

THE
CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY
OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

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PART II.
1741 To 1788.

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PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

PART II.

CHAPTER IV,

THE GREAT REVIVAL OF RELIGION, 1740-45.

Introductory Remarks.—State of Religion before the Revival in the Presbyterian Church; in New England, in Scotland, in England.—History of the Revival in the Presbyterian Church; in New Jersey, at Freehold, at Lawrenceville, Pennington, Amwell, Newark, and Elizabethtown; in Pennsylvania, at Philadelphia, New Londonderry, Neshaminy, Nottingham, &c.; in Virginia; in New England.—Proofs of the genuineness of the Revival; from the judgment of contemporary witnesses; from the doctrines preached; from the experience of its subject; from its effects.—State of Religion after the Revival.—Evils attending the Revival; spurious religious feelings, bodily agitations, enthusiasm, censoriousness, disorderly itinerating, and lay-preaching.—Conclusion.

THE great revival, which about a hundred years ago visited so extensively the American Churches, is so much implicated with the ecclesiastical history of our own denomination, that the latter cannot be understood without some knowledge of the former. The controversies connected with the revival are identical with the disputes which resulted in the schism which divided the Presbyterian Church in 1741. Before entering, therefore, upon the history of that event, it will be necessary to present the reader with a general survey of that great religious excitement, which arrayed in conflicting parties the friends of religion in every part of the country. This division of sentiment could hardly have occurred, had the revival been one of unmingled purity. Such a revival, however, the church has never seen. Every luminous body is sure to cause shadows in every direction and of every form. Where the Son of man sows wheat, the evil one is sure to sow tares. It must be so. For it needs be that offences come, though woe to those by whom they come.

The men who, either from their character or circumstances, are led to take the most prominent part, during such seasons of excitement, are themselves often carried to extremes, or are so connected with the extravagant, that they are sometimes the last to perceive and the slowest to oppose the evils which so frequently mar the work of God, and burn over the fields which he had just watered with his grace. Opposition to these evils commonly comes from a different quarter; from wise and good men who have been kept out of the focus of the excitement. And it is well that there are such opposers, else the church would soon be over-run with fanaticism.

The term 'revival' is commonly used in a very comprehensive sense. It includes all the phenomena attending a general religious excitement; as well those which spring from God, as those which owe their origin to the infirmities of men. Hence those who favour the work, for what there is divine in it, are often injuriously regarded as the patrons of its concomitant irregularities, and those who oppose what is unreasonable about it, are as improperly denounced as the enemies of religion. It is, therefore, only one expression of that fanaticism which haunts the spirit of revivals, to make such a work a touch-

stone of character; to regard all as good who favour it, and all as bad who oppose it. That this should be done during the continuance of the excitement, is an evil to be expected and pardoned; but to commit the same error in the historical review of such a period, would admit of no excuse. Hard as it was then either to see or to believe, we can now easily perceive and readily credit that some of the best and some of the worst men in the church, were to be found on either side, in the controversy respecting the great revival of the last century. The mere geographical position of a man, in many cases, determined the part he took in that controversy. A sober and sincere Christian, within the sphere of Davenport's operations, might well be an opposer, who, had he lived in the neighbourhood of Edwards, might have approved and promoted the revival. Yet Edwards and Davenport were then regarded as leaders in the same great work.

That there had been a lamentable declension in religion both in Great Britain and in this country, is universally acknowledged by the writers of this period. The Rev. Samuel Blair, speaking of the state of religion in Pennsylvania at that time, says: "I doubt not but there were some sincerely religious persons up and down; and there were, I believe, a considerable number in several congregations pretty exact, according to their education, in the observance of the external forms of religion, not only as to attendance upon public ordinances on the Sabbath, but also as to the practice of family worship, and perhaps secret prayer too; but with those things, the most part seemed, to all appearance, to rest contented, and to satisfy their conscience with a dead formality in religion. A very lamentable ignorance of the essentials of true practical religion, and of the doctrines relating thereto, very generally prevailed. The nature and necessity of the new-birth were little known or thought of; the necessity of a conviction of sin and misery, by the Holy Spirit opening and applying the law to the conscience, in order to a saving closure with Christ, was hardly known at all to most. The necessity of being first in Christ by a vital union and in a justified state, before our religious services can be well pleasing or acceptable to God, was very little understood or thought of; but the common notion seemed to be, that if people were aiming to be in the way of duty as well as they could, as they imagined, there was no reason to be much afraid." In consequence of this ignorance of the nature of practical religion, there were, he adds, great carelessness and indifference about the things of eternity, great coldness and unconcern in public worship; a disregard of the Sabbath, and prevalence of worldly amusements and follies.¹

In 1734, the Synod of Philadelphia found it necessary to issue a serious admonition to the presbyteries to examine candidates for the ministry and for admission to the Lord's supper, "as to their experience of a work of sanctifying grace in their hearts; and to inquire regularly into the life, conversation, and ministerial diligence of their members, especially as to whether they preached in an evangelical and fervent manner?"² This admonition shows that there was a defect as to all these points, on the part of at least some of the members of the Synod.

In 1740, Messrs. Gilbert Tennent and Samuel Blair presented two representations, complaining of "many defects in our ministry," that are, say the Synod, "matter of the greatest lamentation, if chargeable upon our members. The Synod do therefore solemnly admonish all the ministers within our bounds, seriously to consider the weight of their charge, and, as they will an-

swer it at the great day of Christ, to take care to approve themselves to God, in the instances complained of. And the Synod do recommend it to the several presbyteries to take care of their several members in these particulars.”³

In these papers, which will be noticed more at length in the following chapter, complaint is made of the want of fidelity and zeal in preaching the gospel, and in the discharge of other ministerial duties; and the strong conviction is expressed that many of the members of the Synod were in an unconverted state. It is true indeed that such general complaints might be uttered now, or at almost any period of the church, and that of themselves they give us but little definite information of the character of the clergy. When or where might it not be said, that many of the preachers of the Gospel were too worldly in their conversation, too little urgent, discriminating, and faithful in their preaching? That these faults, however, prevailed at the period under consideration, to a greater extent than usual, there is little reason to doubt. Mr. Thompson, in his answer to these charges, says, with respect to the complaint, “concerning the low state of religion and experimental godliness, and the influence which the negligence and remissness of ministers in the duties of their office have upon the same, I acknowledge that I believe there is too much ground for it, and that it is just matter of mourning and lamentation to all who have the welfare of Zion and the prosperity of souls at heart; yea, I am firmly persuaded that our barrenness and fruitlessness under the means of grace, the decay of vital godliness in both ministers and people, our too great contentedness with a lifeless lukewarm orthodoxy of profession, is one principal evil whereby our God hath been provoked against us, to suffer us to fall into such divisions and confusions as we are visibly involved in.”⁴ He makes the same acknowledgment with regard to some of the more specific charges. In reference to that respecting their talking to the people more about secular matters than about religion, he says: “I may charge myself in particular with being guilty of misimproving many a precious opportunity that might have been improved to much better purpose for edification of myself and others. Yet I hope the generality of us are not degenerate to that desperate degree in this matter as to prove us altogether graceless; or to give our hearers just ground to believe that we do not desire them to be deeply and heartily concerned about their eternal estate.” “As to the more serious charge of endeavouring to prejudice people against the work of God’s power and grace in the conviction and conversion of sinners,” he pronounces it to be, as far as he knows, “a downright calumny.” “It is true,” he adds, “there are some things in our brethren’s conduct which we cannot but condemn, and have condemned and spoken against both in public and private; and some things also which are the frequent effects of their preaching on many of their hearers which we cannot esteem so highly of, as both they and their admirers do.” He then refers to their censoriousness, to their endeavours to prejudice their people against them as unconverted, their intruding into other men’s congregations against their will, and the extravagances which they allowed and encouraged in public worship. He also denies the charge, that they insisted on external duties to the “neglect of vital religion and the necessity of regeneration;” and the assertion that they “seldom or never preached on the nature and necessity of conversion,” he declares to be another slander taken up from prejudiced persons.

It is worthy of remark that neither Mr. Tennent nor Mr. Blair, when professedly bringing forward grounds of complaint against their brethren, men-

tions either the denial of any of the leading doctrines of the Bible, or open immorality. It is not to be doubted, that had error or immoral conduct prevailed, or been tolerated among the clergy, it would have been prominently presented.⁵ We know, however, from other sources, that there was no prevalent defection from the truth among the ministers of our church. The complaint against the old-side was, that they adhered too rigidly to the Westminster Confession; and the theology of every leading man on the new-side, is known from his writings, to have been thoroughly Calvinistic. There is not a single minister of that age in connection with our church, whose name has come down to us under the suspicion of Arminianism. False doctrine, therefore, was not the evil under which the church then suffered. It was rather a coldness and sluggishness with regard to religion. There was, undoubtedly, before the revival, a general indifference and lukewarmness among the clergy and people; and there is too much reason to fear, that in some cases the ministers, though orthodox, knew nothing of experimental religion. These cases were indeed not so numerous as the representations of Tennent would lead us to expect, as he himself afterwards freely acknowledged.

As far, then, as the Presbyterian Church is concerned, the state of religion was very low before the commencement of the great revival. As that work extended over the whole country, and was perhaps more general and powerful in New England than anywhere else, in order to have any just idea of its character, our attention must be directed to the congregational churches, as well as to those of our own denomination. After the first generation of Puritans had passed away, religion seems to have declined very rapidly, so that the writings of those who had seen what the churches in New England were at the beginning, are filled with lamentations over their subsequent condition, and with gloomy prognostications as to the future. As early as 1678, Dr. Increase Mather says, "The body of the rising generation is a poor, perishing, unconverted, and (unless the Lord pour down his Spirit) an undone generation. Many are profane, drunkards, swearers, lascivious, scoffers at the power of godliness, despisers of those that are good, disobedient. Others are only civil and outwardly conformed to good order by reason of their education, but never knew what the new birth means."⁶ In 1721, he writes thus: "I am now in the eighty-third year of my age; and having had an opportunity to converse with the first planters of this country, and having been for sixty-five years a preacher of the Gospel, I cannot but be in the disposition of those ancient men, who had seen the foundation of the first house, and wept to see the change the work of the temple had upon it. I wish it were no other than the weakness of Horace's old man, the *laudator temporis acti*, when I complain there is a grievous decay of piety in the land, and a leaving of her first love and that the beauties of holiness are not to be seen as once they were; a fruitful Christian grown too rare a spectacle; yea, too many are given to change, and leave that order of the Gospel to set up and uphold which, was the very design of these colonies; and the very interest of New England seems to be changed from a religious to a worldly one."⁷ We must, however, be on our guard against drawing false conclusions from such statements. We should remember how high was the standard of piety which such writers had in view, and how peculiarly flourishing was the original condition of those churches whose declension is here spoken of. There may have been, and doubtless was much even in that age, over which we, in these less religious days, would heartily rejoice. What

was decay to them, would be revival to us. The declension, however, did not stop at this stage. The generation which succeeded that over which Increase Mather mourned, departed still further from the doctrines and spirit of their pious ancestors. "The third and fourth generations," says Trumbull, "became still more generally inattentive to their spiritual concerns, and manifested a greater declension from the purity and zeal of their ancestors. Though the preaching of the Gospel was not altogether without success, and though there were tolerable peace and order in the churches; yet there was too generally a great decay as to the life and power of godliness. There was a general ease and security in sin. Abundant were the lamentations of pious ministers and good people poured out before God, on this account."⁸ As a single example of such lamentations, we may quote the account of the state of religion in Taunton, in 1740, as given by the Rev. Mr. Crocker. "The church was but small, considering the number of inhabitants; and deadness, dulness, formality, and security prevailed among them. Any who were wise virgins (and I trust there were a few such) appeared to be slumbering and sleeping with the foolish; and sinners appeared to be at ease in Zion. In a word, it is to be feared there was but little of the life or power of godliness among them, and, irreligion and immorality of one kind or another seemed awfully to increase."⁹

The defection from sound doctrine was also very extensive at this period; an evil which the revival but partially arrested, and that only for a few years. Edwards speaks of Arminianism as making a great noise in the land in 1734,¹⁰ and his biographer says, there was a prevailing tendency to that system, at that time, not only in the county of Hampshire, but throughout the province.¹¹ This tendency was not confined to Massachusetts; it was as great, if not greater, in Connecticut. President Clapp, though himself a Calvinist, was elected to the presidency of Yale College in 1739, "by a board of trustees exclusively Arminian, and all his associates in office held the same tenets."¹² We know not on what authority this specific statement rests, but it is rendered credible by other facts; such, for example, as the ordination of Mr. Whittlesey at Milford, notwithstanding the strenuous opposition of a large majority of people, founded on the belief "that he was not sound in the faith, but had imbibed the opinions of Arminius;"¹³ in which matter the ordaining council were fully sustained by the Association of New Haven.

In Scotland there had been a general decay in the power of religion from the revolution in 1688 to the time of which we are now speaking. In 1712 Halyburton complained, upon his death-bed, of the indifference to the peculiarities of the gospel and to the power of godliness which prevailed among a great portion of the clergy. There had indeed been no general defection from the truth; though the lenity with which the Assembly treated the errors of Professor Simson of Glasgow, and Professor Campbell of Aberdeen, is appealed to by the Seceders, in their Act and Testimony of 1736, with too much reason, in proof of a criminal indifference to the doctrines of the church. Though there had been extensive revivals in the West of Scotland in 1725, and a most remarkable effusion of the Spirit at the kirk of Shotts in 1730, as well as in other parts of the kingdom, the general state of religion was low, and upon the decline.

In England the case was far worse. From the accession of Charles II. in 1660 and the exclusion of the non-conformists, true religion seems to have declined rapidly in the established church. Bishop Butler says, in his Introduc-

tion to his Analogy, that in his day Christianity itself seemed to be regarded as a fable “among all persons of discernment;” and in his first charge to the clergy of the diocese of Durham he laments over “the general decay of religion in the nation,” the influence of which, he says, seems to be wearing out the minds of men.¹⁴ Before the rise of the Methodists, says John Newton, “the doctrines of grace were seldom heard from the pulpit, and the life and power of religion were little known.”

Such in few words was the state of religion in England, Scotland and America, when it pleased God, contemporaneously in these several countries, remarkably to revive his work. The earliest manifestation of the presence of the Holy Spirit, in our portion of the church, during this period, was at Freehold, N. J., under the ministry of the Rev. John Tennent, who was called to that congregation in 1730, and died in 1732. “The settling of that place,” says his brother, the Rev. Wm. Tennent, “with a gospel ministry, was owing under God to the agency of some Scotch people, that came to it; among whom there was none so painstaking in this blessed work as one Walter Ker, who, in 1685, for his faithful and conscientious adherence to God and his truth as professed by the church of Scotland, was there apprehended and sent to this country, under a sentence of perpetual banishment. By which it appears that the devil and his instruments lost their aim in sending him from home, where it is unlikely he could ever have been so serviceable to Christ’s kingdom as he has been here. He is yet (1744) alive; and, blessed be God, flourishing in his old age, being in his 88th year.”

The state of religion for a time in this congregation was very low. The labours of Mr. J. Tennent, however, were greatly blessed. The place of public worship was generally crowded with people, who seemed to hear as for their lives. Religion became the general subject of discourse; though all did not approve of the power of it. The Holy Scriptures were searched by people on both sides of the question; and knowledge surprisingly increased. The terror of God fell generally on the inhabitants of the place, so that wickedness, as ashamed, in a great measure hid its head.

Mr. William Tennent, who succeeded his brother in 1733 as pastor of that church, says the effects of the labours of his predecessor were more discernible a few months after his death, than during his life. The religious excitement thus commenced continued, with various alternations, until 1744, the date of this account. As to the number of converts, Mr. T. says, “I cannot tell; my comfort is, that the Lord will reckon them, for he knows who are his.”

Those who were brought to the Saviour, “were all prepared for it by a sharp law-work of conviction, in discovering to them, in a heart-affecting manner, their sinfulness both by nature and practice, as well as their liableness to damnation for their original and actual transgressions. Neither could they see any way in themselves by which they could escape the divine vengeance. For their whole past lives were not only a continued act of rebellion against God, but their present endeavours to better their state, such as prayers and the like, were so imperfect, that they could not endure them, and much less, they concluded, would a holy God. They all confessed the justice of God in their eternal perdition; and thus were shut up to the blessed necessity of seeking relief by faith in Christ alone.”

The sorrows of the convinced were not alike in all, either in degree or continuance. Some did not think it possible for them to be saved, but these

thoughts did not continue long. Others thought it possible, but not very probable on account of their vileness. The greatest degree of hope which any had under a conviction which issued well, was a may-be: Peradventure, said the sinner, God will have mercy on me.

The conviction of some was instantaneous, by the Holy Spirit applying the law and revealing all the deceit of their hearts, very speedily. But that of others was more progressive. They had discovered to them one abomination after another in their lives, and hence were led to discover the fountain of all corruption in the heart, and thus were constrained to despair of life by the law, and consequently to flee to Jesus Christ as the only refuge, and to rest entirely in his merits.

After such sorrowful exercises such as were reconciled to God were blessed with the spirit of adoption, enabling them to cry, "Abba, Father." Some had greater degrees of consolation than others in proportion to the clearness of the evidences of their son-ship. The way in which they received consolation, was either by the application of some particular promise of Scripture; or by a soul-affecting view of the method of salvation by Christ, as free, without money and without price. With this way of salvation their souls were well pleased, and thereupon they ventured their case into his hands, expecting help from him only.

As to the effects of this work on the subjects of it, Mr. Tennent says, they were not only made to know but heartily to approve of the great doctrines of the Gospel, which they were before either ignorant of, or averse to (at least some of them;) so that they sweetly agreed in exalting free, special, sovereign grace, through the Redeemer; being willing to glory only in the Lord, who loved them and gave himself for them. They approved of the law of God after the inward man, as holy, just, and good, and prized it above gold. They judged it their duty as well as privilege to wait on God in all his ordinances. A reverence for his commanding authority and gratitude for his love conspired to incite them to a willing, unfeigned, universal, unfainting obedience to his laws; yet they felt that in everything they came sadly short, and bitterly bewailed their defects. They loved all such as they had reason to think, from their principles, experience and practice, were truly godly, though they differed from them in sentiment as to smaller matters; and looked upon them as the excellent of the earth. They preferred others to themselves, in love except when under temptation; and their failures they were ready to confess and bewail, generally accounting themselves that they were the meanest of the family of God.

Through God's mercy, adds Mr. Tennent, we have been quite free from enthusiasm. Our people have followed the holy law of God, the sure word of prophecy, and not the impulses of their own minds. There have not been among us, that I know of, any visions, except such as are by faith; namely, clear and affecting views of the new and living way to the Father through his dear Son Jesus Christ; nor any revelations but what have been long since written in the sacred volume.¹⁵

The leading characteristics of this work were a deep conviction of sin, arising from clear apprehensions of the extent and spirituality of the divine law. This conviction consisted in an humbling sense both of guilt and corruption. It led to the acknowledgment of the justice of God in their condemnation, and of their entire helplessness in themselves. Secondly, clear apprehensions

of the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, producing a cordial acquiescence in the plan of salvation presented in the Gospel, and a believing acceptance of the offers of mercy. The soul thus returned to God through Jesus Christ, depending on his merits for the divine favour. Thirdly, this faith produced joy and peace; a sincere approbation of the doctrines of the Gospel; delight in the law of God; a constant endeavour to obey his will; love to the brethren, and a habitually low estimate of themselves and their attainments. This surely is a description of true religion. Here are faith, hope, charity, obedience, and humility, and where these are, there is the Spirit of God, for these are his fruits.

The revival in Lawrence, Hopewell, and Amwell, three contiguous towns in New Jersey, commenced under the ministry of Rev. John Rowland, of the Presbytery of New Brunswick. As the churches in two of these towns belonged to the Presbytery of Philadelphia, and as a large portion of the people did not unite in the call to Mr. Rowland, he at first preached in barns. In 1744, however, a new congregation was formed under the care of the Presbytery of New Brunswick.¹⁶ According to the account of Mr. Rowland, the revival in these towns was at first slow in its progress, one or two persons only being seriously affected under each sermon. In the spring of 1739, the number increased; and the power of the Spirit evidently attended the word on several occasions, until May, 1740, when the work became more extensive. On one occasion the people cried out so awfully that the preacher was constrained to conclude. After the sermon he inquired of those whose feelings had thus overcome them, what was the real cause of their crying out in such a manner. Some answered, "They saw hell opening before them and themselves ready to fall into it." Others said, "They were struck with such a sense of their sinfulness that they were afraid the Lord would never have mercy upon them."

During the summer of 1740, the people, on several occasions, were deeply affected, and at times their convictions were attended with great horror, trembling, and loud weeping. Many continued crying in the most doleful manner, along the road, on their way home, and it was not in the power of man to restrain them, for the word of the Lord remained like fire upon their hearts. Of those who were thus affected by a sense of their guilt and danger, many became to all appearance, true Christians; many went back, and became stiff-necked. The number in the latter class was small, Mr. Rowland says, in comparison to what he had seen in most other places of his acquaintance. Those who were regarded as real converts gave a very distinct account of sin both original and actual. Their views of the corruption of their own hearts, and of their distance from God, were very clear and affecting. Their hardness, unbelief, ignorance, and blindness, pressed very heavily upon them. Their apprehension of their need of Christ, and of his Spirit, was such that they could find rest or contentment in nothing, until they had obtained an interest in Jesus Christ, and had received his Spirit to sanctify their hearts. Those under conviction were very watchful over themselves, lest they should receive false comfort, and thus rest in unfounded hopes. Their views of the Lord Jesus, as to his person, nature, and offices, and of the actings of their own faith and love towards him, were clear and satisfactory. They continued, until the date of this account, careful to maintain a holy communion with God, in the general course of their lives, were zealous for his truth, and walked steadily in his ways.¹⁷

Here, as in the case of Freehold, are to be recognized the essential fea-

tures of a genuine revival, conviction of sin, faith in Christ, joy and peace in believing, and a holy life. There was, however, apparently, a greater admixture of mere animal feeling in this than in the preceding case.

In Newark and Elizabethtown, according to President Dickinson, religion was in a very low state until 1739. In August of that year a remarkable revival, especially among the young, commenced in Newark, which continued and increased during the months of November, December, and January following. There was a general reformation among the young people, who forsook the taverns and other places of amusement. All occasions for public worship were embraced with gladness. Great solemnity and devout attention were manifested in their assemblies. In March the whole town was brought under an uncommon concern about eternal things; which, during the summer, sensibly abated, though it did not entirely die away. Nothing remarkable occurred until February, 1741, when they were again visited with the special effusion of the Spirit of God. A plain, familiar sermon then preached, without any peculiar terror, fervour, or affectionate manner of address, was set home with power. Many were brought to see and feel that till then they had no more than a name to live; and professors in general were put upon solemn inquiry into the foundation of their hope. During the following summer, this religious concern sensibly decayed; and, though the sincere converts held fast their profession without wavering, too many of those who had been under conviction grew careless and secure. What seemed greatly to contribute to this growing security, was the pride, false and rash zeal, and censoriousness among some who made high pretences to religion. This opened the mouths of many against the whole work, and raised that opposition which was not before heard of. Almost everybody seemed to acknowledge the finger of God in those wonderful appearances, until this handle was given to their opposition; and the dreadful scandals of the Rev. Mr. C., which came to light about this time, proved a means to still further harden many in their declension and apostasy. That unhappy gentleman having made such high pretensions to extraordinary piety and zeal, his scandals gave the deeper wound to vital and experimental godliness.

Thus far regarding Newark. In the fall of 1739, the Rev. Mr. Whitefield preached in Elizabethtown to a numerous and attentive audience, but without any marked result. There was no apparent success attending the labours of Mr. Dickinson during that winter; which severely tried his faith and patience, as the neighbouring town was then so remarkably visited. In June, 1740, he invited the young people to hear a discourse designed particularly for their benefit. A large congregation assembled, and he preached a plain, practical sermon, without any special liveliness or vigour, as he was himself in a remarkably dull frame, until enlivened by a sudden and deep impression which visibly appeared on the whole congregation. There was no crying out, or falling down, (as elsewhere happened,) but the distress of the audience discovered itself by tears and by audible sobbing and sighing in almost all parts of the house. From this time the usual amusements of the young were laid aside, and private meetings for religious exercises were instituted by them in different parts of the town. Public worship was constantly attended in a very solemn manner by the people generally. More persons applied, in a single day, during this period, to their pastor for spiritual direction, than in half a year before. In another letter, dated September 4, 1740, Mr. Dickinson says: "I

have had more young people address me for direction in their spiritual concerns within these three months than within thirty years before.” Though there were so many brought under conviction at the same time, there was little appearance of those irregular heats of which so much complaint was made in other parts of the land. Only two or three occurrences of that nature took place, and they were easily and speedily regulated. This work was substantially the same in all the subjects of it. Some indeed suffered more than others, yet all were brought under a deep sense of sin, guilt and danger, and none obtained satisfactory discoveries of their safety in Christ, till they were brought to despair of all help for themselves, and to feel that they lay at the mercy of God. There were no instances of such sudden conversions, nor of those ecstatic raptures spoken of in other places. Some who at one time were deeply affected, soon wore off their impressions, but Mr. Dickinson says he did not know of any two persons who gave reasonable evidence of conversion, who had disappointed his hopes. About sixty persons in Elizabethtown, and a number in the adjoining parish, were regarded as having experienced a change of heart during this revival.¹⁸

In New Brunswick and its neighbourhood, Mr. Gilbert Tennent informs us, the labours of the Rev. Mr. Frelinghuysen, of the Dutch Reformed Church, had been much blessed, especially about the time of his first settlement over that people in the year 1720. When Mr. Tennent took charge of the Presbyterian Church in New Brunswick, about 1727, he had the pleasure of seeing many proofs of the usefulness of his worthy fellow-labourer in the cause of Christ. Mr. Tennent was much distressed at his own apparent want of success; for eighteen months after his settlement, he saw no evidence that anyone had been savingly benefited by his labours. He then commenced a serious examination of the members of his church, as to the grounds of their hope, which he found, in many cases, to be but sand. Such he solemnly warned and urged to seek converting grace. By this method many were awakened, and not a few, to all appearance, converted. As the effect of his labours increased, adversaries were multiplied; and his character was unjustly aspersed, which, however, did not discourage him. He preached much, at this time, upon original sin, repentance, the nature and necessity of conversion; and endeavoured to alarm the secure by the terrors of the Lord, as well as to affect them by other topics of persuasion. These efforts were followed by the conviction and conversion of a considerable number of persons at various places, and at different times. During his residence at New Brunswick there was no great ingathering of souls, at any one time, though there were frequent gleanings of a few here and there. During the revival of 1740, New Brunswick, he says, felt some drops of the spreading rain, but no general shower.¹⁹

In his Journal, under the date of November 20, 1739, Whitefield has the following entry, relating to New Brunswick: “Preached about noon near two hours, in worthy Mr. Tennent’s meeting-house, to a large assembly gathered from all parts. About 3 P. M. I preached again, and at 7 I baptized two children and preached a third time with greater freedom than at either of the former opportunities. It is impossible to tell with what pleasure the people of God heard those truths confirmed by a minister of the Church of England, which, for many years, had been preached by their own pastor.”

With regard to the revival at Baskinridge, about twenty miles to the north of New Brunswick, we know little, beyond what is stated in Mr. Whitefield’s

Journal, under the date just quoted. He there speaks of what he had heard of the wonderful effusions of the Spirit in that congregation, of the frequent sudden conversions which had there occurred, &c. &c. These are all, however, second-hand reports, on which little reliance can be placed, especially as the pastor of that church, though making the highest pretensions to zeal and piety, was left to bring a sad disgrace upon the ministry and upon the revival of which he was one of the most prominent advocates.

Whitefield visited Philadelphia in November, 1739. He found the Episcopal churches, for a time, freely opened to him. On one occasion, he says, "After I had done preaching, a young gentleman, once a minister of the Church of England, but now secretary to Mr. Penn, stood up, and with a loud voice warned the people against the doctrine which I had been delivering; urging that there was no such term as imputed righteousness in Holy Scripture, and that such a doctrine put a stop to all goodness. When he had ended, I denied his first proposition, and brought a text to prove that imputed righteousness was a scriptural expression; but thinking the church an improper place for disputation, I said no more at that time. The portion of Scripture appointed to be read, was Jeremiah xxiii., wherein are the words, 'The Lord our righteousness.' Upon them I discoursed in the afternoon, and showed how the Lord Jesus was to be our whole righteousness; proved how the contrary doctrine overthrew divine revelation; answered the objections that were made against the doctrine of an imputed righteousness; produced the Articles of our Church to illustrate it; and concluded with an exhortation to all, to submit to Jesus Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. The word came with power. The church was thronged within and without; all wonderfully attentive, and many, as I was informed, convinced that the Lord Jesus Christ was our righteousness."

Whitefield's sentiments, manner of preaching, and clerical habits were so little in accordance with those of the majority of his Episcopal brethren, that this harmonious intercourse did not long continue. Their pulpits were soon closed against him, and he commenced preaching in the open air. One of his favourite stations. was the balcony of the old court-house in Market street. Here he would take his stand, while his audience arranged themselves on the declivity of the hill on which the court-house stood.²⁰ The effects produced in Philadelphia by his preaching, "were truly astonishing. Numbers of all denominations, and many who had no connection with any denomination, were brought to inquire, with the utmost earnestness, what they must do to be saved. Such was the eagerness of the multitude for spiritual instruction, that there was public worship regularly twice a day for a year; and on the Lord's day it was celebrated thrice, and frequently four times."²¹

During the winter of 1739-40, Whitefield visited the South, and returned to Philadelphia by sea the following spring. His friends now erected a stage for him on what was called Society Hill, where he preached for some time to large and deeply affected audiences. When he left the city, he urged his followers to attend the ministry of the Tennents and their associates. These gentlemen, accordingly, continued to labour among the people, and thus cherished and extended the impressions produced by Whitefield's preaching. In the course of this year, he collected funds for the erection of a permanent building for the use of itinerant ministers. This house afterwards became the seat of the college, and subsequently, university of Pennsylvania. Here White-

field preached whenever he visited the city, and here his associates, especially the Tennents, and Messrs. Rowland, Blair, and Finley, ministered during his absence.

In 1743, the people who had been accustomed to attend upon the occasional ministrations of the above-named gentlemen, determined to form themselves into a church, and to call a stated pastor. They accordingly presented a call to the Rev. Gilbert Tennent, who accepted their invitation, and was installed over them by the Presbytery of New Brunswick. In the letter already quoted, Mr. Tennent, after speaking of the low state of religion in Philadelphia, before the visits of Mr. Whitefield, and of the immediate effects of his preaching, says, that though some who were then awakened had lost their seriousness, and others fallen into erroneous doctrines, yet many gave every rational evidence of being true Christians. That some should have been led astray by the fair speeches and cunning craftiness of those that lie in wait to deceive, he thought was not to be wondered at, considering that the greater portion of them had not had the benefit of a strict religious education. He says he knew of none, who had been well acquainted with the doctrines of religion, in their connection, and established in them, who had been thus turned aside.

In May, 1744, he administered the Lord's supper to his people, for the first time, as a distinct church. The number of communicants was above one hundred and forty, almost all of whom were the fruits of the recent revival. Besides these, many others connected with other churches were regarded as Mr. Whitefield's converts. Mr. Tennent concludes his account by stating, that though there was a considerable falling off in the liveliness of the religious feeling of the people, yet they were growing more humble and merciful, and that their whole conversation made it evident that the bent of their hearts was towards God.²²

The Rev. Samuel Blair gives substantially the following account of the revival in New Londonderry, (Fagg's Manor,) in Pennsylvania. The congregation was formed in that place about the year 1725; and consisted, as did all the Presbyterian churches in Pennsylvania, with two or three exceptions, of emigrants from Ireland. Mr. Blair, who was the first pastor of the church at Londonderry, was installed there, November, 1739. During that winter, some four or five persons were brought under deep convictions; and in the following March, during a temporary absence of the pastor, while a neighbouring minister was preaching in his place, such a powerful impression was made upon the people, that some of them broke out into audible crying; a thing previously unknown in that part of the country. A similar effect was produced by the first sermon preached by Mr. Blair, after his return. The number of the awakened now increased very fast, and the Sabbath assemblies were exceedingly large, people coming from all quarters to a place where there was an appearance of the divine presence and power. There was scarcely a sermon preached during that summer, without manifest evidence of a deep impression being made upon the hearers. Often this impression was very great and general; some would be overcome to fainting; others, deeply sobbing; others crying aloud; while others would be weeping in silence. In some few cases, the exercises were attended by strange convulsive agitations of the body. It was found that the greater portion of those thus seriously affected were influenced by a fixed and rational conviction of their dangerous condition.

The general behaviour of the people was soon very manifestly altered.

Those who were concerned, spent much time in reading the Bible and other good books, and it was a great satisfaction to the people to find how exactly the doctrines which they daily heard preached to them, agreed with those taught by godly men in other places and in former times. Mr. Blair insisted much in his preaching upon the miserable state of man by nature, on the way of recovery through Jesus Christ, on the nature and necessity of faith, warning his hearers not to depend upon their repentance, prayers, or reformation; nor to seek peace in extraordinary ways, by visions, dreams, or immediate inspirations, but by an understanding view and believing persuasion of the way of life, as revealed in the gospel, through the suretyship, obedience and sufferings of Jesus Christ. His righteousness they were urged to accept as the only means of justification and life.

Many of those who were convinced, soon gave satisfactory evidence that God had brought them to a saving faith in Christ. In most cases, the Holy Spirit seemed to use for this purpose some particular passage of the Scriptures, some promise or some declaration of the way of salvation through Jesus Christ. In others, there was no such prominence in the mind of the inquirer, given to any one particular passage. Those who experienced such remarkable relief could not only give a rational account of the change in their feelings, but also exhibited the usual fruits of a genuine faith; particularly humility, love, and affectionate regard to the will and honour of God. Much of their exercises was in self-abasing and self loathing, and admiring the astonishing condescension and grace of God towards those who were so unworthy. They freely and sweetly chose the way of his commands, and were desirous to live according to his will and to the glory of his name. There were others who had no such lively exercises, and yet gave evidence of faith in Christ, though it was not attended with such a degree of liberty and joy. Such persons, however, generally long continued to be suspicious of their own case.

As to the permanent results of this work, it is stated that those who had merely some slight impressions of a religious character, soon lost them; and some who were for a time greatly distressed, seemed to have found peace in some other way than through faith in Christ. There were, however, a considerable number who gave scriptural evidence of having been savingly renewed. Their walk was habitually tender and conscientious; their carriage towards their neighbours was just and kind, and they had a peculiar love to all who bore the image of God. They endeavoured to live for God, and were much grieved on account of their imperfections, and the plague of their hearts. Entire harmony prevailed in the congregation. Indeed there was scarcely any open opposition to the work from the beginning, though some few of the people withdrew, and joined the ministers who unhappily opposed the revival.

During the summer of 1740, the shower of divine influence spread extensively through Pennsylvania, and beyond the borders of that province. Certain ministers distinguished for their zeal were earnestly sought for in all directions; vacant congregations solicited their services; and even some of the clergy who were not disposed heartily to co-operate in the work, yielded to the importunity of their people, and invited those ministers to visit their congregations. Great assemblies would ordinarily meet to hear them, upon any day of the week, and frequently a surprising power attended their preaching. Great numbers were thus convinced of their perishing condition, and there is every reason to believe that many were savingly converted to God.²³

Among the places in Pennsylvania particularly favoured during this season, were New Providence, Nottingham, White Clay Creek, and Neshaminy. With regard to the first of these places, Mr. Rowland, who after leaving New Jersey laboured much among those churches, says that it was while he was travelling among them that God chose as the time of their ingathering to Christ, and that since he laboured stately among those people he was as much engaged in endeavouring to build up those who had been called into fellow-ship with God, as to awaken and convince the careless. "As to their conviction, and conversion unto God," he adds, "they are able to give a scriptural account of them. I forbear to speak of many extraordinary appearances, such as scores crying out at one instant, falling, and fainting. These people are still increasing, blessed be the Lord, and are labouring to walk in communion with God and one another."²⁴

Whitefield mentions his having preached at Neshaminy on the 23d of April, 1740, to more than five thousand persons; "upwards of fifty," he adds, "I hear, have lately been brought under conviction, of sin in this place." With regard to Nottingham he gives the following account. "There a good work had begun some time ago, by the ministry of Mr. Blair, Messrs. Tennent, and Mr. Cross; the last of whom was denied the use of the pulpit, and was obliged to preach in the woods, where the Lord manifested his glory, and caused many to cry out, What shall we do to be saved? It surprised me to see such a multitude gathered together at so short a notice, in such a desert place. I believe there were near twelve thousand hearers. I had not spoken long, when I perceived numbers melting. And as I preached, the power increased, till at last, both in the morning and afternoon, thousands cried out, so that they almost drowned my voice. Never before did I see a more glorious sight. O what strong crying and tears were shed and poured forth after the dear Lord Jesus! Some fainted; and when they had got a little strength, would hear and faint again. Others cried out in a manner almost as if they were in the sharpest agonies of death. I think I was never myself filled with greater power. After I had finished my last discourse, I was so pierced, as it were, and overpowered with God's love, that some thought, I believe, that I was about to give up the ghost." The next day he preached at Fagg's Manor, where the congregation was nearly as large as it had been at Nottingham, and "the commotion in the hearts of the people" as great, if not greater.

It is evident there must have been an extraordinary influence on the minds of the people to produce such vast assemblies, and such striking effects from the preaching of the gospel. There is no reason to doubt that there was much that was rational and scriptural in the experience of the persons thus violently agitated; yet there can be as little doubt that much of the outward effect above described was the result of mere natural excitement, produced by powerful impressions made upon excited imaginations by the fervid eloquence of the preacher, and propagated through the crowd by the mysterious influence of sympathy.

Mr. Whitefield preached in New York repeatedly, during his second and third visits to this country, and was kindly received by the Rev. Mr. Pemberton, pastor of the Presbyterian church in that city, but no very remarkable results seem to have there attended his ministry.

In no part of our country was the revival more interesting, and in very few was it so pure as in Virginia. The state of religion in that province was

deplorable. There was “a surprising negligence in attending public worship, and an equally surprising levity and unconcernedness in those that did attend. Family religion a rarity, and a solemn concern about eternal things a greater. Vices of various kinds triumphant, and even a form of godliness not common.”²⁵ “Much the larger portion of the clergy were, at this time, deficient in the great duty of placing distinctly before the people the fundamental truths of the gospel.”²⁶ Various circumstances had conspired to supply the established church of Virginia with ministers unfitted for their stations; and under the influence of men unqualified to be either the teachers or examples of their flocks, religion had been reduced to a very low state. There were indeed some faithful ministers, and some who were sincerely seeking the Lord in the communion of the Church of England.²⁷ Still all accounts agree as to the general prevalence of irreligion among both the clergy and the laity.

It seems that even before the year 1740, some persons had been led, partly by their own reflections, and partly by the perusal of some of the writings of Flavel and others, to feel a deep interest in the concerns of religion. This was the case particularly with Mr. Samuel Morris, who having obtained relief to his own mind, became anxious for the salvation of his neighbours. He accordingly began to read to them the works which he had found so useful to himself, especially Luther on the Galatians. In the year 1740, Mr. Whitefield preached at Williamsburg. Though the little company, of which Mr. Morris was the centre, did not enjoy the advantage of hearing Mr. Whitefield preach, his visit awakened interest in the man, and prepared them to receive his writings with favour. Accordingly, when in 1743, a volume of his sermons was brought into the neighbourhood, Mr. Morris invited his friends to meet and hear them read. A considerable number of persons attended for this purpose every Sabbath, and frequently on other days. Mr. Morris’ dwelling being too small to accommodate his audience, a meeting-house was soon erected, merely for the purpose of reading; not being accustomed to extempore prayer, no one of the company had courage to attempt to lead in that exercise. The attention thus excited gradually diffused itself, so that Mr. Morris was frequently invited to distant places to read his sermons to the people. These meetings soon attracted the attention of the magistrates, and those who frequented them were called upon to account for their non-attendance on the services of the established church, and to state to what denomination of Christians they belonged. This latter demand puzzled them not a little. The only dissenters of whom they knew anything were Quakers, and as they were not Quakers, they could not tell what they were. At length recollecting that Luther was a great reformer, and that his writings had been particularly serviceable to them, they determined to call themselves Lutherans. About this time, the Rev. William Robinson, on a mission from the Presbytery of New Brunswick, visited that part of Virginia. He founded a church in Lunenburg, .now Charlotte, and preached with much success. Also in Hanover, Mr. Morris and his friends begged him to preach in their reading-house, an invitation which he gladly accepted. “The congregation,” says Mr. Morris, “was large the first day, and vastly increased the three ensuing ones. It is hard for the liveliest imagination to form an image of the condition of the assembly on those glorious days of the Son of man. Such of us as had been hungering for the word before, were lost in agreeable astonishment, and could not refrain from publicly declaring our transport. We were over-

whelmed with the thoughts of the unexpected goodness of God, in allowing us to hear the gospel preached in a manner which surpassed our hopes. Many that came from curiosity were pricked in the heart, and but few in the numerous assemblies appeared unaffected." Soon after Mr. Robinson's departure, the Rev. John Blair visited them, when former impressions were revived and new ones made in many hearts. He was succeeded by the Rev. Mr. Roan, who was sent by the Presbytery of New Castle, and continued with them longer than either of the others. The good effects of this gentleman's labours were very apparent. He was instrumental in beginning and promoting a religious concern, in many places where there was little appearance of it before. "This, together with his speaking pretty freely of the degeneracy of the clergy in this colony," says Mr. Morris, "gave a general alarm, and some measures were concerted to suppress us. To increase the indignation of the government the more, a perfidious wretch deposed that he heard Mr. Roan utter blasphemous expressions in his sermon. An indictment was accordingly drawn up against Mr. R., though he had by that time departed the colony, and some who had invited him to preach at their houses were cited to appear before the general court, and two of them were fined." The indictment, however, against Mr. Roan was dropped, the witnesses cited against him testifying in his favour, and his accuser fled the province. Still as the opposition of those in authority continued, and all circumstances seeming to threaten the extirpation of religion among the dissenters, they determined to apply to the Synod of New York for advice and assistance. This application was made in 1745, when that body drew up an address to the governor, Sir William Gooch, and sent it by Messrs. William Tennent and Samuel Finley. These gentlemen having been kindly received by the governor, were allowed to preach, and remained about a week. After their departure, the meetings for reading and prayer were continued, though Mr. Morris was repeatedly fined for absenting himself from church and keeping up unlawful assemblies. In 1747, the opposition of the government became more serious, and a proclamation was affixed to the door of the meeting-house, calling on the magistrates to prevent all itinerant preaching. This prevented the usual services for one Sabbath, but before the succeeding Lord's day the Rev. Mr. Davies arrived in the neighbourhood, having been sent by the Presbytery of New Castle, and legally qualified to preach according to the act of toleration. He petitioned the general court for permission to officiate in four meeting-houses in and about Hanover, and his request, after some delay, was granted. Ill health prevented Mr. Davies from commencing his labours among this people as their pastor, until the spring of 1748. In October, 1748, three additional places of worship were licensed. The people under his charge were sufficiently numerous, if compactly situated, to form three distinct congregations. In 1751, the date of Mr. Davies's narrative, there were three hundred communicants in these infant churches. There were at this period two other Presbyterian congregations, one in Albemarle, and the other in Augusta, which were supplied with ministers in connection with the Synod of Philadelphia. The Presbyterians in Virginia, in connection with the Synod of New York, though much more numerous than those belonging to the other Synod, were, except the churches in Hanover, destitute of pastors. President Davies says they were numerous enough to form at least five congregations; three in Augusta, one in Frederick, and one in Amelia and Lunenburg. "Were you a

bigot,” says Mr. Davies to Dr. Bellamy, “you would no doubt rejoice to hear that there are hundreds of dissenters in a place where a few years ago there were not ten;²⁸ but I assure myself of your congratulations on a nobler account, because a considerable number of perishing sinners are gained to the blessed Redeemer, with whom, though you never see them here, you may spend a blissful eternity. After all, poor Virginia demands your compassion; religion at present is but like the cloud which Elijah’s servant saw.”²⁹

While the revival was thus extending itself through almost all parts of the Presbyterian Church, it was perhaps still more general and remarkable throughout New England. In Northampton, where President Edwards had been settled since 1726, there had been a revival in 1734-35, which extended more or less through Hampshire county, and to many adjoining places in Connecticut.³⁰

In the spring of 1740, before the visit of Mr. Whitefield, there was a growing seriousness through the town, especially among the young people. When that gentleman came to the place in October, he preached four or five sermons with his usual force and influence. In about a month there was a great alteration in the town, both in the increased fervour and activity of professors of religion, and in the awakened attention of sinners. In May, 1741, a sermon was preached at a private house, when one or two persons were so affected by the greatness and glory of divine things, that they were not able to conceal it, the affection of their minds over-coming their strength, and having an effect on their bodies. After the exercises, the young people removed to another room to inquire of those thus exercised, what impressions they had experienced. The affection was quickly propagated round the room; many of the young people and children appeared to be overcome with the sense of divine things, and others with distress about their sinfulness and danger, so that “the room was full of nothing but out-cries, faintings, and such like.” Others soon came to look on; many of whom were overpowered in like manner. The months of August and September of this year were most remarkable for the number of convictions and conversions, for the revival of professors, and for the external effects of this state of excitement. It was no uncommon thing to see a house, as Edwards expresses it, full of outcries, faintings, convulsions, and the like, both from distress, and also from admiration and joy. The work continued much in the same state until February, 1742, when Mr. Buel came and laboured among the people during a temporary absence of the pastor. The effect of his preaching was very extraordinary. The people were greatly moved, great numbers crying out during public worship, and many remaining in the house for hours after the services were concluded. The whole town was in a great and continual commotion night and day. Mr. Buel remained a fortnight after Mr. Edwards’s return, and the same effects continued to attend his preaching. There were instances of persons lying twenty-four hours in a trance, apparently senseless, though under strong imaginations, as though they went to heaven and had there visions of glorious objects. When the people were raised to this height, Satan took the advantage, and his interpositions, in many instances, soon became apparent, and a great deal of pains was necessary to keep the people from running wild.

President Edwards states, that he considered this revival much more pure than that of 1734-5, at least during the years 1740, 1741, and the early part of 1742. Towards the close of the last-mentioned year, an unfavourable influ-

ence was exerted upon the congregation from abroad. This remark shows that he did not consider the scenes which he describes as attending Mr. Buel's preaching, as affording any reason to doubt the purity of the revival. What he disapproved of occurred at a later period, and had a different origin. When his people saw that there were greater commotions in other places, and when they heard of greater professions of zeal and rapture than were common among themselves, they thought others had made higher attainments in religion, and were thus led away by them. These things plainly show, says Mr. Edwards, that the degree of grace is not to be judged by the degree of zeal or joy; that it is not the strength, but the nature of religious affections which is to be regarded. Some, who had the highest raptures, and the greatest bodily exercises, showed the least of a Christian temper. Though there were few cases of scandalous sin among professors, the temper and behaviour of some, he adds, led him to fear that a considerable number were awfully deceived. On the other hand, there were many whose temper was truly Christian; and the work, notwithstanding its corrupt admixtures, produced blessed fruit in particular persons, and some good effects in the town in general.³¹

If such scenes as those just referred to occurred in Northampton, under the eye of President Edwards, we may readily imagine what was likely to occur in other places under men far his inferiors in judgment, knowledge, and piety. Though Edwards never regarded these outcries and bodily affections as any evidence of true religious affections, he was at this time much less sensible of the danger of encouraging such manifestations of excitement, than he afterwards became. Nor does he seem to have been sufficiently aware of the nature and effects of nervous disorders, which in times of excitement are as infectious as any form of disease to which the human system is liable. When he speaks of certain persons being seized with a strange bodily affection, which quickly propagated itself round the room, especially among the young; and of spectators, after a while, being similarly affected, he gives as plain an example of the sympathetic propagation of a nervous disorder, as is to be found in the medical records of disease. There may have been, and no doubt there was, much genuine religious feeling in that meeting, but these bodily affections were neither the evidence, nor, properly speaking, the result of it.

In September, 1740, Mr. Whitefield first visited Boston, when multitudes were greatly affected by his ministry. Though he preached every day, the houses continued to be crowded until his departure. The December following, Mr. G. Tennent arrived, whose preaching was followed by still greater effects. Many hundreds, says Mr. Prince, were brought by his searching ministry to be deeply convinced of sin; to have clear views of the divine sovereignty, holiness, justice, and power; of the spirituality and strictness of the divine law, and of the dreadful corruption of their own hearts, and "its utter impotence either rightly to repent or believe in Christ, or change itself;" of their utter unworthiness in the sight of a righteous God, of their being "without the least degree of strength to help themselves out of this condition."

On Monday, March 2, 1741, Mr. Tennent preached his farewell sermon, to an extremely crowded and deeply affected audience. "And now was a time such as we never knew. Mr. Cooper was wont to say, that more came to him in one week, in deep concern about their souls, than in the whole twenty-four years of his previous ministry." In three months, he had six hundred such calls, and Mr. Webb above a thousand. The very face of the town was

strangely altered. There were some thousands under such religious impressions as they never knew before; and the fruits of the work, says Mr. Cooper, in 1741, as far as time had been allowed to test them, promised to be abiding. The revival in Boston seems to have been much more pure than in most other places, and it thus continued until the arrival of Mr. Davenport in June, 1742. Mr. Prince says he met with only one or two persons who talked of their impulses; that he knew of no minister who encouraged reliance on such enthusiastic impressions. "The doctrinal principles," he adds, "of those who continue in our congregations, and have been the subjects of the late revival, are the same as they all along have been instructed in, from the Westminster Shorter Catechism, which has generally been received and taught in the churches of New England, from its first publication, for one hundred years to the present day; and which is therefore the system of doctrine most generally and clearly declarative of the faith of the New England churches." There seems also to have been far less extravagance in Boston than attended the excitement in most other places. "We have neither had," says Dr. Colman, "those outcries and faintings in our assemblies, which have disturbed the worship in many places, nor yet those manifestations of joy inexpressible which now fill some of our eastern parts."³²

When Mr. Whitefield left Boston in October, 1740, he went to Northampton, preaching at most of the intervening towns. After spending a few days with President Edwards, as already mentioned, he proceeded to New Haven, and thence to New York. Everywhere, during this journey, the churches and houses were freely opened to him, and everywhere, to a greater or less degree, his discourses were attended by the same remarkable effects as elsewhere followed his preaching. Mr. Tennent also, after leaving Boston, made an extended tour through New England, and was very instrumental in awakening the attention of the people. His stature was large, and his whole appearance commanding. He wore his hair undressed, and his usual costume in the pulpit, at least during this journey, was a loose great coat with a leathern girdle about his loins.³³ As a preacher he had few equals. His reasoning powers were strong; his expressions nervous and often sublime; his style diffusive; his manner warm and pathetic, such as must convince his audience that he was in earnest; and his voice clear and commanding.³⁴ "When I heard Mr. Tennent," says the celebrated Dr. Hopkins, then a student in Yale College, "I thought he was the greatest and best man, and the best preacher that I had ever seen or heard."³⁵ Mr. Prince of Boston, says, "He did not at first come up to my expectations, but afterwards far exceeded them. He seemed to have as deep an acquaintance with experimental religion as any I have ever conversed with; and his preaching was as searching and rousing as any I ever heard."³⁶ Such appears to have been the general style of his preaching during this tour; for the Rev. W. Fish, in giving an account of the origin of the revival, says, "When the ears of the people were thus opened to hear, and their hearts awake to receive instruction, there came a son of thunder, Rev. Gilbert Tennent, through these parts, by whose enlightening and alarming discourses, people were more effectually roused up, and put upon a more earnest inquiry after the great salvation."³⁷ Mr. Tennent, in a letter to Mr. Whitefield, dated April, 1741, says that, on his return homeward from Boston, he preached daily, ordinarily three times a day, and sometimes oftener, (a few days only excepted;) and that his success had far exceeded his expectations. He enu-

merates at least twenty-three towns in which he had thus laboured, and adds that, on a moderate calculation, “divers thousands had been awakened.”³⁸

The transient impressions, however, made by a passing preacher would, in all probability, have been of little avail, had they not been followed by the laborious and continued efforts of the settled pastors. Such efforts were in most cases made, and the revival soon became general through almost the whole of Massachusetts and Connecticut, and a considerable part of Rhode Island. In Connecticut, the work was probably more extensive than in any other of the colonies, and was greatly promoted by the labours of Messrs. Pomeroy, Mills, Wheelock, and Bellamy. “Dr. Pomeroy was a man of real genius; grave, solemn, and weighty in his discourses, which were generally well composed, and delivered with a great degree of animation and affection. His language was good, and he might be reckoned among the best preachers of his day.”³⁹ Pr. Wheelock, says the same authority, “was a gentleman of a comely figure, of a mild and winning aspect. His voice smooth and harmonious, the best by far that I ever heard. His preaching and addresses were close and pungent, and yet winning almost beyond all comparison, so that his audience would be melted even to tears before they were aware of it.” Dr. Bellamy “was a large man and well built, of a commanding appearance. He had a smooth strong voice, and could fill the largest house without any unnatural effort. He possessed a truly great mind; generally preached without notes; had some great point of doctrine commonly to establish, and would keep close to his subject until he had sufficiently illustrated it, and then in an ingenious, close, and pungent manner, would make the application.”⁴⁰ Such were the more prominent promoters of this great revival. As this work was more extensive in Connecticut than elsewhere, so it was there attended with greater disorders, and was more violently opposed, and in many cases led to disastrous separations and lasting conflicts. Severe penal laws were enacted against itinerant preaching; several ministers were transported out of the colony; others were deprived of their salaries or fined. The act for the indulgence of sober consciences was repealed in 1743, so that there “was no relief for any persons dissenting from the established mode of worship in Connecticut, but upon application to the assembly, who were growing more rigid in enforcing the constitution.”⁴¹ The General Association, on the occasion of Whitefield’s second visit in 1745, declared him to be the promoter, or at least the faulty occasion of the errors and disorders which there prevailed; and voted that it was not advisable for the ministers to admit him into their pulpits, or for the people to attend his ministrations.⁴²

Notwithstanding all the disorders and other evils attendant on this revival, there can be no doubt that it was a wonderful display, both of the power and grace of God. This might be confidently inferred from the judgment of those who, as eye-witnesses of its progress, were the best qualified to form an opinion of its character. The deliberate judgment of such men as Edwards, Cooper, Colman, and Bellamy, in New England; and of the Tennents, Blair, Dickinson, and Davies, in the Presbyterian Church, must be received as of authority on such a subject. These men were not errorists or enthusiasts. They were devout and sober-minded men, well versed in the Scriptures and in the history of religion. They had their faults, and fell into mistakes; some of them very grievous; but if they are not to be regarded as competent witnesses as to the nature of any religious excitement, it will be hard to know where such witnesses are

to be found. Besides the testimony of these distinguished individuals, we have that of a convention of about ninety ministers met at Boston, July 7, 1743. Similar attestations were published by several associations in Connecticut and elsewhere.⁴³ The Presbyteries of New Brunswick and New Castle, and the whole Synod of New York, repeatedly and earnestly bore their testimony to the genuineness and value of this revival.⁴⁴

We have, however, ourselves sufficient ground on which to form a judgment on this subject. We can compare the doctrines then taught, the exercises experienced, and the effects produced, with the word of God, and thus learn how far the work was in accordance with that infallible standard. The first of these points is a matter of primary importance. It would be in vain for any set of men to expect the confidence of the Christian public in the genuineness of any religious excitement, unless it could be shown that the truth of God was instrumental in its production. There have been great excitements where Pagan, Mohammedan, and Popish doctrines were preached, but no one regards such excitements with approbation, who does not regard those doctrines as true. Any revival, therefore, which claims the confidence of the people of God, must show that it is the child of the truth of God. If it cannot do this, it may safely be pronounced spurious. How will the revival under consideration abide this test? Is there any doubt as to the doctrines taught by Whitefield, the Tennents, Blair, Dickinson, and the other prominent preachers of that day? They were the doctrines of the Reformation, and of the standards of the Presbyterian Church. Indeed, these men often went to a length in their statements of the peculiarities of those doctrines, that would shock the delicacy of modern ears.⁴⁵ These great truths were not kept under a bushel during this period. They were prominently presented, and gave to the work, as far as it was genuine, its distinctive character. "The doctrines preached," says Trumbull, "by those famous men, who were owned as the principal instruments of this remarkable revival of God's work, were the doctrines of the reformers; the doctrine of original sin, of regeneration by the supernatural influences of the divine Spirit, and of the absolute necessity of it, that any man might bear good fruit, or ever be admitted into the kingdom of God; effectual calling; justification by faith, wholly on account of the imputed righteousness of Christ; repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ; the perseverance of saints; the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in them, and its divine consolations and joys."⁴⁶

The contemporary accounts of the doctrines inculcated by the zealous preachers of that day, fully sustain the statement just quoted. Edwards mentions that his sermon on justification by faith, though it gave offence to many, was greatly blessed, and that it was on the doctrine therein taught, the revival was founded in its beginning and during its whole progress.⁴⁷ In the account of the revival at Plymouth, we are told that the doctrines principally insisted upon, were "the sin and apostasy of mankind in Adam; the blindness of the natural man in things of God; the enmity of the carnal mind; the evil of sin, and the ill desert of it; the utter inability of fallen man to relieve himself; the sovereignty of God, his righteousness, holiness, truth, power, eternity, and also his grace and mercy in Christ Jesus; the way of redemption by Christ; justification through his imputed righteousness received by faith, this faith being a gift of God, and a living principle that worketh by love; legal and evangelical repentance; the nature and necessity of regeneration, &c."⁴⁸

The Rev. Mr. Crocker, in his history of the revival at Taunton, enumerates the doctrines which had been chiefly “blessed by God to the awakening, convincing, and converting of sinners,” or to the edification of believers. His list contains all the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel; as original sin, that all men by nature are dead in trespasses and sins, legally and spiritually dead; the natural impotence and enmity of men; their natural blindness in spiritual things; the covenant of works and of grace; God’s sovereignty in dispensing grace to whomsoever he will; justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ; the necessity of regeneration; the necessity of the special and supernatural influences of the Holy Spirit; the necessity of a holy life, &c. &c.⁴⁹

The Rev. Mr. M’Gregore, pastor of the Presbyterian church at Londonderry, New Hampshire, preached a sermon on the trial of the spirits, which was subsequently published, with a preface by certain of the ministers of Boston. In that preface it is said: “As the Assembly’s Shorter Catechism has been all along agreeable to the known principles of the New England churches, and has been generally received and taught in them as a system of Christian doctrine agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, wherein they happily unite; it is a great pleasure to us that our Presbyterian brethren who came from Ireland, are generally with us in these important points, as also in the particular doctrines of experimental piety arising from them, and the wondrous work of God agreeable to them, at this day making its triumphant progress through the land.” The writers say that they rejoice to add their testimony to that of the author of the sermon, to the same doctrines of grace, and to the wondrous works of God. “The doctrines which the promoters of this work teach,” says the author, and by which he insists they ought to be tried, to know whether they are of God, “are the doctrines of the gospel, of the Apostles’ Creed, of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, and of the Westminster Confession of Faith. More particularly these men are careful to teach and inculcate the great doctrine of original sin, in opposition to Pelagius, Arminius, and their respective followers: that this sin has actually descended from Adam, the natural and federal head, to all his posterity proceeding from him by ordinary generation; that hereby the understanding is darkened, the will depraved, and the affections under the influence of a wrong bias, to that degree that they are utterly indisposed to anything that is spiritually good; that man, as a sad consequence of the fall, has lost all power in things spiritual. They teach likewise, with due care, the doctrine of the imputation of the righteousness of the second Adam, Jesus Christ; that this righteousness is apprehended and applied by faith alone, without the deeds of the law; that the faith which justifies the soul is living and operative. They teach that this faith is the gift of God; that a man cannot believe by any inherent power of his own. As to regeneration, they hold it to be absolutely necessary, that the tree must be made good before the fruit be so; that unless a man undergo a supernatural change by the operation of the Holy Ghost upon his soul, or be born of water and of spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”⁵¹ Such were the doctrines of the promoters of this revival, by which they wished to be tried themselves, and to have their work tested. Those who believe these doctrines will of course be disposed to have confidence in these men, and in the revival which attended their preaching. Whereas those who reject these doctrines may be expected to pronounce the men nothing-doers, passivity-preachers, destroyers of souls, and the like, and their work a mere delusion; unless, indeed, an exaggerated

deference for public opinion, or the amiable prejudice of education should lead them still to laud the men and the revival, while they condemn the sentiments which gave both it and them their distinctive character.

The second criterion of the genuineness of any revival is the nature of the experience professed by its subjects. However varied as to degree or circumstances, the experience of all true Christians is substantially the same. There is and must be a conviction of sin, a sense of ill-desert and unholiness in the sight of God, a desire of deliverance from the dominion as well as penalty of sin; an apprehension of the mercy of God in Jesus Christ; a cordial acquiescence in the plan of redemption; a sincere return of the soul to God through Christ, depending on his merits for acceptance. These acts of faith will ever be attended with more or less of joy and peace, and with a fixed desire and purpose to live in obedience to the will of God. The distinctness and strength of these exercises, the rapidity of their succession, their modifications and combinations, admit of endless diversity, yet they are all to be found in every case of genuine conversion. It is here as in the human face; all men have the same features, yet no two men are exactly alike. This uniformity of religious experience, as to all essential points, is one of the strongest collateral proofs of the truth of experimental religion. That which men of every grade of cultivation, of every period, and in every portion of the world, testify they have known and felt, cannot be a delusion. When we come to ask what was the experience of the subjects of this revival, we find, amidst much that is doubtful or objectionable, the essential characteristics of genuine conversion. This is plain from the accounts already given, which need not be here repeated. In a great multitude of cases, the same feelings were professed which we find the saints, whose spiritual life is recorded in the Bible, experienced, and which the children of God in all ages have avowed; the same sense of sin, the same apprehension of the mercy of God, the same faith in Christ, the same joy and peace in believing, the same desire for communion with God, and the same endeavour after new obedience.

Such however is the ambiguity of human language, such the deceitfulness of the human heart, and such the devices of Satan, that no mere detail of feeling, and especially no description which one man may give of the feelings of others, can afford conclusive evidence of the nature of those feelings in the sight of God. Two persons may, with equal sincerity, profess sorrow for sin, and yet their emotions be essentially different. Both may with truth declare that they believe in Christ, and yet the states of mind thereby expressed be very dissimilar. Both may have peace, joy, and love, yet the one be a self-deceiver, and the other a true Christian.

We must, therefore, look further than mere professions or detail of experiences, for evidence of the real character of this work. We must look to its effects. The only satisfactory proof of the nature of any religious excitement, in an individual or a community, is its permanent results. What then were the fruits of this revival? Mr. William Tennent says that the subjects of this work, who had come under his observation, were brought to approve of the doctrines of the gospel, to delight in the law of God, to endeavour to do his will, to love those who bore the divine image; that the formal had become spiritual; the proud, humble; the wanton and vile, sober and temperate; the worldly, heavenly-minded; the extortioner, just; and the self-seeker, desirous to promote the glory of God.⁵² This account was written in 1744.

The convention of ministers that met in Boston in 1743, state, that those who were regarded as converts confirmed the genuineness of the change which they professed to have experienced, "by the external fruits of holiness in their lives, so that they appeared to those who had the nearest access to them, as so many epistles of Jesus Christ, written not with ink, but by the Spirit of the living God."⁵³ President Edwards, in his *Thoughts on the Revival*, written in 1743, says, there is a strange alteration almost all over New England among the young. Many, both old and young, have become serious, mortified and humble in their conversation; their thoughts and affections are now about the favour of God, an interest in Christ, and spiritual blessedness. The Bible is in much greater esteem and use than formerly. The Lord's day is more religiously observed. There has been more acknowledgment of faults and restitution within two years, than in thirty years before. The leading truths of the gospel are more generally and firmly held; and many have exhibited calmness, resignation, and joy, in the midst of the severest trials.⁵⁴ It is true his estimate of this work, a few years later, was far less favourable, but he never ceased to regard it as a great revival of genuine religion.

Trumbull, a later witness, says, "the effects on great numbers were abiding and most happy. They were the most uniform exemplary Christians with whom I was ever acquainted. I was born and had my education in that part of the town of Hebron in which the work was most prevalent and powerful. Many, who at that time imagined that they were born of God, made a profession of their faith in Christ, and were admitted to full communion, and appeared to walk with God." They were, he adds, constant and serious in their attendance on public worship, prayerful, righteous, and charitable, strict in the government of their families, and not one of them, as far as he knew, was ever guilty of scandal. Eight or ten years after the religious excitement, there was not a drunkard in the whole parish. "It was the most glorious and extensive revival of religion and reformation of manners which this country has ever known. It is estimated that, in the term of two or three years, thirty or forty thousand souls were born into the family of heaven in New England, besides great numbers in New York, New Jersey, and the more southern provinces."⁵⁵ It is to be feared, indeed, that Trumbull was led from the favourable specimens which fell under his own observation, and from his friendship for some of the leading promoters of the revival, to form a more favourable opinion of its general results than the facts in the case would warrant. His testimony, however, is important, belonging as he did to the next generation of ministers, and familiarly acquainted as he was with some of the most zealous preachers of the preceding period.

The rise of the Methodists in England, the extensive revival of religion in Scotland, were contemporaneous with the progress of the revival in this country. This simultaneous excitement in the different parts of the British empire, was marked everywhere, in a great measure, with the same peculiar features. It would be interesting to trace its history abroad, in connection with what occurred on our side of the Atlantic. This, however, the nature of the present work forbids. It is enough for our purpose to know that the revival was not confined to this country. It was essentially the same work here, in Scotland and in England, modified by the peculiar circumstances of those several countries.

If the evidence was not perfectly satisfactory, that this remarkable and ex-

tended revival was indeed the work of the Spirit of God, it would lose almost all its interest for the Christian church. It is precisely because it was in the main a work of God, that it is of so much importance to ascertain what were the human or evil elements mixed with it, which so greatly marred its beauty and curtailed its usefulness. That there were such evils cannot be a matter of doubt. The single consideration, that immediately after this excitement the state of religion rapidly declined, that errors of all kinds became more prevalent than ever, and that a lethargy gradually settled on the churches, which was not broken for near half a century, is proof enough that there was a dreadful amount of evil connected with the revival. Was such, however, actually the case? Did religion thus rapidly decline? If this question must be answered in the affirmative, what were the causes of this decline, or what were the errors which rendered this revival, considered as a whole, productive of such evils? These are questions of the greatest interest to the American churches, and ought to be very seriously considered and answered.

That the state of religion did rapidly decline after the revival, we have abundant and melancholy evidence. Even as early as 1744, President Edwards says, "the present state of things in New England is, on many accounts, very melancholy. There is a vast alteration within two years." God, he adds, was provoked at the spiritual pride and self-confidence of the people, and withdrew from them, and "the enemy has come in like a flood in various respects, until the deluge has overwhelmed the whole land. There had been from the beginning a great mixture, especially in some places, of false experiences and false religion with true; but from this time the mixture became much greater, and many were led away into sad delusions."⁵⁶ In another letter, dated May 23, 1749, he says, "as to the state of religion in these parts of the world, it is, in general, very dark and melancholy."⁵⁷ In the preceding October, when writing to Mr. Erskine of Edinburgh, he communicates to him an extract from a letter to himself, from Governor Belcher of New Jersey, who says, "The accounts which I receive from time to time, give me too much reason to fear that Arminianism, Arian-ism, and even Socinianism, in destruction to the doctrines of grace, are daily propagated in the New England colleges."⁵⁸ In 1750, he writes to Mr. McCulloch in the following melancholy strain: "It is indeed now a sorrowful time on this side of the ocean. Iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold. Multitudes of fair and high professors, in one place or another, have sadly backslidden, sinners are desperately hardened; experimental religion is more than ever out of credit with far the greater part; and the doctrines of grace and those principles in religion which do chiefly concern the power of godliness, are far more than ever discarded. Arminianism and Pelagianism have made a strange progress within a few years. The Church of England in New England, is, I suppose, treble what it was seven years ago. Many professors are gone off to great lengths in enthusiasm and extravagance in their notions and practices. Great contentions, separations, and confusions in our religious state prevail in many parts of the land."⁵⁹ In 1752, in a letter to Mr. Gillespie, relating to his difficulties with his congregation, he says, "It is to be considered that these things have happened when God is greatly withdrawn, and religion was very low, not only in Northampton, but all over New England."⁶⁰ The church in Stonington, Connecticut, was torn to pieces by fanaticism, and a separate congregation erected. The excellent pastor of that place, the Rev. Mr. Fish, a warm friend of the revival, ex-

erted himself in vain to stem the torrent; “and other ministers,” he says, “that came to our help carried on the same design of correcting the false notions which new converts had embraced about religion; particularly the late judicious and excellent Mr. David Brainerd, who, in this desk, exposed and remonstrated against the same errors, and told me that such false religion as prevailed among my people, had spread almost all the land over.”⁶¹

That false doctrines increasingly prevailed after the revival, is strongly asserted in the letter of Edwards already quoted. Other proofs of the fact might easily be adduced. The Rev. John Graham, in a sermon preached in 1745, complains that many had gone forth who preached not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who denied the doctrines of personal election, of original sin, of justification by the perfect righteousness of Christ, imputed by an act of sovereign grace; instantaneous regeneration by the divine energy of special irresistible grace; and of the final perseverance of the saints. “The Pelagian and Arminian errors,” he adds, “can-not but be exceedingly pleasing to the devil; and such as preach them most successfully, are the greatest instruments of supporting his kingdom in the world, and his dominion in the hearts of men. What necessity is then laid upon ministers of the gospel, who see what danger precious souls are in by the spread and prevalence of such pernicious errors, which are like a fog or smoke, sent from the bottomless pit on purpose to prevent the shining of the gospel sun into the hearts of men, to be very close and strict in searching into the principles of such as are candidates for the sacred ministry.”⁶²

Somewhat later, President Clap found it necessary, on account of the increasing prevalence of error, to write a formal defence of the doctrines of the New England churches. The leading features of the new divinity, of which he complained, were, 1. That the happiness of the creature is the great end of creation. 2. That self-love is the ultimate foundation of all moral obligation. 3. That God cannot control the acts of free agents. 4. That he cannot certainly foreknow, much less decree such acts. 5. That all sin consists in the voluntary transgression of known law; that Adam was not created in a state of holiness, but only had a power to act virtuously; and every man is now born into the world in as perfect a state of rectitude as that in which Adam was created. 6. The actions of moral agents are not free, and consequently have no moral character, unless such agents have plenary ability and full power to the contrary. Hence it is absurd to suppose that God should implant grace or holiness in any man, or keep him from sin. 7. Christ did not die to make satisfaction for sin, and hence there is no need to suppose him to be essentially God, but only a perfect and glorious creature. No great weight ought to be laid upon men's believing Christ's divinity, or any of those speculative points which have been generally received as the peculiar and fundamental doctrines of the gospel; but we ought to have charity for all men, let their speculative principles be what they may, provided they lead moral lives.⁶³ These doctrines were a great advance on the Arminian or even Pelagian errors over which President Edwards lamented, and show what might indeed be expected, that the churches had gone from bad to worse.

This is certainly a gloomy picture of the state of religion so soon after a revival, regarded as the most extensive the country had ever known. It is drawn not by the enemies, but in a great measure by the best and wisest friends of religion. The preceding account, it is true, relates principally to

New England. In the Presbyterian Church the same rapid decline of religion does not appear to have taken place. In 1752, President Edwards, in a letter to Mr. McCulloch, says, "As to the state of religion in America, I have little to write that is comfortable, but there seem to be better appearances in some of the other colonies than in New England."⁶⁴ He specifies particularly New Jersey and Virginia.

And we know from other sources that, while the cause of truth and piety was declining in the Eastern States, the Presbyterian Church, especially that portion of it in connection with the Synod of New York, was increasing and flourishing. With regard to orthodoxy, at least, there was little cause of complaint. The only instance on record, during this whole period, of the avowal of Arminian sentiments by a Presbyterian minister, was that of the Rev. Mr. Harker, of the Presbytery of New Brunswick; and he was suspended from the ministry as soon as convicted.⁶⁵

This low state of religion, and extensive departure from the truth, in that part of the country where the revival had been most extensive, is certainly *prima facie* proof that there must have been something very wrong in the revival itself. It may, however, be said, that the decay of religion through the land generally, is perfectly consistent with the purity of the revival and the flourishing state of those particular churches which had experienced its influence. The facts of the case, unfortunately, do not allow us the benefit of this assumption. It is no doubt true, that in some congregations, as in that of Hebron, mentioned by Trumbull, religion was in a very desirable state, in the midst of the general decline; but it is no less certain, that in many instances, in the very places where the revival was the most remarkable, the declension was the most serious. Northampton itself may be taken as an illustration. "That church was pre-eminently a city set upon a hill. Mr. Stoddard, during a remarkably successful ministry, had drawn the attention of American Christians for fifty-seven years. He had also been advantageously known in the mother country. Mr. Edwards had been their minister for twenty-three years. In the respect paid to him as a profound theological writer, he had no competitor from the first establishment of the colonies, and even then, could scarcely find one in England or Scotland. He had also as high a reputation for elevated and fervent piety as for superiority of talents. During the preceding eighty years, that church had been favoured with more numerous and powerful revivals than any church in Christendom."⁶⁶ This account, though given in the characteristically large style of Edwards's biographer, is no doubt in the main correct. Here then, if anywhere, we might look for the most favourable results of the revival. During the religious excitement in the years 1734 and 1735, within six months, more than three hundred persons, whom Edwards regarded as true converts, were received into the church.⁶⁷ In 1736, the whole number of communicants was six hundred and twenty, including almost the whole adult population of the town.⁶⁸ The revival of 1740-2, was considered still more pure and wonderful. What was the state of religion in this highly favoured place, soon after all these revivals? In the judgment of Edwards himself it was deplorably low, both as to Christian temper and adherence to sound doctrine. In 1744, when an attempt was made to administer discipline somewhat injudiciously, it is true, as to the manner of doing it, it was strenuously resisted. The whole town was thrown into a blaze. Some of the accused "refused to appear; others, who did appear, behaved with a great degree of insolence, and

contempt for the authority of the church, and little or nothing could be done further in the affair.”⁶⁹ From 1744 to 1748, not a single application was made for admission to the church.⁷⁰ In 1749, when it became known that Edwards had adopted the opinion that none ought to be admitted to the Lord’s Supper but such as gave satisfactory evidence of conversion, “the town was put into a great ferment; and before he was heard in his own defence, or it was known by many what his principles were, the general cry was to have him dismissed.”⁷¹ That diversity of opinion between a pastor and his people on such a practical point, should lead to a desire for a separation, might not be very discreditable to either party. But when it is known that on this occasion the church treated such a man as Edwards, who not only was an object of veneration to the Christian public, but who behaved in the most Christian manner through the whole controversy, with the greatest injustice and malignity, it must be regarded as proof positive of the low state of religion among them. They refused to allow him to preach on the subject in dispute; they pertinaciously resisted the calling of a fair council to decide the matter; they insisted on his dismissal without making any provision for his expensive family; and when his dismissal had taken place, they shut their pulpit against him, even when they had no one else to occupy it. On the unfounded suspicion that he intended to form a new church in the town, they presented a remonstrance containing direct, grievous, and criminal charges against him, which were really gross slanders.⁷² This was not the offence of a few individuals. Almost the whole church took part against Edwards.⁷³ Such treatment of such a man certainly proves a lamentable state of religion, as far as Christian temper is concerned. With regard to orthodoxy the case was not much better. Edwards in a letter to Erskine, in 1750, says, there seemed to be the utmost danger that the younger generation in Northampton would be carried away with Arminianism as with a flood; that it was not likely that the church would choose a Calvinist as his successor, and that the older people were never so indifferent to things of this nature.⁷⁴

The explanation which has been proposed of these extraordinary facts, is altogether unsatisfactory. It is said that the custom which had long prevailed in Northampton, of admitting those to the Lord’s Supper who gave no sufficient evidence of conversion, sufficiently accounts for all this ill conduct on the part of the church. But where were the three hundred members whom Edwards regarded as “savingly brought home to Christ,”⁷⁵ within six months, during the revival of 1734-5? Where were all the fruits of the still more powerful revival of 1740-42? The vast majority of the members of the church had been brought in by Edwards himself, and of their conversion he considered himself as having sufficient evidence. The habit of free admission to the Lord’s table, therefore, by no means accounts for the painful facts above referred to. After all that had been published to the world of the power of religion in Northampton, the Christian public were entitled to expect to see the people established in the truth, and an example in holiness to other churches. Instead of this, we find them resisting the administration of discipline in less than eighteen months after the revival; alienated from their pastor; indifferent to the truth, and soon driving from among them the first minister of his age, with every aggravating circumstance of ingratitude and injustice. It is all in vain to talk of the religion of such a people. This fact demonstrates that there must have been something wrong in these revivals, even under the eye and guidance of Edwards, from the beginning. There must have been many spurious conversions, and much

false religion which at the time were regarded as genuine. This assumption is nothing more than the facts demand, nor more than Edwards himself frequently acknowledged. There is the most marked difference between those of his writings which were published during the revival, and those which appeared after the excitement had subsided. In the account which he wrote in 1736, of the revival of the two preceding years, there is scarcely an intimation of any dissatisfaction with its character. Yet, in 1743, he speaks of it as having been very far from pure;⁷⁶ and in 1751, he lamented his not having had boldness to testify against some glaring false appearances, and counterfeits of religion, which became a dreadful source of spiritual pride, and of other things exceedingly contrary to true Christianity.⁷⁷ In like manner, in the contemporaneous account of the revival of 1740-42, he complains of no-thing but of some disorders introduced towards the close of the year 1742, from other congregations; whereas, in his letters written a few years later, he acknowledges that many things were wrong from the first. This is, indeed, very natural. While in the midst of the excitement, seeing and feeling much that he could not but regard as the result of divine influence, he was led to encourage many things which soon brought forth the bitter fruits of disorder and corruption. His correspondence affords abundant evidence how fully sensible he became of the extent to which this revival was corrupted with false religion. When his Scottish friends had informed him of the religious excitement then prevailing in some parts of Holland, he wrote to Mr. Erskine, June 28, 1751, expressing his anxiety that the people might be led to “distinguish between true and false religion; between those experiences which are from the saving influence of the Spirit of God, and those which are from Satan transformed into an angel of light.” He wished that they had the experience of the church of God in America, on this subject, as they would need all the warning that could be given them. “The temptation,” he adds, “to religious people in such a state to countenance the glaring, shining counterfeits of religion, without distinguishing them from the reality,” is so strong that they can hardly be restrained from committing the mistake. In reference to the wish of the Dutch ministers to have attestations of the permanently good effects of the revivals in Scotland and America, he says, “I think it fit they should know the very truth in the case, and that things should be represented neither better nor worse than they are. If they should be represented worse, it would give encouragement to unreasonable opposers; if better, it might prevent a most necessary caution among the true friends of the awakening. There are, undoubtedly, very many instances in New England, in the whole, of the perseverance of such as were thought to have received the saving benefit of the late revivals of religion, and of their continuing to walk in newness of life as becometh saints; instances which are incontestable. But I believe the proportion here is not so great as in Scotland. I cannot say that the greater portion of the supposed converts give reason to suppose, by their conversation, that they are true converts. The proportion may, perhaps, be more truly represented by the proportion of the blossoms on a tree which abide and come to mature fruit, to the whole number of blossoms in the spring.”⁷⁸ In another letter, dated Nov. 23, 1752, he expresses his conviction that there was a greater mixture of evil with good in the revival in Holland, than the ministers there supposed; that the consequences of not distinguishing between true and false religion would prove worse than they had any conception of. He then refers to the history of the revival here, and adds that it is not

to be expected that “the divines of Europe would lay very much weight on the admonitions which they received from such an obscure part of the world. Other parts of the church of God must be taught as we have been, and when they see and feel, then they will believe. Not that I apprehend there is in any measure so much enthusiasm and disorder mixed with the work in Holland, as was in many parts of America, in the time of the last revival of religion here.”⁷⁹

These passages give a melancholy account of the results of the great religious excitement now under consideration. In the preceding estimate, Edwards does not speak of those who were merely awakened, or who were for a time the subjects of serious impressions, but of those who were regarded as converts. It is of these, he says, that only a small portion proved to be genuine. If this be so, it certainly proves that, apart from the errors and disorders universally reprobated by the judicious friends of the revival, there were serious mistakes committed by those friends themselves. If it was difficult then, it must be much more so now, to detect the causes of the spurious excitement which then so extensively prevailed. Two of these causes, however, are so obvious that they can hardly fail to attract attention. These were laying too much stress on feelings excited through the imagination, and allowing, and indeed encouraging the free and loud manifestation of feeling during public or social worship.

It is one office of the imagination to recall and reconstruct conceptions of any object which affects the senses. It is by this faculty that we form mental images, or lively conceptions of the objects of sense. It is to this power that graphic descriptions of absent or imaginary scenes are addressed; and it is by the agency of this faculty that oratory, for the most part, exerts its power over the feelings. That a very large portion of the emotions so strongly felt, and so openly expressed during this revival, arose not from spiritual apprehensions of divine truth, but from mere imaginations or mental images, is evident from two sources; first, from the descriptions given of the exercises themselves; and, secondly, from the avowal of the propriety of this method of exciting feeling in connection with religious subjects. Had we no definite information as to this point, the general account of the effects of the preaching of Whitefield and others would satisfy us that, to a very great extent, the results were to be attributed to no supernatural influence, but to the natural powers of oratory. There is no subject so universally interesting as religion, and therefore there is none which can be made the cause of such general and powerful excitement; yet it cannot be doubted that had Whitefield selected any worthy object of benevolence or patriotism, he would have produced a great commotion in the public mind. When therefore he came to address men on a subject of infinite importance, of the deepest personal concern, we need not be surprised at the effects which he produced. The man who could thaw the icy propriety of Bolingbroke; who could extort gold from Franklin, though armed with a determination to give only copper; or set Hopkinson, for the time being, beside himself; might be expected to control at will the passions of the young, the ignorant, and the excitable. It is far from being denied or questioned that his preaching was, to an extraordinary degree, attended by a divine influence. That influence is needed to account for the repentance, faith, and holiness, which were in a multitude of cases the result of his ministrations. It is not needed, however, to account for the loud out-cries, faintings, and bodily agitations which attended his course. These are sufficiently explained by his vivid

descriptions of hell, of heaven, of Christ, and a future judgment, addressed to congregated thousands of excited and sympathizing hearers, accompanied by the most stirring appeals to the passions, and all delivered with consummate skill of voice and manner. It was under such preaching, the people, as he tells us, soon began to melt, to weep, to cry out, and to faint. That a large part of these results was to be attributed to natural causes, can hardly be doubted; yet who could discriminate between what was the work of the orator, and what was the work of the Spirit of God? Who could tell whether the sorrow, the joy, and the love expressed and felt, were the result of lively imaginations, or of spiritual apprehensions of the truth? The two classes of exercises were confounded; both passed for genuine, until bitter experience disclosed the mistake. It is evident that Whitefield had no opportunity of making any such discrimination; and that for the time at least, he regarded all meltings, all sorrowing, and all joy following his fervid preaching, as evidence of the divine presence. It is not, however, these general accounts so much as the more particular detail of the exercises of the subjects of this revival, which shows how much of the feeling then prevalent was due to the imagination. Thus Edwards speaks of those who had a lively picture in their minds of hell as a dreadful furnace, of Christ as one of glorious majesty, and of a sweet and gracious aspect, or as of one hanging on the cross, and blood running from his wounds.⁸⁰ Great stress was often laid upon these views of “an outward Christ,” and upon the feeling resulting from such conceptions. Though Edwards was from the beginning fully aware that there was no true religion in such exercises,⁸¹ and though in his work on the Affections, written in 1746, he enters largely on the danger of delusion from this source, it is very evident that at this period he was not properly impressed with a sense of guarding against this evil. Just after stating how commonly such mental pictures were cherished by the people, he adds, “surely such things will not be wondered at by those who have observed, how any strong affections about temporal matters will excite lively ideas and pictures of different things in the mind.”⁸² In his sermon on the distinguishing marks of a work of the Spirit of God, he goes much further. He there says, “Such is our nature, that we cannot think of things invisible without some degree of imagination. I dare appeal to any man of the greatest powers of mind, whether he is able to fix his thoughts on God, or Christ, or the things of another world without imaginary ideas attending his meditation.”⁸³ By imaginary ideas, he means mental images, or pictures.⁸⁴ In the same connection, he adds, “the more engaged the mind is, and the more intense the contemplation and affection, still the more lively and strong will the imaginary idea ordinarily be.” Hence, he insists, “that it is no argument that a work is not a work of the Spirit of God, that some who are the subjects of it, have been in a kind of ecstasy, wherein they have been carried beyond themselves, and have had their minds transported in a train of strong and pleasing imaginations, and a kind of visions, as though they were rapt up even to heaven, and there saw glorious sights.”⁸⁵

It is not to be denied that there is a legitimate use of the imagination in religion. The Bible often addresses itself to this faculty. The descriptions which it gives of the future glory of the church, and of heaven itself, are little else than a series of images; not that we should conceive of the millennium as of a time when the lion and lamb shall feed together, or of heaven as a golden city, but that we may have a more lively impression of the absence of all destructive passions, when Christ shall reign on earth, and that we may learn to think

of heaven as a state of surpassing glory. In all such cases, it is the thought which the figure is meant to convey, and not the figure itself, that the mind rests upon in all truly religious exercises. When, on the other hand, the mind fixes on the image, and not upon the thought, and inflames itself with these imaginations, the result is mere curious excitement. So far then as the imagination is used to render the thoughts which the understanding forms of spiritual things distinct and vivid, so far may it minister to our religious improvement. But when it is made a mere chamber of imagery, in which the soul alarms or delights itself with spectres, it becomes the source of all manner of delusions.

It may still further be admitted, that images borrowed from sensible objects often mix with and disturb the truly spiritual contemplations of the Christian, but this is very different from teaching that we cannot think of God, or Christ, or spiritual subjects, with-out some pictorial representations of them. If such is the constitution of our nature that we must have such imaginary ideas of God himself, then we ought to have and to cherish them. But by the definition, these ideas are nothing but the reproduction and varied combinations of past impressions on the senses. To say, therefore, that we must have such ideas of God, is to say that we must conceive of him and worship him under some corporeal form, which is nothing but refined idolatry, and is as much forbidden as the worship of stocks or stones. It certainly needs no argument to show that we cannot form any pictorial representation of a spirit, and least of all, of God; or that such representations of Christ or heaven cannot be the source of any truly religious affections. What have such mental images to do with the apprehension of the evil of sin, of the beauty of holiness, of the mercy of God, of the merits of Christ, or with any of those truths on which the mind acts when under the influence of the Spirit of God?

From the accounts of this revival already quoted, from the detail given of the experience of many of its subjects, and especially from the arguments and apologies just referred to, it is evident that one great source of the false religion, which, it is admitted, then prevailed, was the countenance given to these impressions on the imagination and to the feelings thus excited. It was in vain to tell the people they must distinguish between what was imaginary and what was spiritual; that there was no religion in these lively mental images, when they were at the same time told that it was necessary they should have them, and that the more intense the religious affection, the more vivid would these pictures be. Under such instruction they would strive to form such imaginations; they would dote on them, inflame themselves with them, and consider the vividness of the image, and the violence of the consequent emotion, as the measure of their religious attainment. How deeply sensible Edwards became of the evil which actually arose from this source, may be learned from his work on the Affections. When an "affection arises from the imagination, and is built upon it, as its foundation, instead of a spiritual illumination or discovery, then is the affection, however elevated, worthless and vain."⁸⁶ And in another place he says, "When the Spirit of God is poured out, to begin a glorious work, then the old Serpent, as fast as possible, and by all means, introduces this bastard religion, and mingles it with the true; which has from time to time, brought all things into confusion. The pernicious consequence of it is not easily imagined or conceived of, until we see and are amazed with the awful effects of it, and the dismal desolation it has made. If the revival of true religion be very great in its beginning, yet if this bastard comes in, there is danger of its

doing as Gideon's bastard, Abimelech, did, who never left until he had slain all his threescore and ten true-born sons, excepting one, that was forced to flee. The imagination or phantasy seems to be that wherein are formed all those delusions of Satan, which those are carried away with, who are under the influence of false religion, and counterfeit graces and affections. Here is the devil's grand lurking-place, the very nest of foul and delusive spirits."⁸⁷

If Edwards, who was *facile princeps* among the friends of this revival, could, during its early stages, fall into the error of countenancing the delusions which he afterwards so severely condemned, what could be expected of Whitefield and others, who at this time, (dates must not be neglected, a few years made a great difference both in persons and things,) passed rapidly from place to place, neither making nor being able to make, the least distinction between the effects of an excited imagination, and the exercises of genuine religion? That they would test the experience of their converts by its fruits, is not denied; but that they considered all the commotions which attended their ministrations, as proofs of the Spirit's presence, is evident from their indiscriminate rejoicing over all such manifestations of feeling. These violent agitations produced through the medium of the imagination, though sufficiently prevalent, during the revival in this country, were perhaps still more frequent in England, under the ministrations of Wesley, and, combined with certain peculiarities of his system, have given to the religion of the Methodists its peculiar, and, so far as it is peculiar, its undesirable characteristic.

Another serious evil was the encouragement given to loud out-cries, faintings, and bodily agitations during the time of public worship. It is remarkable that these effects of the excitement prevailed generally, not only in this country, but also in Scotland and England. The fanatical portion of the friends of the revival not only encouraged these exhibitions, but regarded them as proofs of the presence and power of the Spirit of God.⁸⁸ The more judicious never went to this extreme, though most of them regarded them with favour. This was the case with Whitefield, Edwards, and Blair.

The manner in which Whitefield describes the scenes at Nottingham and Fagg's Manor, and others of a similar character, shows that he did not disapprove of these agitations. He says he never saw a more glorious sight, than when the people were fainting all round him, and crying out in such a manner as to drown his own voice. Edwards took them decidedly under his protection. He not only mentions, without the slightest indication of disapprobation, that his church was often filled with outcries, faintings, and convulsions, but takes great pains to vindicate the revival from all objection on that account. Though such effects were not, in his view, any decisive evidence of the kind of influence by which they were produced, he contended that it was easy to account for their being produced by a "right influence and a proper sense of things."⁸⁹ He says, ministers are not to be blamed for speaking of these things "as probable tokens of God's presence, and arguments of the success of preaching, because I think they are so indeed. I confess that when I see a great outcry in a congregation, I rejoice in it much more than merely in an appearance of solemn attention, and a show of affection by weeping. To rejoice that the work of God is carried on calmly and without much ado, is in effect to rejoice that it is carried on with less power, or that there is not so much of the influence of God's Spirit."⁹⁰ In the same connection he says, that when these outcries, faintings, and other bodily effects attended the preaching of the truth, he did

not “scruple to speak of them, to rejoice in them, and bless God for them,” as probable tokens of his presence.

The Boston ministers, on the other hand, appear to have disapproved of these things entirely, as they mention their satisfaction that there had been little or nothing of such “blemishes of the work” among their churches.⁹¹ The same view was taken of them by President Dickinson, William Tennent, of Freehold, and many others.

That the fanatics, who regarded these bodily agitations and out-cries as evidences of conversion, committed a great and dangerous mistake, need not be argued; and that Edwards and others, who rejoiced over and encouraged them, as probable tokens of the favour of God, fell into an error scarcely less injurious to religion, will, at the present day, hardly be questioned. That such effects frequently attend religious excitements is no proof that they proceed from a good source. They may owe their origin to the corrupt, or at least merely natural feelings, which always mingle, to a greater or less degree, with strong religious exercises. It is a matter of great practical importance to learn what is the true cause of these effects; to ascertain whether they proceed from those feelings which are produced by the Spirit of God, or from those which arise from other sources. If the former, we ought to rejoice over them; if the latter, they ought to be repressed and discountenanced.

That such bodily agitations owe their origin not to any divine influence, but to natural causes, may be inferred from the fact that these latter are adequate to their production. They are not confined to those persons whose subsequent conduct proves them to be the subjects of the grace of God; but, to say the least, are quite as frequently experienced by those who know nothing of true religion. Instead, therefore, of being referred to those feelings which are peculiar to the people of God, they may safely be referred to those which are common to them and to unrenewed men. Besides, such effects are not peculiar to what we call revivals of religion; they have prevailed, in seasons of general excitement, in all ages and in all parts of the world, among pagans, papists, and every sect of fanatics which has ever disgraced the Christian church. We are, therefore, not called upon to regard such things with much favour, or to look upon them as probable tokens of the presence of God. That the bodily agitations attendant on revivals of religion are of the same nature, and attributable to the same cause, as the convulsions of enthusiasts, is in the highest degree probable, because they arise under the same circumstances, are propagated by the same means, and cured by the same treatment. They arise in seasons of great, and especially of general excitement; they, in a great majority of cases, affect the ignorant rather than the enlightened, those in whom the imagination predominates over the reason, and especially those who are of a nervous temperament, rather than those of an opposite character. These affections all propagate themselves by a kind of infection. This circumstance is characteristic of this whole class of nervous diseases. Physicians enumerate among the causes of epilepsy “seeing a person in convulsions.” This fact was so well known, that the Romans made a law, that if any one should be seized with epilepsy during the meeting of the comitia, the assembly should be immediately dissolved. This, disease occurred so frequently in those exciting meetings, and was propagated so rapidly, that it was called the *morbus comitialis*. Among the enthusiasts who frequented the tomb of the Abbe Paris, in the early part of the last century, convulsions were of frequent occurrence, and

never failed to prove infectious. During a religious celebration in the church of Saint Roch, at Paris, a young lady was seized with convulsions, and within half an hour between fifty and sixty were similarly affected.⁹² A multitude of facts of the same kind might be adduced. Sometimes such affections become epidemic, spreading over whole provinces. In the fifteenth century, a violent nervous disease, attended with convulsions, and other analogous symptoms, extended over a great part of Germany, especially affecting the inmates of the convents. In the next century something of the same kind prevailed extensively in the south of France. These affections were then regarded as the result of demoniacal possessions, and in some instances, multitudes of poor creatures were put to death as demoniacs.⁹³

The bodily agitations attending the revival, were in like manner propagated by infection. On their first appearance in Northampton, a few persons were seized at an evening meeting, and while others looked on they soon became similarly affected; even those who appear to have come merely out of curiosity did not escape. The same thing was observable at Nottingham, Fagg's Manor, and other places, under the preaching of Whitefield. It was no less obvious in Scotland. It was exceedingly rare for anyone to be thus affected in private; but in the public meetings, when one person was seized, others soon caught the infection. In England, where these affections were regarded at least at first, by Wesley, as coming from God, and proofs of his favour, they were very violent, and spread with great rapidity, seizing, at times, upon opposers as well as friends. Thus on one occasion, it is stated, that a Quaker who was present at one meeting, and inveighed against what he called the dissimulation of these creatures, caught the contagious emotion himself, and even while he was biting his lips and knitting his brows, dropt down as if he had been struck by lightning. "The agony he was in," says Wesley, "was even terrible to behold; we besought God not to lay folly to his charge, and he soon lifted up his head and cried aloud, 'Now I know thou art a prophet of the Lord.'" ⁹⁴ On another occasion, under the preaching of the Rev. Mr. Berridge, a man who had been mocking and mimicking others in their convulsions, was himself seized. "He was," says the narrator, "the most horrible human figure I ever saw. His large wig and hair were coal-black, his face distorted beyond all description. He roared incessantly, throwing and clapping his hands together with his whole force. Some of his brother scoffers were calling for horsewhips, till they saw him extended on his back at full length they then said he was dead; and indeed the only sign of life was the working of his breast, and the distortions of his face, while the veins of his neck were swelled as if ready to burst. His agonies lasted some hours; then his body and soul were eased."⁹⁵ "At another meeting," he says, "a stranger who stood facing me, fell backward to the wall, then forward on his knees, wringing his hands and roaring like a bull. His face at first turned quite red, then almost black. He rose and ran against the wall, till Mr. Keeling and another held him. He screamed out, 'Oh! what shall I do! what shall I do! oh, for one drop of the blood of Christ!' As he spoke, God set his soul at liberty; he knew his sins were blotted out; and the rapture he was in seemed too great for human nature to bear." "One woman tore up the ground with her hands, filling them with dust and with the hard trodden grass, on which I saw her lie as one dead. Some continued long, as if they were dead, but with a calm sweetness in their looks. I saw one who lay two or three hours in the open air, and being then carried into the house, con-

tinued insensible another hour, as if actually dead. The first sign of life she showed, was a rapture of praise intermixed with a small joyous laughter.”⁹⁶ These accounts, however, must be read in detail, in order to have any adequate conception of the nature and extent of these dreadful nervous affections. Wesley at one time regarded them as direct intimations of the approbation of God. Preaching at Newgate, he says, he was led insensibly, and without any previous design, to declare strongly and explicitly, that God willed all men to be saved, and to pray that, if this was not the truth of God, he would not suffer the blind to go out of the way; but if it was, he would bear witness to his word. “Immediately one and another sunk to the earth; they dropt on every side as thunderstruck.” “In the evening I was again pressed in spirit to declare that Christ gave him-self a ransom for all. And almost before we called upon him to set to his seal, he answered. One was so wounded by the sword of the Spirit, that you would have imagined she could not live a moment. But immediately his abundant kindness was shown, and she loudly sang of his righteousness.”⁹⁷

The various bodily exercises which attended the Western revivals in our own country, in the early part of the present century, were of the same nature, and obeyed precisely the same laws. They began with what was called the falling exercise; that is, the person affected would fall on the ground helpless as an infant. This was soon succeeded, in many places, by a species of convulsions called the jerks. Sometimes it would affect the whole body, jerking it violently from place to place, regardless of all obstacles; at others, a single limb would be thus agitated. When the neck was attacked, the head would be thrown backwards and forwards with the most fearful rapidity. There were various other forms in which this disease manifested itself, such as whirling, rolling, running, and jumping. These exercises were evidently involuntary. They were highly infectious, and spread rapidly from place to place; often seizing on mere spectators, and even upon those who abhorred and dreaded them.⁹⁸

Another characteristic of these affections, whether occurring among pagans, papists, or protestants, and which goes to prove their identity, is, that they all yield to the same treatment. As they arise from impressions on the nervous system through the imagination, the remedy is addressed to the imagination. It consists in removing the exciting causes, that is, withdrawing the patient from the scenes and contemplations which produced the disease; or in making a strong counter-impression, either through fear, shame, or sense of duty. The possessions, as they were called, in the south of France, were put a stop to by the wisdom and firmness of certain bishops, who insisted on the separation and seclusion of all the affected. On another occasion, a strange nervous agitation, which had for some time, to the great scandal of religion, seized periodically on all the members of a convent, was arrested by the magistrates bringing up a company of soldiers, and threatening with severe punishment the first who should manifest the least symptom of the affection.⁹⁹ The same method has often been successfully resorted to.¹⁰⁰ In like manner the convulsions attending revivals have been prevented or arrested, by producing the conviction that they were wrong or disgraceful. They hardly ever appeared, or at least continued, where they were not approved and encouraged. In Northampton, where Edwards rejoiced over them, they were abundant; in Boston, where they were regarded as “blemishes,” they had nothing of them. In Sutton, Massachusetts, they were “cautiously guarded against,” and consequently

never appeared, except among strangers from other congregations.¹⁰¹ Only two or three cases occurred in Elizabethtown, under President Dickinson, who considered them as “irregular heats,” and those few were speedily regulated. There was nothing of the kind at Freehold, where William Tennent set his face against all such manifestations of enthusiasm. On the other hand, they followed Davenport and other fanatical preachers, almost wherever they went. In Scotland, they were less encouraged than they were here, and consequently prevailed less. In England, where Wesley regarded them as certainly from God, they were fearful both as to frequency and violence. The same thing was observed with regard to the agitations attending the Western revivals. The physician already quoted, says: “Restraint often prevents a paroxysm. For example, persons always attacked by this affection in churches where it is encouraged, will be perfectly calm in churches where it is discouraged, however affecting may be the service, and however great the mental excitement.”¹⁰² It is also worthy of consideration that these bodily affections are of frequent occurrence at the pre-sent day, among those who continue to desire and encourage them.

It appears, then, that these nervous agitations are of frequent occurrence in all times of strong excitement. It matters little whether the excitement arise from superstition, fanaticism, or from the preaching of the truth. If the imagination be strongly affected, the nervous system is very apt to be deranged, and outcries, faintings, convulsions, and other hysterical symptoms, are the consequence. That these effects are of the same nature, whatever may be the remote cause, is plain, because the phenomena are the same; the apparent circumstances of their origin the same; they all have the same infectious nature, and are all cured by the same means. They are, therefore, but different forms of the same disease; and, whether they occur in a convent or a camp-meeting, they are no more a token of the divine favour than hysteria or epilepsy.

It may still be said, that, although they do sometimes arise from other causes, they may be produced by genuine religious feeling. This, however, never can be proved. The fact that undoubted Christians experience these effects, is no proof that they flow from a good source; because there is always a corrupt mixture in the exercises of the most spiritual men. These affections may, therefore, flow from the concomitants of genuine religious feelings, and not from those feelings themselves. And that they do in fact flow from that source, may be assumed, because in other cases they certainly have that origin; and because all the known effects of true religious feelings are of a different character. Those apprehensions of truth which arise from divine illumination, do not affect the imagination, but the moral emotions, which are very different in their nature and effects from the feelings produced by a heated fancy. This view of the subject is greatly confirmed by the consideration, that there is nothing in the Bible to lead us to regard these bodily affections as the legitimate effects of religious feeling. No such results followed the preaching of Christ, or his apostles. We hear of no general outcries, faintings, convulsions, or ravings in the assemblies which they addressed. The scriptural examples cited by the apologists of these exhibitions are so entirely inapplicable, as to be of themselves sufficient to show how little countenance is to be derived from the Bible for such irregularities. Reference is made, for example, to the case of the jailer at Philippi, who fell down at the apostles’ feet; to Acts ii. 37, (“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said, Men and brethren, what shall we do?”) and to the conversion of Paul. It is, however,

too obvious to need remark, that in no one of these cases was either the effect produced, or the circumstances attending its production, analogous to the hysterical convulsions and out-cries now under consideration.

The testimony of the Scriptures is not merely negative on this subject. Their authority is directly opposed to all such disorders. They direct that all things should be done decently and in order. They teach us that God is not the God of confusion, but of peace, in all the churches of the saints. These passages have particular reference to the manner of conducting public worship. They forbid everything which is inconsistent with order, solemnity, and devout attention. It is evident that loud outcries and convulsions are inconsistent with these things, and therefore ought to be discouraged. They cannot come from God, for he is not the author of confusion. The apology made in Corinth for the disorders which Paul condemned, was precisely the same as that urged in defence of these bodily agitations. We ought not to resist the Spirit of God, said the Corinthians; and so said all those who encouraged these convulsions. Paul's answer was, that no influence which comes from God destroys our self-control "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." Even in the case of direct inspiration and revelation, the mode of communication was in harmony with our rational nature, and left our powers under the control of reason and the will. The man, therefore, who felt the divine afflatus had no right to give way to it, under circumstances which would produce noise and confusion. The prophets of God were not like the raving Pythoness of the heathen temples; nor are the saints of God converted into whirling dervishes by any influence of which he is the author. There can be little doubt that Paul would have severely reprobated such scenes as frequently occurred during the revival of which we are speaking. He would have said to the people substantially, what he said to the Corinthians. If any unbeliever or ignorant man come to your assemblies, and hear one shouting in ecstasy, another howling in anguish; if he see some falling, some jumping, some lying in convulsions, others in trances, will he not say, Ye are mad? But if your exercises are free from confusion, and your discourses addressed to the reason, so as to convince and reprove, he will confess that God is among you of a truth.

Experience, no less than Scripture, has set the seal of reprobation upon these bodily agitations. If they are of the nature of an infectious nervous disease, it is as much an act of infatuation to encourage them, as to endeavour to spread epilepsy over the land. It is easy to excite such things, but when excited, it is very difficult to suppress them, or to arrest their progress; and they have never prevailed without the most serious mischief. They bring discredit upon religion, they give great advantage to infidels and gainsayers, and they facilitate the progress of fanaticism. When sanctioned, the people delight in them, as they do in all strong excitement. The multitude of spurious conversions, the prevalence of false religion, the rapid progress of fanaticism, and the consequent permanent declension of religion immediately after the great revival, are probably to be attributed to the favour shown to these bodily agitations, as much as to any one cause.

Besides the errors above specified, which were sanctioned by many of the best friends of the revival, there were others which, though reprobated by the more judicious, became, through the patronage of the more ardent, prolific sources of evil. There was from the first a strong leaven of enthusiasm,

manifesting itself in the regard paid to impulses, inspirations, visions, and the pretended power of discerning spirits. This was decidedly opposed by Edwards,¹⁰³ by the Boston clergy, by Tennent, and many others. Whitefield, on the contrary, was, especially in the early part of his career, deeply infected with this leaven. When he visited Northampton, in 1740, Edwards endeavoured to convince him of the dangerous tendency of this enthusiastic spirit, but without much success.¹⁰⁴ He had such an idea of what the Scriptures mean by the guidance of the Spirit, as to suppose that by suggestions, impressions, or sudden recollection of texts of the Bible, the Christian's duty was divinely revealed, even as to the minutest circumstance, and that at times even future events were thus made known. On the strength of such an impression he did not hesitate publicly to declare that his unborn child would prove to be a son.¹⁰⁵ An unaccountable but very strong impression," that he should preach the gospel, was regarded as a revelation of the purpose of God respecting him.¹⁰⁶ The question whether he should return to England was settled to his satisfaction, by the occurrence to his mind of the passage, When Jesus was returned, the people gladly received him.¹⁰⁷ These few examples are enough to illustrate the point in hand.

In Whitefield there was much to counteract the operation of this spirit, which in others produced its legitimate effects. When Davenport was asked by the Boston ministers the reason of any of his acts, his common reply was, God commanded me. When asked whether he was inspired, he answered, they might call it inspiration, or what they pleased. The man who attended him he called his armour-bearer, because he was led to take him as a follower, by opening on the story of Jonathan and his armour-bearer. He considered it also as revealed, that he should convert as many persons at a certain place, as Jonathan and his armour-bearer slew of the Philistines.¹⁰⁸

This was the only one of the forms in which this spirit manifested itself. Those under its influence pretended to a power of discerning spirits, of deciding at once who was and who was not converted; they professed a perfect assurance of the favour of God, founded not upon scriptural evidence, but inward suggestion. It is plain that when men thus give themselves up to the guidance of secret impressions, and attribute divine authority to suggestions, impulses, and casual occurrences, there is no extreme of error or folly to which they may not be led. They are beyond the control of reason or the word of God. They have a more direct and authoritative communication of the divine will than can be made by any external and general revelation. They of course act as if inspired and in-fallible. They are commonly filled with spiritual pride, and with a bitter denunciatory spirit. All these results were soon manifested to a lamentable extent during this revival. If an honest man doubted his conversion, he was declared unconverted. If any one was filled with great joy, he was pronounced a child of God. These enthusiasts paid great regard to visions and trances, and would pretend in them to have seen heaven or hell, and particular persons in the one or the other. They paid more attention to inward impressions than to the word of God. They laid great stress on views of an outward Christ, as on a throne, or upon the cross. If they did not feel a minister's preaching, they maintained he was unconverted, or legal. They made light of all meetings in which there was no external commotion. They had a remarkable haughtiness and self-sufficiency, and a fierce and bitter spirit of zeal and censoriousness.¹⁰⁹

The origin and progress of this fanatical spirit is one of the most instructive portions of the history of this period. In 1726, a religious excitement commenced in New Milford, Connecticut, which was at first of a promising character, but was soon perverted. Its subjects opened a communication with the enthusiasts of Rhode Island, and began to speak slightly of the Bible, especially of the Psalms of David, and to condemn the ministers of the gospel and civil magistrates. They organized themselves into a separate society, and appointed officers not only to conduct their meetings, but to regulate their dress. They made assurance essential to faith; they undervalued human learning, and despised the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper. They laid claim to sinless perfection, and claimed that the standing ministers were unfit to preach, and that the people ought to leave them.¹¹⁰ One of the leaders of this company was a man named Ferris, who entered Yale College in 1729. A contemporary writer says of this gentleman, He told me he was certain not one in ten of the communicants in the church in New Haven could be saved; that he should have a higher seat in heaven than Moses; that he knew the will of God in all things, and had not committed any sin for six years. He had a proud and haughty spirit, and appeared greatly desirous of applause. He obtained a great ascendancy over certain of the students, especially Davenport, Wheelock, and Pomeroy, who lived with him most familiarly. He remained in college until 1782, and then returned to New Milford. He ultimately became a Quaker preacher.¹¹¹

Such was the origin of that enthusiastical and fanatical spirit, which swept over the New England churches. Messrs. Wheelock and Pomeroy seem soon to have escaped from its influence; but Davenport remained long under its power, and was the cause of incalculable mischief. He was settled as pastor of the church in Southhold, Long Island. In March, 1740, he became satisfied that God had revealed to him that his kingdom was coming with great power, and that he had an extraordinary call to labour for its advancement. He assembled his people on one occasion, and addressed them, continuously, for nearly twenty-four hours; until he became quite wild.¹¹² After continuing for some time his exciting labours in his own neighbourhood, he passed over into Connecticut. The best and most favourable account of his erratic course, is given by the Rev. Mr. Fish,¹¹³ who knew him intimately. The substance of this account, given nearly in the language of its author, is as follows. The good things about him, says this writer, were, that he was a fast friend of the doctrines of grace; fully declaring the total depravity, the deplorable wretchedness and danger, and utter inability of men by the fall. He preached with great earnestness the doctrines of man's dependence on the sovereign mercy of God; of regeneration; of justification by faith, &c. The things that were evidently and dreadfully wrong about him were, that he not only gave full liberty to noise and outcries, but promoted them with all his power. When these things prevailed among the people, accompanied with bodily agitations, the good man pronounced them tokens of the presence of God. Those who passed immediately from great distress to great joy, he declared, after asking them a few questions, to be converts; though numbers of such converts, in a short time, returned to their old way of living, and were as carnal, wicked, and void of experience, as ever they were. He was a great favourer of visions, trances, imaginations, and powerful impressions in others, and made such inward feelings the rule of his own conduct in many respects. He greatly en-

couraged lay exhorters, who were soon, in many cases, preferred by the people to the letter-learned rabbis, scribes, pharisees, and unconverted ministers, phrases which the good man would frequently use with such peculiar marks not only of odium, but of indication, as served to destroy the confidence of the people in their ministers. The worst thing, however, was his bold and daring enterprise of going through the country to examine all the ministers in private, and then publicly declaring his judgment of their spiritual state. This he did wherever he could be admitted to examine them. Some that he examined, (though for aught that appeared as godly as himself,) were pronounced in his public prayer, immediately after the examination, to be unconverted. Those who refused to be examined, were sure to suffer the same fate. By this tremendous step many people, relying on his judgment, were assured they had unconverted ministers; others became jealous of their pastors; and all were told by this wild man, that they had as good eat ratsbane as hear an unconverted minister. In his zeal to destroy idolatry, that is, pride in dress, he prevailed upon a number of his followers in New London, to cast into a fire, prepared for the purpose, each his idol. Whereupon some article of dress, or some ornament, was by each stripped off and committed to the flames. In like zeal to root out heresy, a number of religious books, some of them of real excellence, were cast into the fire.¹¹⁴

When he visited Saybrook in August, 1741, he requested Mr. Hart to grant him the use of his pulpit. Mr. Hart replied, that he wished to know, before he could decide on his application, whether he had denounced many of his fathers and brethren in the ministry as unconverted. He said he had, and that his object was the purification of the church, and that he freely urged the people not to attend the ministry of those whom he had thus judged. The pulpit was of course refused him. He then rose and calling to his adherents, said, Come, let us go forth without the camp, after the Lord Jesus, bearing his reproach. Oh this is pleasant to suffer reproach for the blessed Jesus, sweet Jesus!¹¹⁵ How true to nature this is! The man who was going about the country denouncing ministers, and overturning congregations, complains of persecution, because a pastor shuts his pulpit against him.

Mr. Davenport went to Boston in June, 1742. He attended the morning service upon the Sabbath, but in the afternoon absented himself "from an apprehension of the minister's being unconverted, which," says Mr. Prince, "greatly alarmed us." The following day the ministers had a friendly conference with him, which led to their publishing a declaration testifying against his depending on impulses, his condemning ministers, his going through the streets singing, and his encouraging lay exhorters. This declaration was signed by fourteen ministers of Boston and Charlestown. Mr. Davenport denounced the pastors, naming some as unconverted, and representing the rest as Jehoshaphat in Ahab's army, and exhorting the people to separate from them. This, adds Mr. Prince, put an effectual stop to the revival.¹¹⁶

The same year he was arrested and taken before the legislature of Connecticut, on the charge of disorderly conduct. The Assembly judged that although his conduct had a tendency to disturb the peace, yet as "the said Davenport was under the influence of enthusiastical impressions and impulses, and thereby disordered in the rational faculties of his mind, he is rather to be pitied and compassionated, than to be treated as otherwise he might be." They therefore ordered that he should be transported out of the colony, and handed

over to his friends. The solution here given of Davenport's conduct, is certainly the most charitable. That any young man should go about the country to examine grey-headed ministers on their experience, denouncing such as would not submit to his inquisition; declaring some of the best men in the church to be unconverted; exhorting the people to desert their ministry; making religion to consist in noisy excitement, and trampling on order and decency in the house of God, can only be accounted for on the assumption of insanity or wickedness. Davenport's subsequent retractions, his altered conduct, and the judgment of his contemporaries, are all in favour of the former solution.

After having pursued his disorderly and destructive course for a number of years, he was convinced of his errors, and published a confession, in which he acknowledged that he had been influenced by a false spirit in judging ministers; in exhorting their people to forsake their ministry; in making impulses a rule of conduct; in encouraging lay exhorters; and in disorderly singing in the streets. He speaks of the burning the books and clothes at New London, as matter for deep and lasting humiliation, and prays that God would guard him from such errors in future, and stop the progress of those who had been corrupted by his word and example.¹¹⁷ This latter petition was not granted. He found it easy to kindle the flame of fanaticism, but impossible to quench it. "When he came," says Mr. Fish, "to Stonington, after his recantation, it was with such a mild, pleasant, meek, and humble spirit, broken and contrite, as I scarce ever saw exceeded or equalled. He not only owned his fault in private, and in a most Christian manner asked forgiveness of some ministers whom he had before treated amiss, but in a large assembly made a public recantation of his errors and mistakes."¹¹⁸ This same writer informs us, however, that those who were ready to adore him in the time of his false zeal, now denounced him as dead, as having joined with the world and carnal ministers. The work of disorder and division, therefore, went on, little hindered by Mr. Davenport's repentance; and the evils continue to this day. Davenport afterwards removed to New Jersey, and settled at Pennington, within the bounds of the Presbytery of New Brunswick. His remains lie in a grave-yard attached to a small church, long since in ruins.

The censorious spirit, which so extensively prevailed at this period, was another of those fountains of bitter waters, which destroyed the health and vigour of the church. That it should characterize such acknowledged fanatics as Davenport and his associates, is what might be expected. It was, however, the reproach and sin of far better men. Edwards stigmatizes it, as the worst disease which attended the revival, "the most contrary to the spirit and rules of Christianity, and of the worst consequences."¹¹⁹ The evil in question consists in regarding and treating, on insufficient grounds, those who profess to be Christians, as though they were hypocrites. The only adequate ground for publicly discrediting such profession, is the denial of those doctrines which the Bible teaches us are essential to true religion, or a course of conduct incompatible with the Christian character. There are, indeed, cases where there is no want of orthodoxy, and no irregularity of conduct, in which we cannot avoid painful misgivings. But such misgivings are no sufficient ground on which to found either public declarations, or public treatment of those who may be the object of them. Does any one dare, on any such ground, to declare a man of reputable character a thief, or a drunkard, or to surmise away the

honour of a virtuous woman? Such conduct is not only a sin against God, but a penal offence against society. Yet in no such case is the pain inflicted, or the mischief occasioned, comparable to what arises from taking from a minister his character for piety, and teaching the people to regard him as a hypocrite. This is often done, however, with heartless unconcern. It was by the dreadful prevalence of this habit of censorious judging during the revival, that the confidence of the people in their pastors was destroyed, their usefulness arrested, their congregations divided, and the fire-brands of jealousy and malice cast into every society, and almost into every household. It was this, more than anything else, that produced that conflagration in which the graces, the peace, and union of the church were consumed. Though this censorious spirit prevailed most among those who had the least reason to think themselves better than others, it was to a lamentable degree the failing of really good men.

It is impossible to open the journals of Whitefield without being painfully struck, on the one hand with the familiar confidence with which he speaks of his own religious experience, and on the other with the carelessness with which he pronounces others to be godly or graceless, on the slightest acquaintance or report. Had these journals been the private record of his feelings and opinions, this conduct would be hard to excuse; but as they were intended for the public, and actually given to the world almost as soon as written, it constitutes a far more serious offence. Thus he tells us, he called on a clergyman, (giving the initials of his name, which, under the circumstances completely identified him,) and was kindly received, but found “he. had no experimental knowledge of the new birth.” Such intimations are slipped off, as though they were matters of indifference. On equally slight grounds he passed judgment on whole classes of men. After his rapid journey through New England, he published to the world his apprehension “lest many, nay most that preach do not experimentally know Christ.”¹²⁰ After being six days in Boston, he recorded his opinion, derived from what he heard, that the state of Cambridge college for piety and true godliness, was not better than that of the English universities,¹²¹ which he elsewhere says, “were sunk into mere seminaries of paganism, Christ or Christianity being scarce so much as named among them.” Of Yale he pronounces the same judgment, saying of it and Harvard, “their light is now become darkness, darkness that may be felt.” A vindication of Harvard was written by the Rev. Edward Wigglesworth, a man “so conspicuous for his talents, and so exemplary for every Christian virtue,” that he was unanimously appointed the first Hollis professor of divinity in the college. The President of Yale, at that time, was the Rev. Dr. Clap, an orthodox and learned man, “exemplary for piety,” and zealous for the truth.¹²² Whitefield was much in the habit of speaking of ministers as being unconverted; so that the consequence was, that in a country where “the preaching and conversation of far the bigger part of the ministers were undeniably as became the gospel, such a spirit of jealousy and evil surmising was raised by the influence and example of a young foreigner, that perhaps there was not a single town,” either in Massachusetts or Connecticut, in which many of the people were not so prejudiced against their pastors, as to be rendered very unlikely to be benefited by them.¹²³ This is the testimony of men who had received Mr. Whitefield, on his first visit with open arms. They add, that the effect of his preaching, and of that of Mr. Tennent, was, that before he left New England, ministers were commonly spoken of as pharisees and un-

converted.¹²⁴ The fact is, Whitefield had, in England, got into the habit of taking it for granted, that every minister was unconverted, unless he had special evidence to the contrary. This is not to be wondered at, since, according to all contemporaneous accounts, the great majority of the episcopal clergy of that day did not profess to hold the doctrines of grace, nor to believe in what Whitefield considered experimental religion. There was, therefore, no great harm in taking for granted that men had not, what they did not profess to have. When, however, he came to New England, where the great majority of the ministers still continued to profess the faith of their fathers, and laid claim to the character of experimental Christians in Whitefield's own sense of the term, it was a great injustice to proceed on the assumption that these claims were false, and take it for granted that all were graceless who had not to him exhibited evidence to the contrary.

The same excuse cannot be made for Mr. Tennent; and as his character was more impetuous, so his censures were more sweeping and his denunciations more terrible than those of Whitefield. It has been already mentioned, that in 1740 he read a paper before the Synod of Philadelphia, to prove that many of his brethren were "rotten-hearted hypocrites;" assigning reasons for that belief, which would not have justified the exclusion of any private member from the communion of the church. About the same time he published his famous sermon on an unconverted ministry, which is one of the most terrible pieces of denunciation in the English language. The picture there drawn, he afterwards very clearly intimated, (what was indeed never doubted,) was intended for a large portion of his own ministerial brethren. As, however, this conduct was one of the main causes of the schism in the Presbyterian Church, which occurred in 1741, it will more properly come under consideration in the following chapter.

The great sinfulness of this censorious spirit, and his own offences in this respect, Mr. Tennent afterwards very penitently acknowledged. In a letter to President Dickinson, dated February 12, 1742, he says, "I have had many afflicting thoughts about the debates which have subsisted for some time in our Synod. I would to God the breach were healed, were it the will of the Almighty. As for my own part, wherein I have mismanaged in doing what I did, I do look upon it to be my duty, and should be willing to acknowledge it in the openest manner. I cannot justify the excessive heat of temper which has sometime appeared in my conduct. I have been of late, (since I returned from New England,) visited with much spiritual desertion and distresses of various kinds, coming in a thick and almost continual succession, which have given me a greater discovery of myself, than I think I ever had before. These things, with the trial of the Moravians, have given me a clear view of the danger of everything which tends to enthusiasm and division in the visible church. I think that while the enthusiastical Moravians, and Long-Beards, or Pietists, are uniting their bodies, (no doubt to increase their strength, and render themselves more considerable,) it is a shame that the ministers, who are in the main of sound principles of religion, should be divided and quarrelling. Alas, for it, my soul is sick for these things! I wish that some scriptural healing methods could be fallen upon to put an end to these confusions. Some time since I felt a disposition to fall upon my knees, if I had opportunity, to entreat them to be at peace. I add no more at present, but humble and hearty salutations; and remain, with all due honour and respect, your poor worthless

brother in the gospel ministry.

“P.S. I break open the letter myself, to add my thoughts about some extraordinary things in Mr. Davenport’s conduct. As to his making his judgment about the internal state of persons, or their experience, a term of church fellowship, I believe it is unscriptural, and of awful tendency to rend and tear the church. It is bottomed upon a false base, viz.: That a certain and infallible knowledge of the good estate of men is attainable in this life from their experience. The practice is schismatical, inasmuch as it sets up a new term of communion which Christ has not fixed.

“The late method of setting up separate meetings upon the supposed unregeneracy of pastors of places, is enthusiastical, proud, and schismatical. All that fear God ought to oppose it, as a most dangerous engine to bring the churches into the most damnable errors and confusions. The practice is built upon a two-fold false hypothesis, viz.: Infallibility of knowledge, and that unconverted ministers will be used as instruments of no good to the church.

“The practice of openly exposing ministers who are supposed to be unconverted, in public discourse, by particular application of such times and places, serves only to provoke them, instead of doing them any good, and to declare our own arrogance. It is an unprecedented, divisial, and pernicious practice. It is lording it over our brethren to a degree superior to what any prelate has pre-tended since the coming of Christ, so far as I know, the pope only excepted; though I really do not remember to have read that the pope went on at this rate.

“The sending out of unlearned men to teach others, upon the supposition of their piety, in ordinary cases, seems to bring the ministry into contempt; to cherish enthusiasm, and bring all into confusion. Whatever fair face it may have, it is a most perverse practice. The practice of singing in the streets is a piece of weakness and enthusiastical ostentation.

“I wish you success, dear sir, in your journey; my soul is grieved for such enthusiastical fooleries. They portend much mischief to the poor church of God, if they be not seasonably checked. May your labours be blest for that end. I must also express my abhorrence of all pretence to immediate inspiration, or following immediate impulses, as an enthusiastical perilous ignis fatuus.”¹²⁵

A few years later, when the evils arising from the rash denunciation of professing Christians and ministers had become more apparent, Mr. Tennent protested against it in the strongest terms. “It is cruel and censorious judging,” he says, “to condemn the state of those we know not, and to condemn positively and openly the spiritual state of such as are sound in fundamental doctrines, and regular in life. The way to obtain quickening grace is the path of duty, and not the scandalous practice of that God-provoking, church-rending iniquity, rash judging. This may quicken indeed, but not to any thing good, but to backbiting, slandering, wrath, and malignity, and all manner of mischief. Oh that a gracious God would open the eyes of the children of men, to see the inexpressible baseness and horrors of this detestable impiety, which is pregnant with innumerable evils.”¹²⁶ He even denies the right of any man to judge of the spiritual state of others on the ground of their inward experience, or to make such judgment the ground of his public conduct towards them. “The terms of Christian fellowship,” he says, “which God has fixed, are soundness in the main doctrines of religion, and a regular life. I know of no

passage of the Bible that proves converting grace, or the church's judgment of it, to be a term of Christian communion, of divine appointment."¹²⁷ And in another place, he says, "I desire to know where Almighty God has given any of the children of men the right to inspect into the spiritual experiences of others, so as to make our judgment of them, abstract from their doctrine and life, the ground of our opinion concerning the state of their souls, and of our public conduct towards them. For my part, I know of no place in Scripture which gives such a power to any of the sons of men, and much less to every man."¹²⁸ Yet this good man allowed himself publicly to denounce as graceless, multitudes of his brethren, whom he admitted to be sound in the faith and orderly in their lives, and thus greatly aided in producing that state of confusion and strife which he afterwards so strenuously laboured to correct.

The extent to which the sin of censoriousness prevailed during this revival, may be inferred, not only from the complaints of those who were unrighteously condemned, but from the frequency with which it was testified against by the best friends of religion, and the confessions of those who had most grievously offended in this respect. One great evil of this spirit is, that it is contagious, and in a sense, hereditary. That is, there always will be men disposed to rake up the sins and errors of these pious denouncers; and on the score of these deformities, to proclaim themselves the Tennents and Whitefields of their own generation. If the fruit of the Spirit of God is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, then may we be sure that a proud, arrogant, denunciatory, self confident, and self-righteous spirit is not of God; and that any work which claims to be a revival of religion, and is characterized by such a spirit, is so far spurious and fanatical. All attempts to account for, or excuse such a temper on the ground of uncommon manifestations, or uncommon hatred of sin, or extraordinary zeal for holiness and the salvation of souls, are but apologies for sin. The clearer our apprehensions of God, the greater will be our reverence and humility; the more distinct our views of eternal things, the greater will be our solemnity and carefulness; the more we know of sin, of our own hearts, and of Jesus Christ, the more shall we be forbearing, forgiving, and lamb-like, in our disposition and conduct. "Gracious affections do not tend to make men bold, noisy, and boisterous, but rather to speak trembling. When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel."¹²⁹ The evidence from Scripture is full and abundant, "that those who are truly gracious are under the government of the lamb-like, dove-like Spirit of Jesus Christ, and this is essentially and eminently the nature of the saving grace of the gospel, and the proper spirit of true Christianity. We may therefore undoubtedly determine that all truly Christian affections are attended with this spirit, that this is the natural tendency of the fear and hope, the sorrow and joy, the confidence and zeal of true Christians."¹³⁰

Another of the evils of this period of excitement, was the disregard shown to the common rules of ecclesiastical order, especially in the course pursued by itinerant preachers and lay exhorters. With respect to the former, no one complained of regularly ordained ministers acting the part of evangelists; that is, of their going to destitute places, and preaching the gospel to those who would not otherwise have an opportunity of hearing it. The thing complained of was, that these itinerants came into parishes of settled ministers, and without their knowledge, or against their wishes, insisted on preaching to the people. This was a thing of very frequent, almost daily occurrence,

and was a fruitful source of heart burnings, and divisions.

It is the plain doctrine of the Scriptures and the common under-standing of the Christian church, that the pastoral relation is of divine appointment. Ministers are commanded to take heed to the flocks over which the Holy Ghost has made them overseers. If the Holy Ghost has made one man an overseer of a flock, what right has another man to interfere with his charge? This relation not only imposes duties, but it also confers rights. It imposes the duties of teaching and governing; of watching for souls as those who must give an account. It confers the right to claim obedience as spiritual instructors and governors. Hence the people are commanded to obey them that have the rule over them, and to submit themselves. They have indeed the right to select their pastor, but having selected him, they are bound by the authority of God, to submit to him as such. They have moreover, in extreme cases, the right to desert or discard him; as a wife has in extreme cases, the right to leave her husband, or a child to renounce the authority of a parent. But this cannot be done for slight reasons, without offending God. In like manner, as a stranger has a right, in extreme cases, to take a child from the control and instruction of a father, or withdraw a wife from the authority and custody of her husband, so also there are cases, in which he may interfere between a pastor and his people. Interference in any one of these cases, is a violation of divinely recognized rights; and to be innocent, must, in every instance, have an adequate justification.

Mr. Tennent admitted these principles to their fullest extent; he justified his conduct and that of his associates, on the ground that the ordinary rules of ecclesiastical order cease to be obligatory in times of general declension.¹³¹ When the majority of ministers are unconverted men, and contentedly unsuccessful in their work, it was, he maintained, the right of any one who could, to preach the gospel to their people, and the duty of the people to forsake the ministrations of their pastors. Admitting the correctness of this principle, when can it be properly applied? When may it be lawfully taken for granted, that a minister is unconverted and unfit for his office? According to Tennent's own sober and deliberate judgment, this could be rightfully done only when he either rejected some fundamental doctrine, or was immoral in his conduct. And even when this was the case, the obviously correct course would be, to endeavour to have him removed from office by a competent authority. Not until this had been proved to be impossible, would any man be justified in trampling upon the rights of a brother minister. The conduct of Mr. Tennent and that of his associates, cannot stand the test of his own principles. They not only made no effort to have those ministers removed from office, whom they regarded as unregenerate or unfaithful, but they chose to assume them to be unconverted, and on the ground of that assumption, to enter their congregations, and to exhort the people to forsake their ministry, though they admitted them to be sound in all the main articles of religion, and regular in their lives. This disorderly course was, in many cases, productive of shameful conflicts, and was in general one of the most crying evils of the times.

Whitefield far out-did Mr. Tennent, as to this point. He admitted none of the principles which Mr. Tennent believed, in ordinary times, ought to be held sacred. He assumed the right, in virtue of his ordination, to preach the gospel wherever he had an opportunity, "even though it should be in a place where officers were already settled, and the gospel was fully and faithfully preached.

This, I humbly apprehend," he adds, "is every gospel minister's indisputable privilege."¹³² It mattered not whether the pastors who thus fully and faithfully preached the gospel, were willing to consent to the intrusion of the itinerant evangelist or not. "If pulpits should be shut," he says, "blessed be God, the fields are open, and I can go without the camp, bearing the Redeemer's reproach. This I glory in; believing if I suffer for it, I suffer for righteousness' sake."¹³³ If Whitefield had the right here claimed, then of course Davenport had it, and so every fanatic and errorist has it. This doctrine is entirely inconsistent with what the Bible teaches of the nature of the pastoral relation, and with every form of ecclesiastical government, episcopal, presbyterian, or congregational. Whatever plausible pretences may be urged in its favour, it has never been acted upon without producing the greatest practical evils.

As soon as this habit of itinerant preaching within the bounds of settled congregations, began to prevail, it excited a lively opposition. The Synod of Philadelphia twice unanimously resolved that no minister should preach in any congregation without the consent of the presbytery to which the congregation belonged.¹³⁴ As soon, however, as the revival fairly commenced, Mr. Tennent and his associates refused to be bound by the rule; and, for the sake of peace, it was given up. The legislature of Connecticut made it penal for any minister to preach within the bounds of the parish of another minister, unless duly invited by the pastor and people.¹³⁵

The General Association of Connecticut, in 1742, after giving thanks for the revival, bear their testimony against "ministers disorderly intruding into other ministers' parishes."¹³⁶ The convention of ministers of Massachusetts, in 1743, declared this kind of itinerant preaching, "without the knowledge, or against the leave of settled pastors," to be "a breach of order, and contrary to the Scriptures, and the sentiments of our fathers, expressed in their Platform of Church Discipline."¹³⁷ And the assembly of pastors held at Boston, July, 1743, in their testimony in behalf of the revival, express it as their judgment "that ministers do not invade the province of others, and, in ordinary cases, preach in another's parish, without his knowledge and consent."¹³⁸ Notwithstanding this general concurrence among the friends of religion, in condemning this disorderly practice, it prevailed to a great extent, and resulted in dividing congregations, unsettling ministers, and introducing endless contentions and confusion.

As to lay preaching, though of frequent occurrence, it found little favour with any but the openly fanatical. Tennent in a letter to Edwards, written probably in the autumn of 1741, says, "As to the subject you mentioned, of laymen being sent out to exhort and teach, supposing them to be real converts, I cannot but think, if it be encouraged and continued, it will be of dreadful consequence to the church's peace and soundness in the faith. It is base presumption, whatever zeal be pretended to, notwithstanding, for any persons to take this honour to themselves, unless they be called of God, as was Aaron. I know most young zealots are apt, through ignorance, inconsideration, and pride of heart, to undertake what they have no proper qualifications for; and through their imprudence and enthusiasm the church of God suffers. I think all that fear God should rise and crush the enthusiastic creature in the egg. Dear brother, the times are dangerous. The churches in America and elsewhere are in great danger of enthusiasm; we need to think of the maxim *principiis obsta*."¹³⁹ This irregularity was freely condemned also by the associa-

tion of Connecticut, the convention of Massachusetts, and the assembly of pastors in Boston, in the documents already referred to. Yet it was through the influence of these lay exhorters, encouraged by a few such ministers as Davenport, and Mr. Park, of Westerly, Rhode Island,¹⁴⁰ that fanaticism and false religion, were most effectually promoted among the churches.

This is a formidable array of evils. Yet as the friends of the revival testify to their existence, no conscientious historian dare either conceal or extenuate them. There was too little discrimination between true and false religious feeling. There was too much encouragement, given to outcries, faintings, and bodily agitations, as probable evidence of the presence and power of God. There was, in many, too much reliance on impulses, visions, and the pretended power of discerning spirits. There was a great deal of censoriousness, and of a sinful disregard of ecclesiastical order. The disastrous effects of these evils, the rapid spread of false religion, the dishonour and decline of true piety, the prevalence of erroneous doctrines, the division of congregations, the alienation of Christians, and the long period of subsequent deadness in the church, stand up as a solemn warning to Christians, and especially to Christian ministers in all times to come. It was thus, in the strong language of Edwards, the devil prevailed against the revival. "It is by this means that the daughter of Zion in this land, now lies in such piteous circumstances, with her garments rent, her face disfigured, her nakedness exposed, her limbs broken, and weltering in the blood of her own wounds, and in nowise able to rise, and this so soon after her late great joys and hopes."¹⁴¹

Though this, being true, should be known and well considered, that the guilt and danger of propagating false religion and spurious excitement may be understood, yet we are not to forget or under-value the great good which was then accomplished. In many places there was little of these evils, especially in New Jersey and Virginia. Dickinson and Davies successfully resisted their inroads within the sphere of their influence. And in many other places the soundness of the doctrines taught, the experience detailed, and the permanent effects produced, abundantly attest the genuineness of the revival. To the Presbyterian Church, particularly, it was the commencement of a new life, the vigour of which is still felt in all her veins.

FOOTNOTES

1 Narrative of the late remarkable revival of religion in the congregation of New Londonderry, and in other parts of Pennsylvania. By Rev. Samuel Blair, printed in his works, p. 336; and in Gillies' Collections, vol. ii. p. 150.

2 See Part I. of this History, p. 240.

3 Minutes of Synod, vol. ii. p. 72.

4 Church of Christ, p. 29.

5 The charge which Mr. Tennent makes against the Synod, of error in doctrine, respecting the foundation of moral obligation, is so evidently unjust, that it may be safely disregarded. It will be remembered that he and Mr. Cowell had a long dispute upon this subject, which was brought before the Synod, and that President Dickinson and others, as a committee, brought in a report condemning the opinions against which Mr. Tennent contended, in such terms that he himself voted for the adoption of the report. He has certainly, therefore, no right to charge the adoption of that report as a proof of unsound doctrine. As to the other point, which he specifies, viz.: that there is a certainty of salvation annexed to the efforts of unrenewed men, we know nothing, except that Mr. Thompson says, "If there be any of the members of the Synod of this judgment, it is more than I know, and I am persuaded there are very few; for my own part, I know not one whom I so much as suspect, in this particular." See on this subject, ch. iii. p. 197 of this work.

6 Prince's Christian History, vol. i. p. 98.

7 Prince, vol. i. p. 103. This writer, in Nos. 12, 13, and 14, has collected many other testimonies "to the great and lamentable decay of religion" in the generations following the first settlement of New England.

8 History of Connecticut, vol. ii. p. 135.

9 See Prince, No. 93, and also Nos. 30 and 50, for similar accounts.

10 Dwight's Life of Edwards, p. 140.

11 Dwight's Life of Edwards, p. 434.

12 Ibid. p. 211.

13 Trumbull, vol. ii. p. 335.

14 Butler's Works, vol. ii. p. 238.

15 Letter to Rev. Mr. Prince, of Boston, by William Tennent, dated Oct. 9, 1744; published in the Christian History, Nos. 90, 91, and reprinted in Gillies' Collections, vol. ii. p. 28. In the preceding account the language of the original narrator is almost uniformly retained, though his statements are very much abridged and condensed. The usual indication of quotation, therefore, has not been given. We shall pursue the same plan in giving an account of the revival in other places.

16 In a letter from Mr. William Tennent to Mr. Prince, dated October 11, 1744, he says, "About four weeks since, at the invitation of the people, and desire of our Presbytery, I gathered a church, and celebrated the Lord's supper at a newly-erected congregation in the towns of Maidenhead (Lawrence) and Hopewell."—*Christian History*, No. 91.

17 Letter of Rev. Mr. Rowland to Mr. Foxcroft, of Boston, printed at Philadelphia, in 1745, and reprinted in Gillies' Collections, vol. ii. p. 132.

18 President Dickinson's Letter to Rev. Mr. Foxcroft, dated August 23, 1743, in the *Christian History*, No. 32.

19 Letter to Rev. Mr. Prince, dated Philadelphia, August 24, 1744.—*Christian History*, Nos. 88, 89, 90.

20 It is said that his voice was so distinct, that every word he uttered, while preaching from the court-house, could be heard by persons in a vessel at Market street wharf, a distance of more than four hundred feet. It is even stated that his voice was heard on the Jersey shore, a distance of at least a mile.—Galles' *Life of Whitefield*, p. 39.

21 *Memoirs of Mrs. Hannah Hodge*, Philadelphia, 1806.

22 Letter to Mr. Prince, No. 89.

23 Letter of Mr. Blair to Mr. Prince, dated August, 6, 1744, *Christian History*, No. 83; published also in Mr. Blair's Works, p. 336. vol. ii.-3 (?)

24 Gillies, vol. ii: p. 324.

25 Davies's Letter to Mr. Bellamy, *Gillies' Collection*, vol. ii. p. 330.

26 Hawks's Contributions to the Ecclesiastical History of the United States, vol. i. p. 115.

27 Davies's Narrative.

28 This remark of course relates to Hanover, where President Davies was settled. The Presbyterians in the other counties were principally Scotch and Irish emigrants from Pennsylvania.

29 Letter of Mr. Davies to Mr. Bellamy, dated June 28, 1751.—*Gillies' Collections*, vol. ii. p. 330.

“My venerated father in Christ, Dr. Alexander, remarked on part of the above narrative in relation to the establishment of Presbyterian congregations in Virginia, that it would not be very intelligible to Virginians. “The counties of Amelia and Lunenburg are mentioned as the seat of flourishing congregations; now those counties as at present bounded have scarcely ever had more than a sprinkling of Presbyterian families. When Mr. Morris's letter was written, Cumberland and Prince Edward counties formed part of Amelia, and Charlotte of Lunenburg, and these were the counties in which Presbyterian congregations were planted, and where they flourish to this day. So also, Augusta at that time comprehended all the great valley from Frederick south-westward; since then, Rockbridge on the south-west, and Rockingham on the north-east, have been taken off and formed into new counties. The Presbyterians of what is now Augusta, were mostly of the old-side, but those of Rockbridge were of the new-side.”

Dr. Alexander further remarked, “That very little is said in the above narrative, concerning the labours of Mr. Davies. He, in his modesty, speaks as if Mr. Robinson had converted more souls in a few days, than he in eight years. But I can bear witness that, half a century after Mr. Davies's departure, I met with numerous Christians of eminent piety, who acknowledged him as the instrument of their awakening. Every spring and fall he was accustomed to take an extensive tour for preaching. He generally preached in the woods to numerous congregations, and multitudes were benefited sparingly by him, of whom he never knew any thing. He was also very attentive to the blacks, and had many of them taught to read; and by the assistance of the society in London for propagating Christianity, he supplied them with Bibles and Watts's Hymns. I knew three old men, born in Africa, brought over when boys, who were members of his church, and could all read and were eminent for piety. There is nowhere in print any just account of Mr. Davies's evangelical labours in Virginia. While he preached faithfully, he conducted himself with so much dignity, affability, and prudence, that he gained the high respect of all the distinguished laymen in that part of the State. “The melancholy decline of the Hanover congregation after his removal, was owing to a variety of

causes, chiefly to the emigration of the members. Many of the congregations in the newer parts of the State were commenced by members of his congregation.”

30 Edwards’s Narrative, &c., Works, vol. iv. p. 25.

31 Letter of Mr. Edwards to Mr. Prince, dated December 12, 1743. Christian History, No. 46, and Dwight’s Life of Edwards, p. 160.

32 See for an account of the revival in Boston, Prince’s Christian History, No. 100, &c.; or Gillies, vol. ii. p. 162.

33 Assembly’s Magazine.

34 Funeral Discourse by President Finley.

35 Life of Edwards by Dwight, p. 156.

36 Fish’s Nine Sermons, p. 114.

37 Christian History, No. 100.

38 Gillies, vol. ii. p. 132.

39 Trumbull’s Connecticut, vol. ii. p. 157.

40 vol. ii. p. 173

41 Ibid. vol. ii. p. 159.

42 Trumbull’s Connecticut, vol. ii. p. 190.

43 Prince’s History, No. 20, 21.

44 Gillies, vol. ii. p. 318, 319.

45 See Tennent’s Sermons, especially those on original sin, regeneration, and the nature and necessity of conversion: Blair’s Works, his Dissertation on Predestination and Reprobation: President Dickinson’s Familiar Letters; his Dialogues, his Five Points, &c. &c. Whitefield’s Theology at least was such as to satisfy even Toplady, who pronounced him a sound divine.

46 History, vol. ii. p. 158.

47 In that sermon he teaches that a person is said “to be justified when he is approved of God as free from the guilt of sin and its deserved punishment, and as having that righteousness belonging to him that entitles him to the reward of life.” Works, vol. v. p. 354. He argues at length against the opinion that justification is nothing more than pardon. He shows that the righteousness by which we are justified is not faith, nor anything in us, but the righteousness of Christ; that in order to our receiving that righteousness we must be united to him, and that this union is at once legal and vital. Without union, he says, “our sins could not be imputed to him,” nor his righteousness to us: p. 366. This imputation he extends to the obedience of Christ, as well as the merit of his sufferings. “The opposers of this doctrine,” he says, “suppose there is an absurdity in supposing that God imputes Christ’s obedience to us it is to suppose that God is mistaken, and thinks that we performed that obedience which Christ performed. But why cannot that righteousness be reckoned to our account, and accepted for us, without any such absurdity? Why is there any more absurdity in it than in a merchant’s transferring a debt or credit from one man’s account to another, so that it shall be accepted as if that other had paid it? Why is there any more absurdity in supposing that Christ’s obedience is imputed to us, than that his satisfaction is imputed? If Christ has suffered the penalty of the law in our stead, then it will follow that his suffering that penalty is imputed to us; that is, accepted for us, and in our stead, and is reckoned to our account, as though we had suffered it.

But why may not his obeying the law be as rationally reckoned to our account as, his suffering the penalty of the law?" p. 395.

48 Prince's Christian History, No. 92.

49 Christian History, vol. ii. p. 351.

50 Sermon on 1 John iv. 1, preached in Boston, Nov. 3, 1741, by Rev. David M'Gregore. The preface above quoted is signed by Messrs. Prince, Webb, and Cooper.

51 See pp. 13, 14, of the sermon for a full statement of these doctrines, which we have weakened by abridging them.

52 Gillies, vol. ii. p. 34.

53 Gillies, vol. ii. p. 252. See similar testimonies in the Christian History, pp. 252, 286, *et passim*.

54 Edward's Works, vol. iv. p. 105.

55 History of Connecticut, vol. ii. p. 263. The same estimate, as to the number of converts, is given in a Historical Narrative and Declaration of the rise and progress of the strict Congregational Churches, (i. e. of the separated,) in Connecticut. Providence, 1781.

56 Letter to Mr. McCulloch, of Scotland, dated March 5, 1744. Life of Edwards, p. 212.

57 Letter to Mr. Robe, of Kilsyth. Life, p. 279.

58 Life of Edwards, p. 268.

59 Ibid. p. 413.

60 Ibid. p. 467.

61 Fish's Nine Sermons, p. 137. In order to show "what food the separatists turned their backs upon, and what doctrines they could not bear," Mr. Fish gives, in a note, an outline of a sermon which he preached during the revival, and which was the immediate cause of many of his people leaving him. The text of the sermon was, Eph. v. 1. "Be ye followers of God as dear children." The design of the discourse was to show, 1. What it is to follow God. 2. That the distinguishing character of God's children lies in their being followers of him. To follow God implies, I. Our yielding up ourselves wholly to be governed by his laws and commands. 2. Imitating his moral perfections; that is, being conformed to them in heart and life; particularly in purity of heart, truth, faithfulness, justice, uprightness, &c. The second head he passes over, and gives the application of the sermon, viz.:

1. Hence, see the only rule by which we may try and know God's children. So far as heart and life appear to be conformed to God, they show themselves to be his children.

2. Hence, see a safe rule of conduct. Set the Lord always before your eyes, as he is revealed in his word.

3. Learn wherein true religion consists, viz.: in following God, imitating his moral perfections; resembling him in spirit, temper, and carriage, habitually, in a steady course of life. It is therefore a mistake to place religion in ecstasies and raptures of joy, loud expressions of distress for souls in public meetings; in powerful impressions to do things of a religious nature; in visions or lively imaginations of a bleeding Saviour; an outward Christ with open and inviting arms, a local hell or heaven, and such like. (Which things, adds the author, at that day, were in high repute, treated with the greatest reverence, called *the power*, &c.) God's children, indeed, may have these things, but these are no evidences that they are his children, as they are no parts of true religion, nor do they belong to the character of the followers of God.

This sermon, says Mr. Fish, gave an amazing shock to the assembly, and proved extremely offensive. The house was filled with outcries against the preacher, or loud expres-

sions of concern for him. He was upon this declared an opposer of the work of God, making the hearts of his children sad, and strengthening the hands of the wicked. And now matters ripened fast for a separation. The kind of religion of which this extract gives us a glimpse, had, at that early period, according to David Brainerd, spread almost all the land over.

62 Sermon preached at the ordination of Nathan Strong, Oct. 9, 1745, by John Graham, of Southbury.

63 Brief History and Vindication of the Doctrines of the Churches of New England, with a specimen of the new scheme of religion beginning to prevail. By Thomas Clap, President of Yale College. New Haven, 1755.

64 Life of Edwards, p. 518.

65 That there has never been any open and avowed departure from Calvinistic doctrines in the Presbyterian Church, while repeated and extended defections have occurred in New England, is a fact worthy of special consideration. The causes of this remarkable difference in the history of these two portions of the church, may be sought by different persons in different circumstances. Presbyterians may be excused if they regard their form of government as one of the most important of those causes. New England has enjoyed greater religious advantages than any other portion of our country. It was settled by educated and devoted men. Its population was homogeneous and compact. The people were almost all of the same religious persuasion. The Presbyterian Church, on the contrary, has laboured under great disadvantages. Its members were scattered here and there, in the midst of other denominations. Its congregations were widely separated, and, owing to the scattered residences of the people, often very feeble; and, moreover, not unfrequently composed of discordant materials, Irish, Scotch, German, French, and English. Yet doctrinal purity has been preserved to a far greater extent in the latter denomination than in the former. What is the reason? Is it not to be sought in the conservative influence of Presbyterianism? The distinguished advantages possessed by New England, have produced their legitimate effects. It would be not less strange than lamentable, had the institutions, instructions, and example of the pious founders of New England been of no benefit to their descendants. It is to these sources that portion of our country is indebted for its general superiority. The obvious decline in the religious character of the people, and the extensive prevalence, at different periods, of fanaticism and Antinomianism, Arminianism, and Pelagianism, is, as we believe, to be mainly attributed to an unhappy and unscriptural ecclesiastical organization. Had New England, with her compact and homogeneous population, and all her other advantages, enjoyed the benefit of a regular Presbyterian government in the church, it would, in all human probability, have been the noblest ecclesiastical community in the world.

It is well known that a great majority of all the distinguished ministers whom New England has produced, have entertained the opinion here expressed, on the subject. President Edwards, for example, in a letter to Mr. Erskine, said, "I have long been out of conceit of our unsettled, independent, confused way of church government; and the Presbyterian way has ever appeared to me most agreeable to the word of God, and the reason and nature of things." Life, p. 412. Where the preservation of the purity of the church is committed to the mass of the people, who, as a general rule, are incompetent to judge in doctrinal matters, and who, in many cases, are little under the influence of true religion, we need not wonder that corruption should from time to time prevail. As Christ has appointed presbyters to rule in the church according to his word, on them devolve the duty and responsibility of maintaining the truth. This charge is safest in the hands of those to whom Christ has assigned it.

66 Dwight's Life of Edwards, p. 446

67 Edwards's Works, vol. iv. p. 28.

68 Ibid. p. 27.

69 Life of Edwards, p. 300.

70 Ibid. p. 438.

71 Ibid. p. 306.

72 Ibid. p. 421. See the whole details of this extraordinary history, pp. 288-404.

73 In one place it is said, about twenty heads adhered to their pastor, (Life, p. 464;) in another, that only twenty-three, out of two hundred and thirty male Members of the church, voted against his dismissal. p. 410.

74 Ibid. p. 411. Compare his Farewell Sermon.

75 Works, vol. iv. p. 28.

76 Life, p. 168.

77 Ibid. p. 465.

78 Life, p. 459.

79 Ibid. p. 508.

80 Works, vol. iv. p. 55.

81 See his account of the revival in 1734-5, written in 1736.

82 Works, vol. iv. p. 55.

83 Ibid. vol. iii. p. 567.

84 This is plain from his own account of them. In his work on the Affections, he says, "All such things as we perceive by our five senses, seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and feeling, are external things; and where a person has an idea or image of any of these sorts of things, when they are not there, and when he really does not see, hear, smell, taste, or feel them, that is to have an imagination of them, and these ideas are imaginary ideas." P. 236 of the Elizabethtown edition.

85 Works, vol. iii. p. 568.

86 Religious Affections, p. 320.

87 Religious Affections, p. 316.

88 Fish's Sermons. Trumbull's History, vol. ii. p. 161. Chauncey's Seasonable Thoughts, p. 78, 93.

89 Works, vol. iii. p. 563.

90 Ibid. vol. iv. p. 169.

91 Christian History, vol. ii. p. 386.

92 Dictionnaire des Sciences Medicales, Article Convulsionnaire. In this same article it is stated, that a young woman affected with a spasmodic and continued hiccup, producing a noise very similar to the barking of a dog, was placed in a hospital in the same room with four other female patients, and in a few days they were all seized with the same nervous disease.

93 Marshal Villars says in his Memoires, "Qu'il a vu daps les Cevennes une vine entiere clout touter les femmes et les fines, sans exception, paraisaient possédées du diable; elles tremblaient et prophetisaient publiquement clans les rues," &c.

94 Southey's Life of Wesley, vol. i. p. 221.

95 Southey's Life of Wesley, vol. ii. p. 238.

96 Ibid. vol. ii. p. 237.

97 Southey's Life of Wesley, vol. i. p. 219. How Wesley viewed this subject at a somewhat later period, may be learned from the following extract: "The danger was," says he, "to regard extraordinary circumstances too much; such as outcries, convulsions, visions, trances, as if they were essential to the inward work, so that it could not go on without them. Perhaps the danger is, to regard them too little; to condemn them altogether; to imagine they had nothing of God in them, and were a hinderance to his work; whereas the truth is, 1. God suddenly and strongly convinced many that they were lost sinners; the natural consequences whereof were sudden outcries, and strong bodily convulsions. 2. To strengthen and encourage them that believed, and to make his work more apparent, he favoured several of them with divine dreams; others with trances and visions. 3. In some of these instances, after a time, nature mixed with grace. 4. Satan likewise mimicked this work of God, in order to discredit the whole work; and yet it is not wise to give up this part any more than to give up the whole. At first it was, doubtless, wholly from God; it is partly so at this day; and he will enable us to discern how far, in every case, the work is pure, and when it mixes and degenerates. Let us even suppose that, in some few cases, there was a mixture of dissimulation; that persons pretended to see and feel what they did not, and imitated the cries and convulsive motions of those who were really overpowered by the Spirit of God; yet even this should not make us either undervalue or deny the real work of the Spirit. The shadow is no disparagement of the substance, nor the counterfeit of the real diamond." Quoted by Southey, vol. ii. p. 242. Wesley seems to have felt himself obliged to regard these agitations as springing from dissimulation, from Satan's influence, or from the Spirit of God. The far more natural solution, that they were a nervous disease, common in all ages, during seasons of excitement, he over-looks.

The Rev. Richard Watson, in his Life of Wesley, says very little on this subject. He evidently took much the same view of the matter as that presented in the above extract. "Of the extraordinary circumstances," says he, "which have usually accompanied such visitations, it may be said, that if some should be resolved into purely natural causes, some into real enthusiasm, and (under favour of our philosophers) others in satanic imitation, a sufficient number will remain, which can only be explained by considering them as results of a strong impression made upon the consciences and affections of men, by an influence ascertained to be divine by its unquestionable effects upon the heart and life. Nor is it either irrational or unscriptural to suppose, that times of great national darkness and depravity, the case certainly of this country at the outset of Wesley and his colleagues in their glorious career, should require a strong remedy; and that the attention of a sleeping people should be roused by circumstances which could not fail to be noticed by the most unthinking."-Life of Wesley, by Richard Watson, p. 28.

98 Biblical Repertory, 1834, p. 351.—An intelligent physician, who had many opportunities of personal observation, gives the following account of these singular exercises: "Different persons are variously affected. Some rise to their feet and spin round like a top; while others dance till they fall down exhausted. Some throw back their heads with convulsive laughter, while others, drowned in tears, break forth in sighs and lamentations. Some fall from their seats in a state of insensibility, and lie for hours without consciousness; while others are affected with violent convulsions resembling epilepsy. During the convulsive paroxysm, recollection and sensation are but little impaired; a slight stupor generally supervenes. The animal functions are not much interrupted; the pulse is natural; the temperature is that of health throughout the paroxysm. After it has subsided, there is a soreness of the muscles, and a slight pain in the head, which soon pass away."

99 Dictionnaire des Sciences Medicales. Article Convulsionnaire.

100 It was by an appeal to the principle of shame, that the frequent suicides among the young women of Miletus were prevented. Under the influence of an epidemic alienation, according to Plutarch, the young females hung themselves in great numbers; but when the magistrates threatened the disgraceful exposure of the body of the next *felo de se*, the epidemic was ar-

rested. A similar alienation, which had seized the women in a portion of the department of Simpton, was cured by a strong appeal to their moral sense and religious feelings.

101 Christian History, vol. ii. p. 168.

102 The characteristic now under consideration did not escape the accurate observation of Edwards, though it failed to disclose to him the true nature of these nervous agitations. "It is evident," he says, "from experience, that custom has a strange influence in these things. If some person conducts them, that much countenances and encourages such manifestations of great affections, they naturally and insensibly prevail, and grow by degrees unavoidable; but afterwards, when they come under another kind of conduct, the manner of external appearances will strongly alter. It is manifest that ex-ample and custom have some way or other a secret and unsearchable influence upon those actions which are involuntary, in different places, and in the same place at different times."—Thoughts on the Revival. Works, vol. iv. p. 232.

103 Thoughts on the Revival, Works, vol. iv. p. 180.

104 Life of Edwards, p. 147.

105 Gillies' Life of Whitefield, p. 63.

106 Whitefield's account of his own Life, p. 11.

107 II Journal from Savannah to England, p. 28.

108 Chauncy's Seasonable Thoughts, p. 196-198.

109 Trumbull's History, vol. ii. p. 169; whose account is here abridged

110 Letter of the Rev. D. Boardman, pastor of the church at New Milford, dated, 1742, and printed in Chauncy's Seasonable Thoughts, p..202.

111 Chauncy, p. 212-15.

112 Chauncy, p. 189.

113 Sermons, p. 116.

114 Among the books thus consumed were Beveridge's Thoughts on Religion; part of Flavel's works; one piece of Dr. Increase Mather's, one of Dr. Colman's, &c. &c. Another contemporary gives us an illustration of his manner in the following account. On one occasion, having made a fervent address, "he called all the distressed into the foremost seats. He then came out of the pulpit and stripped off his upper garments, got up on the seats, and leapt up and down for some time, and clapt his hands, and cried out in these words: The war goes on; the fight goes on; the devil goes down, the devil goes down. And he took himself to stamping and screaming most dreadfully." Chauncy, p. 99.

115 Chauncy, p. 154, where the account of this interview, signed by Mr. Hart and four other persons, is given at length.

116 Christian History, vol. ii. p. 407-8.

117 Christian History, No. 82, 83. Gillies, vol. ii. p. 180.

118 Sermons quoted above.

119 Works, vol. iv. p. 238.

120 New England Journal, p. 95.

121 Ibid. p. 12.

122 Allen's American Biographical Dictionary.

123 Letter to the Rev. George Whitefield, by Edward Wigglesworth, in the name of the faculty of Harvard College, 1745.

124 Letter to the Rev. George Whitefield, by Edward Wigglesworth, in the name of the faculty of Harvard College, 1745, p. 60.

125 The above letter was printed in the Pennsylvania Gazette, August 12, 1742; and transcribed into Mr. Hazard's MSS.

126 Irenicum, or Plea for the Peace of Jerusalem, by Gilbert Tennent. Philadelphia, 1749, p. 90.

127 Ibid. p. 79.

128 Ibid. p. 55. On page 79, he has the following note: "I cannot find that the Christians of the first three centuries after Christ, made gracious experiences, or the church's judgment about them, terms of communion. They made no inquiries about them as to baptism, and all that were baptized, and of adult age and free from church censure, were admitted to the sacrament." A few years before, he charged some of his brethren with acting on this principle (though they denied it), and made it one of his most prominent reasons for believing them to be unconverted. See the paper which was read before the Synod in 1740.

129 Edwards on the Affections, p. 393.

130 Edwards on the Affections, p. 387.

131 Speaking of such rules, which he had enforced with great earnestness in his discourse against the Moravians, he says, in vindication of his consistency, "On the supposition that a number of ministers are either unsound in doctrine, or unfaithful and contentedly unsuccessful in their work, then is it not lawful to suspend the aforesaid rules for a season?"—Remarks on the Protest, by which the members of the New Brunswick Presbytery were excluded from Synod.

132 Whitefield's letter to the president, professors, &c. of Harvard College. Boston, 1745: p. 17.

133 Ibid. p. 22.

134 See Part First of this History, p. 206.

135 Trumbull's Connecticut, vol. ii. p. 162.

136 Trumbull's Connecticut, vol. ii. p. 173.

137 Testimony of the pastors of churches in the province of Massachusetts Bay, at their annual convention in Boston, May 25, 1743, pages 6, 7.

138 Some of the ministers present on that occasion signed this testimony and advice as to the substance merely, which Mr. Prince informs us was owing principally to the clause above cited. Some of the pastors thought that it was not explicit enough against the practice which it condemned, while others thought it might "be perverted to the great infringement of Christian and human liberty."—Christian History, vol. i. p. 198.

139 Life of Edwards, p. 153.

140 See Gillies, vol. ii. p. 292.

141 Preface to his Treatise on the Affections, written in 1746.