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***EDWARDS VERSUS FINNEY:
A BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING
OF THE CAUSES OF CONVERSION AND REVIVAL***

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Introduction

Down through the ages, countless pastors and congregations have prayed, “Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?” (Psalm 85:6). We long for what the Puritan Congregational pastor Solomon Stoddard described as “some special seasons wherein God doth in a remarkable manner revive religion among his people,”¹ – a phenomenon that Jonathan Edwards (Solomon Stoddard’s grandson) famously called “a surprising work of God.”²

Although Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) and Charles Finney (1793-1875) were not contemporaries, both men experienced seasons of revival that took place during their respective ministries. The *First Great Awakening* took place during the 1730s and 40s. This period was followed by a “low spiritual condition” that lasted until the *Second Great Awakening*, which began shortly before 1800 and continued through the 1820s.³ Marc Minter notes, “While the historical details surrounding each revival are quite complex, containing some similarities and stark differences, these revivals represent” to some degree “the outworking of the emphases of each man – Edwards and Finney.”⁴

¹ From his chapter “The Benefit of the Gospel” in *The Efficacy of the Fear of Hell, to Restrain Men from Sin* (Boston, 1713), cited by Iain H. Murray, *Revival and Revivalism: The Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism 1750-1858* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1994, reprinted 2002), xvii.

² Jonathan Edwards, “A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God,” (Northampton, MA: 1936). Retrieved on 1 March 2022 at <https://www.jonathan-edwards.org/Narrative.html>; Internet.

³ Shortly after the turn of the century, Congregational pastors launched a forty-page monthly publication titled *The Connecticut Evangelical Magazine* wherein they wrote of “the late wonderful out-pouring of the Holy Spirit and revival of experimental religion.” Prior to this, “great revivals of religion [had] been so rare for the last half century that multitudes began to believe the accounts received from the lips of their parents to have been fabulous. Indeed, it was a time for God to work marvellously to set evidence before a sleeping generation of his mighty power in awakening and sanctifying sinners....” *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine* (Hartford, 1801), vol. 1 (July 1800 – June 1801), p. 6. Quoted by Murray, *Revival and Revivalism*, p. 121.

⁴ Marc Minter, “Revival: Edwards and Finney,” *Holding the Line* blog post, 22 May 2017 [online]. Retrieved on 1 March 2022 at <https://marcminter.com/2017/05/22/revival-edwards-and-finney/>; Internet.

Jonathan Edwards had a more biblical understanding of the causes of conversion and revival than did Charles Finney. This superior understanding showed itself in three ways. First, Edwards had a stronger orientation to the Scriptures than did Finney. Second, Edwards held a monergistic view of regeneration, in contrast to Finney's synergistic stance. Third, Edwards had a Christological focus in his preaching, whereas Finney was more man-centered in his approach.

Scriptural Orientation

A simple comparison of Edwards' work, *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God*, to Finney's *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, reveals that Edwards had a much stronger orientation to the Scriptures than did Finney, particularly concerning the nature of conversion and revival. The issue is not primarily the frequency with which either man employed Scripture, for frequency alone does not by itself indicate biblical fidelity and doctrinal depth. The key is that Edwards' handling of the Scriptures revealed a theological acuity that Finney did not possess.

Interestingly, Finney insisted in his lectures that "a minister's course of study and training for his work should be exclusively theological."⁵ Concerning revival Finney asserted, "Truth is the instrument."⁶ Finney charged his students, "Will you follow the instructions I shall give you from the word of God, and put them in practice in your own hearts?"⁷ Yet one is hard-pressed to find in Finney's lectures more than a cluster of proof texts to justify his own views without regard for the context of the Scripture passages to which he referred or the counsel of the Scriptures as a whole.⁸

⁵Charles G. Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* (New York: F. F. Ripley, 1835), p. 202 [on-line], accessed 13 October 2012, <http://snipurl.com/cfinney>; Internet.

⁶Ibid., 16.

⁷Ibid., 20.

⁸A good example of proof texting appears at the outset of Lecture XII, "How to Preach the Gospel." Ibid., 180.

Edwards, however, referenced Scripture carefully, paying attention to its immediate and broader context. In assessing whether various operations are genuinely a work of God, Edwards emphasized that “we are to take the *scriptures* as our guide in such cases. This is the great and standing rule which God has given to his church, in order to guide them in things relating to the great concerns of their souls; and it is an infallible and sufficient rule.”⁹ Edwards’ view of Scripture was consistent with its own assertions (e.g. Pss. 19:7-11; 119:105; 2 Tim 3:16-17).

To his credit, Edwards did not discount human experience and the physical effects which may occur in relation to a work of God. Indeed, Edwards pointed out various instances in the biblical narrative wherein persons under the Holy Spirit’s influence were deemed to be either drunk or crazy (e.g. Acts 2:13; 26:24; 1 Cor 4:10). Edward’s contention was that while such phenomena may occur, they are not the criteria for recognizing a work of God. Said Edwards,

A work is not to be judged of by any effects on the bodies of men; such as tears, trembling, groans, loud outcries, agonies of body, or the failing of bodily strength. The influence persons are under, is not to be judged of one way or other, by such effects on the body; and the reason is, because the scripture nowhere gives us any such rule.¹⁰

Edwards proceeded to provide scriptural evidence of a work of the Spirit of God by expounding on 1 John 4:1-8 and correlating texts. In extolling the value of Scripture (as well as the virtue of Christian love as an evidence of saving grace), Edwards pointed out, “... we see it common in enthusiasts, that they depreciate this written rule, and set up the light within or some other rule above it.”¹¹

Finney was such an enthusiast. He depreciated Scripture by overemphasizing human experience, going so far as to say, “... it is impossible for God or man to promote religion ... but

⁹Jonathan Edwards, “The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God” (n.p., 1741), excerpted from Jonathan Edwards and David Brainerd, *The Works of President Edwards: In Ten Volumes* (New York: G. & C. & H. Carvill), 1830), p. 560 [on-line], accessed 13 October 2012, <http://snipurl.com/distinguishingmarks>; Internet.

¹⁰Ibid., 562.

¹¹ Ibid., 583.

by powerful excitements. ... Where mankind are so reluctant to obey God, they will not act until they are excited.”¹² In Finney’s revival meetings, people were called on to prove their repentance and submission to God by standing up, kneeling down, or coming forward to “the anxious seat” or “the mourner’s bench” – various designations for the “altar call,” which was little known in most churches before the 1820s. But by 1835, it was a standard practice.

These “new measures” (as they came to be called) stemmed from the “New Divinity,” a theological system advocated by Yale professor Nathaniel William Taylor, who taught that “sin and guilt can *only* be attributed to men’s voluntary choices. All that needs to be changed in the unconverted man is his will, not his nature.”¹³ Biographer Iain Murray notes, “At the heart of the matter lay *a different doctrine* of conversion.”¹⁴

We will consider the doctrines of regeneration and conversion in the next section. The point here is that Finney’s view of human nature – and also the atonement, as we shall see – was a departure from Scripture and the doctrinal standards of his own denomination delineated in the Westminster Confession of Faith. Finney was ordained in the Presbyterian Church in 1824 and did not leave the denomination until 1836, prompting Benjamin Warfield to state, “Under its cover he for a dozen years flouted the doctrines he had been placed by it under obligation to propagate.”¹⁵

¹²Finney, 11.

¹³ Murray, *Revival and Revivalism*, pp. 260-261. Taylor was pastor of the First Church in New Haven, Connecticut, and a foremost figure of Yale Divinity School, which was established in 1822. Murray writes, “By the early 1820s ... the ideas of Yale’s first professor were being understood and were passing into general circulation. By 1826 Yale divinity students were talking of the “New Divinity” being taught by their professors, and the phrase stuck.” In fact, the “New Divinity” was also dubbed “Taylorism.”

¹⁴ Murray, *Revival and Revivalism*, 244, italics added by me for emphasis.

¹⁵ Iain Murray notes, “A revival is, by its very nature, bound to be attended by emotional excitement. But the course of a revival, together with its purity and abiding fruit, is directly related to the manner in which such excitement is handled by its leaders. Once the idea gains acceptance that the degree of the Spirit’s work is to be measured by the strength of emotion, or that physical effects of any kind are proofs of God’s action, then what is rightly called fanaticism is bound to follow. For those who embrace such beliefs will suppose that any check on emotion or on physical phenomena is tantamount to opposing the Holy Spirit.” *Revival and Revivalism*, pp. 163-164.

Monergistic Stance

Monergism is “a term for the belief that the Holy Spirit is the only agent who effects regeneration of Christians. This view . . . sees salvation as the work of God alone, from first to last.”¹⁶ Scripture expressly teaches that salvation is by God’s grace, not our own doing (Eph 2:8-10), and that the Holy Spirit is the effective agent in regeneration (Titus 3:5; cf. 1 Cor 4:7; 15:10).

Edwards consistently affirmed the above truths in his sermons. In his exposition of Matthew 16:17, Edwards pointed out that Peter’s confession of Christ was owing to the fact that “God, and he *only*, had *revealed* it to him.”¹⁷ Edwards proceeded to show from both a scriptural and rational standpoint that one’s knowledge of divine things is “given immediately by God” and is not “obtained by natural means.”¹⁸ This assumption is apparent throughout the entirety of Edwards’ work, *The Distinguishing Mark of a Work of the Spirit of God*. Throughout this treatise, Edwards credited the Holy Spirit with raising people’s esteem of Jesus, opposing Satan’s interests, causing in men a greater regard for Scripture, guiding them toward the truth, and producing in them a spirit of love toward God and man.

While declaring that God alone is the effective agent in conversion, Edwards also acknowledged that God “deals with man according to his nature . . . and makes use of his human faculties. But yet this light is not the less immediately from God for that; though the faculties are made use of, it is as the subject and not as the cause....”¹⁹ This view is utterly consistent with the teaching of Scripture (e.g., Matt. 11:25-27; 2 Cor. 4:4-6; John 1:12-14; 6:37-40; 1 Pet. 2:21-25).

In contrast to Edwards, Finney held a synergistic view of conversion and revival, saying, “There are always two agents, God and the sinner, employed and active in every case of

¹⁶“Monergism,” in *Theopedia: An Encyclopedia of Christianity* [on-line], accessed 13 October 2012, <http://www.theopedia.com/Monergism>; Internet.

¹⁷Jonathan Edwards, “A Divine and Supernatural Light” (n.p., 1734), p. 1 [on-line], accessed 13 October 2012, http://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/Edwards_light.html; Internet.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 7.

genuine conversion.”²⁰ Such a statement by itself is consistent with the teaching of Scripture and the theology of Jonathan Edwards. In conversion, the sinner willingly responds to the gospel call, having received from God the gift of faith and repentance (Eph. 2:8-9; Phil. 1:29; 2 Tim. 2:25). However, Finney understood the respective roles of God and man in a much different way than did Edwards. Finney asserted that a revival “is not a miracle, or dependent on a miracle, in any sense. *It is a purely philosophical result of the right use of the constituted means--as much so as any other effect produced by the application of means.*”²¹ In his sermon, “Sinners Bound to Change Their Own Hearts,” Finney went so far as to say, “This giving the sinner power, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to obey God, is what the Arminians call a gracious ability, which terms are a manifest absurdity. . . . Natural ability to do our duty cannot be a gracious ability.”²²

At times Finney seemed to be quite inconsistent and confusing in his explanation about the respective roles of the Holy Spirit and the sinner in bringing about conversion. For instance, Finney referred to the Holy Spirit as the “efficient cause of the change,” but then in the very next sentence Finney referred to the sinner as “the author of the change.”²³ But in other statements, Finney was far less ambiguous regarding his theology of conversion. In Finney’s view, the Holy Spirit did no more than persuade men by means of motives to obey the gospel. “That was what Finney believed, and he made it clear that the whole idea that an unregenerate man was governed by a fallen nature was wrong.”²⁴

Yet Scripture says that we were Christians, “we were *by nature* children of wrath, like the rest of mankind” (Eph. 2:3, italics mine). David confessed, “Behold, I was brought forth in

²⁰Finney, 15.

²¹Ibid., 12, italics mine (for emphasis).

²²Charles Finney, “Sinners Bound to Change Their Own Hearts” (n.p.), p. 12 [on-line], accessed 15 October 2012, http://www.gospeltruth.net/1836SOIS/01sois_sinners_bound.htm; Internet.

²³Finney, *Lectures on Revivals*, 183.

²⁴Murray, *Revival and Revivalism*, 244.

iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psalm 51:4). Jesus declared, “Unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.... Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.... You must be born again” (John 3:3, 5, 7). In his book on conversion, Michael Lawrence notes,

If we would be right with God, we don’t need to improve ourselves. We need a complete restart. ... A radical change must occur in us. But the word that the Bible never uses to describe what Jesus is talking about is *reformation*. ... The personal change that Jesus says we need goes much deeper; *it reaches down to our very nature*.²⁵

Despite Finney’s insistence to the contrary, Scripture is clear: “Jesus [is] the author . . . of our faith” (Heb. 12:2); it is the Lord who grants repentance (2 Tim. 2:25).

Though Finney was unclear in his remarks at times, he undoubtedly believed and aimed “to show that the Bible ascribes conversion to men.”²⁶ Finney cited Scriptures such as Daniel 12:3, 1 Corinthians 4:15, and James 5:19-20. However, he provided no explanation of these verses in their proper context. Finney declared, “We are apt to speak of ministers and other men as only *instruments* in converting sinners. This is not exactly correct. Man is something more than an instrument. Truth is the mere unconscious instrument.”²⁷

This statement reveals a shockingly elevated view of man and diminished view of the “word of God [which] is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, . . . and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). Finney’s deficient view of the Holy Spirit’s role in effecting faith and repentance in the sinner was a decisive shift from the historical evangelical understanding of conversion. Theologian David Wells has noted that in Finney’s revival campaigns the “emphasis shifted from the older Reformational interests in the inability of the sinner and the sovereignty of grace to newer con-

²⁵ Michael Lawrence, *Conversion: How God Creates a People* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), pp. 23-24.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 180.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 181.

cerns (that were at least Arminian and often Pelagian) about the sinner's ability to appropriate Christ unaided."²⁸ Likewise, the Presbyterian minister Gardiner Spring, a contemporary of Finney, voiced his strong critique of this theological shift, saying, "It was the teaching of some that the renovation of the heart, instead of being the work of the Holy Spirit, is the creature's work and that the power of the Spirit consists in *persuading the sinner* himself to perform it. The principal advocate of these new measures and these Pelagian errors was the Rev. Charles G. Finney."²⁹ This theological shift affected the manner and focus of Finney's preaching, as noted in the next point.

Christological Focus

Scripture teaches that the heart of the gospel is "Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). This gospel "that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3b-4) is the message of "first importance" (1 Cor. 15:3a). Yet this Christological, redemptive focus is not central in the lectures and preaching of Charles Finney. Rather he exhorted his hearers, "As you go over the catalogue of your sins, be sure to resolve upon present and entire reformation. Wherever you find any thing wrong, resolve at once, in the strength of God, to sin no more in that way."³⁰ No mention of Christ's redeeming work on behalf of sinners appears in this section on self-examination and reformation.

One would be inclined to think that if such an emphasis did not appear at this point in Finney's lectures, then the message of "Christ and him crucified" would most certainly be the key focus in the lecture entitled "How to Preach the Gospel."³¹ Yet one is hard-pressed to find any real

²⁸David F. Wells, *Turning to God: Reclaiming Christian Conversion as Unique, Necessary, and Supernatural*. Together for the Gospel 2012 Edition (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2012), p. 106.

²⁹Gardiner Spring, *Personal Reminiscences*, vol. 1, p. 221. Cited by Murray, *Revival and Revivalism*, 250.

³⁰Finney, 42-43.

³¹*Ibid.*, 180-206.

reference to the cross of Christ throughout this entire lecture of twenty-seven pages. Finney used the term “gospel” but did not expound the *substance* of the gospel. In his sixth point, Finney declared, “The gospel should be preached in *those proportions*, that *the whole gospel* may be brought before the minds of the people, and produce its proper influence.”³² In expounding this point, Finney used the terms truth, election, divine sovereignty, man’s ability, antinomianism and Arminianism, but he did not speak with reference to the substance of the gospel, i.e. the substitutionary death and resurrection of Jesus Christ on behalf of sinners. To his credit, Finney extolled the preaching ministry of Christ, particularly his use of parables and illustrations from common life.³³ Christ was lauded by Finney as a great preacher, but why not as a great Savior?

The answer to this question may well be found in the late eighteenth development of the so-called “governmental” theory of the atonement, first advanced by Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) and adopted by such men as Samuel Hopkins and Jonathan Edwards, Jr., in the eighteenth century.

According to this view,

Christ by His death actually paid the penalty for no man’s sin. What His death did was to demonstrate what their sins deserved at the hand of the just Governor and Judge of the universe, and permits God justly to forgive men if on other grounds, such as their faith, their repentance, their works, and their perseverance, they meet His demand. ... But this is just to eviscerate the Savior’s work of all its intrinsic saving worth and to replace the Christosoteric vision of Scripture with the autosoteric vision of Pelagianism.”³⁴

“The atonement of itself does not secure the salvation of any,” wrote Finney.³⁵ “When a sinner repents that state of feeling makes it possible for God to forgive him.”³⁶

The main emphasis in Finney’s lecture on “How to Preach the Gospel” was the manner of delivery. Finney made some good points on the need for preaching to be direct, practical, illustrative,

³²Ibid., 188.

³³Ibid., 194.

³⁴ Quote by Robert Reymond in “Governmental theory of atonement,” *Theopedia* [online]. Retrieved from <https://www.theopedia.com/governmental-theory-of-atonement>; Internet.

³⁵ *Lectures on Systematic Theology*, revised edition (1878), p. 281. Cited by Murray, 262.

³⁶ *Revivals of Religion*, p. 49. Cited by Murray, 262.

persuasive and pointed, but his lack of Christological focus was an inherent weakness in his preaching philosophy. Wells has rightly observed, “Where conversion is reduced to an experience and, indeed, an experience that can almost be induced, it is disengaged from the whole corpus of belief in which it should have found a place.”³⁷ That “corpus of belief” is none other than the cross work of Christ. By not making this the central theme in his preaching, Finney failed “to bring humbled, penitent sinners to the only source from whom forgiveness can be had.”³⁸ Sadly, Finney said of his own revival ministry,

I was often instrumental in bringing Christians under great conviction, and into a state of temporary repentance and faith . . . [But] falling short of urging them up to a point, where they would become so acquainted with Christ as to abide in Him, they would of course soon relapse into their former state.³⁹

Jonathan Edwards, on the other hand, understood that the person and work of Christ is central to the gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit. Edwards wrote,

When the operation is such as to raise their esteem of that Jesus who was born of the Virgin, and was crucified without the gates of Jerusalem; and seems more to confirm and establish their minds in the truth of what the gospel declares to us of his being the Son of God, and the Savior of men; is a sure sign that it is from the Spirit of God.⁴⁰

Edwards’ basis for this assertion was 1 John 4:2-3. His scriptural orientation led to a Christological focus in his preaching. Edwards stated that a work of God will produce in the heart “an admiring, delightful sense of the excellency of Jesus Christ.”⁴¹ Edwards witnessed this reality firsthand in his own town and other neighboring communities during the Great Awakening. He wrote, “Many have spoken much of their hearts being drawn out in love to God and Christ; and of their minds being wrapt [sic] up in delightful contemplation of the glory and wonderful grace of God,

³⁷Wells, 107-108.

³⁸Ibid., 108.

³⁹Cited in Benjamin B. Warfield, *Studies in Perfectionism*, 2 vols. (New York: Oxford, 1932), 2:24 [on-line], accessed 16 October 2012, http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id=19468&forum=36; Internet.

⁴⁰Edwards, “The Distinguishing Marks,” 578.

⁴¹Ibid., 584.

the excellency and dying love of Jesus Christ; and of their souls . . . longing . . . after God and Christ.”⁴²

Edwards’ narrative recounts people’s discoveries of the grace of God and the love of Christ as revealed in the gospel. This Christological focus, which was a hallmark of Edwards’ sermons and other works, shows that he comprehended better than Finney the nature of true gospel work.

William R. Weeks, a Congregational minister who witnessed first-hand the methods employed by Finney in his revival meetings, who also is believed to be the primary author of a twenty-two-paged *Pastoral Letter of the Ministers of the Oneida Association to the Churches under their Care*, shared their pastoral concerns by portraying the controversy as a dialogue between “Love-Self” (representing the new measures) and “Thoughtful” (representing the old).

Here is a representative portion of the dialogue:

Love-self: The sinner is bound to repent now. And if the preacher does his duty, he may expect to see sinners brought to repentance immediately.

Thoughtful: There is a great deal of such talk, at this day, which seems to have very little definiteness. I do not believe the preacher can make the word preached by him effectual to the conversion of sinners. The Lord Jesus did not in all cases; nor the prophets, nor the apostles, nor was it required of them. If they faithfully preached the word, that was their duty. What effect it should produce was the divine prerogative to determine . . .

Love-self: If you admit that it is the duty of every impenitent hearer to repent now, why not take some means to ascertain, at the close of the sermon, how many have done their duty?

Thoughtful: For the plain reason that the eyes of man cannot ascertain. God only looks on the heart. And more time is required for a sober, human judgment to be formed. “By their fruits ye shall know them;” and there must be time for the fruits to appear.

Love-self: You are so often hinting at false conversions, false hopes, and the like, that I begin to think you have not much confidence in the revivals of the present day.

Thoughtful: I confess I cannot have much confidence in those which are produced by new-measure influence. I think the new measures are usually found connected with radical errors in relation to what Christian experience is, and that the kind of experimental religion which these measures is adapted to produce, is not true Christian experience, but a dangerous delusion.

“This,” says Iain Murray, “was the heart of the issue.”⁴³

⁴²Jonathan Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God in the Conversion of Many Hundred Souls, in Northampton and the Neighboring Towns* (n.p.), pp. 19-20 (on-line), accessed 15 October 2012, <http://www.jonathan-edwards.org/Narrative.html>; Internet.

⁴³ Murray, *Revival and Revivalism*, 251-252.

Conclusion

The contrasting emphases in the ministries of Jonathan Edwards and Charles Finney should cause us as present-day pastors and preachers to “keep a close watch on [ourselves] and on the teaching” (1 Tim. 4:16), particularly as we “do the work of an evangelist” (2 Tim. 4:5). May we, like Jonathan Edwards, have a strong orientation to Scripture, which will in turn yield a monergistic view of regeneration and a Christological focus in preaching.

As I thought about keeping a close watch on myself and my own ministry, the Lord seemed to impress three words on me:

1. **Mindfulness:** We must always be aware of, and guard against, the church’s tendency toward theological drift influenced by the winds of culture. Iain Murray correctly states, “When any error in belief or practice gains swift popularity in the churches it will almost invariably be found to be connected with something conducive to the spirit of the age.” He goes on to note, “The nineteenth century was an era of unparalleled activity. A nation awoke to what could be accomplished through human energy.”⁴⁴ If such was true then, how much more so is it characteristic of our own day? Let us therefore maintain a strong orientation to Scripture. “Test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil” (1 Thess. 5:21-22).
2. **Methodology:** In our zeal to see people saved and strengthened in their walk with God, let us be careful not to employ non-scriptural measures that are calculated to induce a response. In a blog article based on the apostle Paul’s testimony in 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 and titled “Messengers or Manipulators?”, John MacArthur reminds us,

⁴⁴ Murray, *Revival and Revivalism*, 278-279.

Paul shunned manipulative oratory. ... He didn't use techniques that excite and stir and move people's emotions to achieve results. ... It is not my task, as the preacher, to manipulate my hearers to do something emotionally. All the slick techniques, all the gospel-marketing packages, all the pulpit histrionics of jumping and stomping and flailing around ... and doing whatever they do to create the mood; all the sad stories, the mood music, the endless invitations, the hand raising, the walking, all of that kind of pressure is not preaching the Word. ...

The decision of yielding, surrendering and then acting, is between the hearer and God, not between the hearer and the preacher. It is the Holy Spirit's work.⁴⁵

3. **Motives:** What preachers don't want to see sinners converted and Christians grow more zealous for the Lord? But if we are not careful, our desire for "success" can lead to "new measures" by which we seek to convince ourselves and others that we are experiencing an outpouring of divine blessing. Early in the nineteenth century, the Reverend Samuel Porter warned "that the man who aspires to celebrity and fame must endeavour to gratify that taste. Clergymen of ambition are under a strong temptation to sail with the wind and tide."⁴⁶ "So let no one boast in men..." (1 Cor. 3:21). May our boast ever be in Jesus Christ, our great God and Savior. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

We praise Thee, O God, for the Son of Thy love –
 For Jesus, who died and is now gone above.
Hallelujah! Thine the glory! Hallelujah! Amen!
Hallelujah! Thine the glory! Revive us again!

All glory and praise to the Lamb that was slain,
 Who has borne all our sins and has cleansed every stain.
Hallelujah! Thine the glory! Hallelujah! Amen!
Hallelujah! Thine the glory! Revive us again!

Revive us again; fill each heart with Thy love.
 May each soul be rekindled with fire from above.
Hallelujah! Thine the glory! Hallelujah! Amen!
*Hallelujah! Thine the glory! Revive us again!*⁴⁷

⁴⁵ John MacArthur, "Messengers or Manipulators?" Grace to You [online]. Retrieved from <https://www.gty.org/library/questions/QA192/messengers-or-manipulators>; Internet.

⁴⁶ *Old Redstone*, pp. 371-372. Cited by Murray, *Revival and Revivalism*, 280.

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