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## I. Literary.

### ICONOCLASTS.

BY J. W. LAPSLEY.

“YE shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves.” This was the divine command to Israel as they invaded Canaan. Policy as well as reverence for the divine authority demanded strict obedience to the command. But it was not so obeyed as to put out of sight the temptations to idolatry; and again and again Israel sinned after the example of the heathen they had supplanted, became image worshippers, and suffered grievously for their apostasy. Hence image breaking was accounted a sign of devotion to Jehovah. Jehu said, “Come with me and see my zeal for the Lord,” and he went and broke down the image of Baal, and the house of Baal, burnt his images with fire, and slew his priests and votaries with the sword. But this was as far as Jehu’s zeal for the Lord carried him. While he had no real devotion to God, and, in fact, renewed the idol worship at Dan and Bethel, he made the divine commission an excuse for pursuing with lavish bloodshed his own schemes of worldly ambition. And there have been others besides Jehu in other ages who have trod in his steps. “Mohammed,” says Dr. Schaff, “started as a religious reformer fired by the great idea of the unity of the Godhead, and filled with horror of idolatry.” And he and his Caliphs, long after they became world-wide conquerors, full of ambition and given up to every cruel and sensual passion, continued to proclaim, “There is but one God,” and continued to the last their warfare on image and image worship. They made their professed zeal for the one God a cover and ex-

## THE BIBLE IN THE REVIVAL.

BY REV. RUSSELL CECIL, D. D.

Is the revival taught in the Bible? Yes, the Bible recognizes the *need* of revivals in describing seasons of great spiritual depression to which the church of God has been subject throughout its entire history; it encourages *prayer* for revivals in such passages as, "Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?" (Psalm lxxxv. 6) and, "O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy" (Hab. iii. 2); and it furnishes *examples* of notable revivals, as those under Hezekiah and Josiah, kings of Judah, and Pentecost under the preaching of the apostles. Granted, then, that the revival is a Biblical method of propagating the gospel, it seems to follow that the Bible should occupy a conspicuous place in the revival. What is that place?

First, it may be remarked that the *object* of the revival should be undoubtedly *scriptural*. Some one may suggest that this is too obvious to admit of discussion. Not so, however. Human motives and purposes are not unknown in many so-called revivals. Is there never any conscious effort on the part of the revivalist to promote his own advancement? Does not an overweening desire to multiply the number of communicants sometimes manifest itself? Is the revival never planned and conducted with the thinly-veiled purpose of building up some particular church into an influential institution, or of magnifying the importance of some pastor in the community? Those who have any extended observation or experience in this field of labor cannot have failed to discover that the motives of those who engage in revival work are not always unmixed. The object of the revival, according to the Scriptures, is two-fold: first, to strengthen the spiritual life of God's people and make them more efficient to do his will, and second, through their prayers and labors to secure the salvation of the unconverted. The word 'revival' itself implies the existence of some life which needs to be strengthened in order that it may become more stable and fruitful. The Psalmist prays, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salva-

tion ; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways ; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." (Ps. li. 12, 13.) No man shall seek to promote a revival for any other than a scriptural object, and the only scriptural object is the glory of God in the salvation of men and the upbuilding of the kingdom of Christ on earth.

Of course, the *methods* employed should also be scriptural. These are manifestly of the simplest character, and consist, in a word, of the ordinary rites of worship, preaching, prayer, and praise. The introduction of unscriptural methods has done as much to discount modern revival work in the minds of the judicious as any other one thing. Many have learned to shun the professional evangelist because his methods are so often diametrically opposed to the teaching of God's word, and the results of his work consequently unsatisfactory. A prominent evangelical minister is reported to have remarked concerning the work of a famous evangelist: "I do not know whether I should be more sorry to hear that the small-pox had broken out in a town, or that the Mountain Evangelist was conducting a work there." Indeed, the effects of an epidemic of small-pox in a community would not be so serious upon the well-being of the people as a protracted visit from some of our peripatetic evangelists. The small-pox only affects the physical man, but the evangelist affects the spiritual man, and too often, sad to say, in a way that is extremely harmful. But do not understand me as making a wholesale attack upon modern evangelists and evangelism. Be that far from me. Much good has been accomplished through this movement and by those engaged in it. But that we have many self-constituted evangelists, controlled by motives more or less selfish and mercenary, and resorting to methods, in the main, unscriptural, surely no thoughtful man can deny. Those answering to this description do not deserve the encouragement of God's people, and it is earnestly hoped that their generation may soon cease. But there is also a true evangelism, and there are many noble and godly evangelists who exhibit an incorruptible fidelity to the Scriptures, and whose work is of the most enduring character. These men adopt the simple scriptural methods of preaching, prayer, and praise. Their effort is not to work the revival up by human machinery, but to bring it down from above through the power of God.

We come now to speak of *the use of the Bible in the revival*.

The Bible should be *honored* as the word of God. I have seen more than one revival meeting (I use 'revival' now in the colloquial sense of an ordinary protracted service) in which the Bible had very little place. Some revivalists read a few verses at the beginning of the service, and select one as the text, not, however, to be expounded and applied, but as a starting point for a ranting, rambling exhortation. I have attended more than one series of services conducted by noted evangelists who often simply recited a text without opening the book. I remember one or two who relied mainly upon a vest-pocket Testament, and who sometimes found it necessary to borrow a book from a bystander before reading the Scripture. The impression left upon my mind by one meeting of a month's duration was that the Scriptures were not only not used to any considerable extent, but were not even honored and exalted as the word of God. It cannot be reasonably hoped that meetings conducted in this fashion will result in much good to the church of God, and, as a matter of fact, it has been learned from observation and experience that they are productive of no permanent benefit. God has said, "Them that honor me I will honor" (1 Sam. ii. 30), and if we do not honor him by honoring his word, we need not expect him to honor our labors.

The Bible should be *expounded* in the revival. The true preacher of the Gospel, whether evangelist or pastor, should be an expounder of the Holy Scriptures. This is the most essential feature of his work, and nothing can take the place of it. He is called of God as a prophet to explain God's word to the people. When he imagines that his own productions are more important to the people than the word of God, and when moral, social, and political issues tempt him to abandon the work of expounding the Scriptures to become a mere declaimer on what are called "living questions," he is no longer a true prophet of God.

One of the advantages of holding protracted services is the unusual opportunity thus afforded of explaining the Scriptures to the people. In two or more meetings in a day the preacher is enabled to fix the minds of the hearers upon the word, and thus instruct them in the revealed will of God. The mass of the people do not study the Bible for themselves; they are dependent

for their knowledge upon the preacher. A continued service, therefore, of some weeks in the hands of a judicious and able man who loves to expound God's word may be of inestimable value to those who attend upon his ministry. It is, in fact, a religious education for them. They are led into fields of Biblical knowledge hitherto unexplored. Their minds are quickened under the stimulus of the prophet's touch, and their souls are fed upon the truth. Under the influence of such a meeting, one in which God's word has been faithfully and lovingly expounded, many are induced to undertake the study of the Bible for themselves in an intelligent and practical way, and date their entrance into a higher spiritual life from it. The man who can make the Holy Scriptures speak as the living oracle of God is a prophet indeed, under whose ministry it is a benediction to sit. What a privilege it must have been to hear the Wesleys and Whitefield, John Bunyan, Jonathan Edwards, David Brainerd, or Thomas Chalmers, expound the word! Such men were worthy successors of our Lord and the apostles as sowers of the good seed of truth.

But not only should the word be expounded in revival meetings; it should also be *practically applied*. It may, of course, be expounded in such a dry, scholastic, and spiritless way as to produce little effect upon the hearers, but such expositions should be avoided. The truth of Holy Scripture is eminently practical. It concerns human life on the practical side, and it is the duty of the preacher not only to explain it, but also to apply it. The doctrines of the Scriptures should be taught in a practical way. There is an impression, widely prevalent, that doctrinal preaching is not practical, but metaphysical and theoretical, and not beneficial to the growth of the spiritual life. There is nothing, however, more intensely practical than the great doctrines of grace. They are simple statements of the vital truths of the gospel, and are absolutely necessary to the existence of the Christian life. The Christian, in order to be a Christian, must know something of the doctrines of the incarnation, the divinity of Christ, the new birth, justification by faith, and sanctification of life; and nothing is more palpably absurd than the charge that the presentation of such doctrines is impractical and unprofitable. The truth is, the man who does not preach them unequivocally and plainly is not a preacher of the Gospel. He

may be an orator, a reformer of public morals, a lecturer on literary subjects and questions of the day, but if he "shuns to declare the counsel of God" on the doctrines of grace, on the ground of their impracticability, their unpopularity, or for any other reason, he is not a preacher of Christ's gospel. The doctrines of the Bible should be preached in revival meetings, and should be practically applied to the needs of sinful men, and I, for one, do not believe, whatever may be the manifestations, that there can be any true revival of spiritual religion where this is not done.

The Bible should be used in the revival as the sword of the Spirit. It is the weapon of the church's warfare, "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb. iv. 12.) It should be so employed as to bring men under *conviction* of sin. The sinner must be brought face to face with God's law before he will recognize his own condition before God. Paul says, "I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." (Rom. vii. 9-13.) And when the sinner has been brought under conviction of sin, then the word of truth should be employed to lead him out into the light. The very words of the Holy Scriptures are the best medicine for the sin-sick soul. If the mind of the seeker after Christ can be fixed upon the plain statements and promises of the word of God, he is almost sure to see the light and be converted.

The Scriptures should also be used in revivals for the consolation and comfort of the saints. Their souls cannot be fed upon ranting exhortations and sentimental anecdotes, but they must have the bread of life, the good word of God.

In the revival the Bible should be *depended upon* to do the work of the Lord. Sometimes, in their eagerness for results, men forget it. They lose faith in God's word to do the work for which he has sent it into the world, and while they nominally read it and preach from it, they really depend upon novel methods in the various parts of the service and the natural enthu-

siasm of a crowd to arouse the unconverted and induce them to act. It sometimes appears as if every conceivable device is resorted to in order to insure results, and the Bible is largely ignored. We may have meetings and meetings, all attended with more or less of excitement, but unless the truth of God under the mighty influence of the Spirit reaches the hearts and consciences of men, there is no genuine revival of the work of the Lord, and the kingdom of Christ is not advanced. We must repose an unshaken confidence in the word of God, honor and magnify it, expound and apply it to the people, if we wish to see the work of the Lord prospering in our hands. The Bible is the main thing in the revival. If it is faithfully preached to the people in a spirit of love and prayer, we may confidently expect God to fulfill his promise: "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it to bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." (Isa. lv. 10, 11.)