go. Century after century adds its "wood, hay, and stubble," until the solid foundations are covered up and disappear altogether. Nothing now but fire and flood—a convulsive reformation, with its Luthers and Calvins—can move away the drift and bring to view clearly the elementary basis. We ought therefore to oppose error at its fountain head, and every effort, from whatever pretext, to obscure the sure foundations, should be sternly rebuked and inexorably

resisted. The only safety for the Church in this or any other age is in cleaving to "the old paths" which are revealed in the Scriptures. To the law and the testimony—thus far can we safely go and no farther.

The hearts of parents must be turned to their children, and those precious hours, consumed hitherto in frivolity and self-indulgence, must be devoted hereafter perseveringly to Christian nurture in the household. The present "distress" in Church and State had its origin in the nursery. For the sake of ease or covetousness, offspring are handed over to mercenary teachers or else turned out at large, or by some other process deprived of that entertainment and sound instruction in the home circle so indispensable to mental and moral health, and as a consequence children grow up untamed like the "wild ass's colt." But duty repudiated is only sorrow put out to interest. The day of payment may be delayed, but will surely come by and by. A portion of these neglected children in health, character, body, and soul, perish speedily. Another part live longer and spread the virus of wilfulness and bad example throughout society and government, in all their ramifications, whilst the parental heart, if not seared and impervious, is lacerated and broken at the last. Domestic feuds and terrible national conflict begin their race in the passions of men who were never made to "bear the yoke in their youth." "From whence," says an apostle, "come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts, that war in your members?" Neglect of faithful training in the family accounts for a large part of the sufferings which afflict us at the present moment. We are ruled tyrannically, in society and every where, by natures that are wayward now, because the period of discipline and government was permitted to pass by unimproved. For such deep-seated disease, it must be seen at a glance, that no annual or semi-annual so-called "revival" is a fit remedy. Time-serving and ease-loving parents may quiet conscience by dependence on the "big meeting" as a universal panacea. One single week or day is to rectify the guilt and accomplish the work of years! But it will be seen that God does not pay a premium for self-indulgence and neglect.

If any are soundly converted, the Holy Spirit selects, usually, those who have been diligently educated in the family. Other professions at "popular revivals," to a large degree, are spurious. If impending ills are to be averted, the Church and society must work at the roots. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." So testifies Solomon, who also bears witness that "the curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked."

The present aspect of affairs, social, political, and religious, affords food for deep and solemn thought to every earnest mind. The *cheap and hasty* system which now obtains in the household, the school room, not to speak of civil government, has borne its sad, but legitimate results. This superficial cultivation yields a harvest scantier and more scant every year. We must return speedily to subsoiling and fertilizing, or there will be a fearful famine in the land. No man can alter the divine decree: "In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread;" and every effort to improve on God's plan only adds to our perplexity. The condition of mankind in this fallen world is probationary and disciplinary, and there are duties to discharge, burdens to bear, and great hard lessons to be learned. The mind of the country needs to be brought to serious reflection. Every family, and congregation, and individual, should be organised with a view to Christian instruction and labor, not during certain seasons of excitement, but the whole year round. Each sermon, speech, or book, in which religion, education, and human duty, are made *cheap and hasty*, should be sternly and steadfastly rejected. There is no time to lose. The elements are already wild. If another generation is taught as the present has been, a storm will gather which no man can rule. Transcendentalists may prate of the golden age and the "good time coming;" but to the Christian philosopher, the future of this country is dark exceedingly, unless good men betake themselves at once to the armory of God, and use faithfully and powerfully those weapons which divine wisdom has prepared.