

## Comments on Revival

By Samuel Miller, D.D.

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(The following excerpt comes from a letter written by Rev. Samuel Miller, D. D., professor of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government at the Theological Seminary at Princeton, NJ, on March 8, 1832. He wrote it to William B. Sprague, D. D. for inclusion in Sprague's book, Lectures on Revivals Of Religion.)

"Reverend and dear brother,

"The pious and devoted Mr. Baxter somewhere remarks,

'The Word of God is divine; but our mode of dispensing it is human, and there is scarcely any thing we have the handling of, but we leave on it the prints of our fingers.'

"The justness of this remark we shall probably all acknowledge...Means have been resorted to, in the fulness of ardent feeling, which scriptural wisdom and experience could not justify...

"Judicious and sober-minded Christians were grieved to see plans adopted and practices indulged which, though intended for good, were by no means adapted to promote it.

"Many who saw and lamented these evils were backward to oppose them, lest they should be thought unfriendly to what was really excellent and commendable in the passing scene.

"Thus, revivals have lost some of their lustre with all, have been altogether discredited in the eyes of many, and have, perhaps, been succeeded by long seasons of prevailing carelessness and even of hardened opposition to the special work of the Holy Spirit...

"Human nature being the same in all ages, the tendencies, infirmities, and temptations of men are the same. One generation forgets the experience of that which preceded it. Few read the record of that experience, and fewer still are qualified to profit by it.

"The consequence is, that every few years, the same occurrences take place. Good men are ensnared and led astray in the same manner. Hypocrites manifest the same arts and unhallowed ebullitions.

"Similar mistakes are made and similar irregularities are indulged without recollecting or perhaps knowing that they were ever witnessed before, and of course without being admonished by the painful instructions of former times...

"That you and I, my dear Friend, may have grace given us to love and promote with our whole hearts genuine revivals of religion, to guard against every thing which tends to impede or mar them, and to speedily enjoy the unspeakable pleasure of seeing the power of Gospel in its choicest influences pervade our land and the world is the unfeigned prayer of your affectionate brother in Christ, Samuel Miller."

(Excerpts taken from the book by William B. Sprague, D. D. Lectures On Revivals Of Religion (The Banner of Truth Trust: London, EN; 1959), Appendix, p. 22-44.)