

# History of Revival (1740-1851), 3

by Ian Murray

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*Ian Murray's sermon explores the significant revivals in America from 1740 to 1851, highlighting key figures and their impact on church growth and spirituality.*

**Duration:** 49:23

**Scripture:** Genesis 6:3, Psalm 95:7, Isaiah 40:1, Isaiah 55:6, Matthew 7:7, 2 Peter 3:9, Revelation 3:20

**Topics:** "Revival History", "Salvation Urgency"

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## Description

In this sermon transcript, the speaker describes a powerful scene that took place in 1843 in Virginia. An old man, despite physical exhaustion, delivers a sermon that deeply moves the congregation. The sermon is based on the evening text, 'the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.' The speaker emphasizes the urgency of preparing one's soul for death and appeals to sinners to give their hearts to God. The transcript also mentions the impact of sacramental seasons and the personal experience of being moved by a sermon on Revelation 3:20.

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## Transcript

I began to put before you something of the revivals that took place in the 120 years between 1740 and the year 1860 here in the United States. And we spent the latter part of our time yesterday morning considering the awakening which began in Virginia in 1787 and 88 at Hampden, Sydney and then spreading as we saw and leading on ultimately to the Great Revival in 1800 and that continuing to 1804, 1805 and spreading into almost all parts of the southern states. Now simultaneously, or almost simultaneously, a new period of revival began in the north in the year 1791.

And as I mentioned yesterday, these revivals were to go on with scarcely intermission for a period of 50 years. And I just want this morning to give you a little more information on these revivals in the north before hopefully I can return to another subject at which I had intended to commence this morning. Well in 1791 in the north, 40 years of course had passed since the Great Awakening.

The churches had gone on laboring and there had been of course conversions but there had been no great outpourings of the spirit. But in the last decade of the 18th century such effusions of the spirit began again. And I want to give you some figures.

In the four or five years commencing with the year 1798 not less than 150 churches in New England were favoured with special effusions of the Holy Spirit. And thousands of souls in the judgment of charity were

translated from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son. One of these awakenings was at Yale College in New Haven in 1802.

Prior to the revival at Yale there had only been four church members amongst the undergraduates. For a period of time for many years after the revival there were more than 200 church members at Yale. The revival of 1802 brought a third of the college student body which was then 230 students, brought a third of these students into the church.

Now just a few more figures. One of the historians of the period has estimated that between 1815 and 1840 now moving on a little, the spirit was poured out upon four to five hundred congregations on an average annually. And that during some particular years, and that during some particular years 40,000 to 50,000 people were added to the churches every 12 months.

Now in the case of the Presbyterian churches there are exact figures and I give you these with a reminder that I suppose the Presbyterians were the most cautious of all the denominations in receiving members at this time so these are not inflated figures. In the North and the South the number of Presbyterian churches in the ten years from 1816 to 1826, the number rose from 920 to over 2,000. So there was an increase of church membership of over 300%.

At the General Assembly of 1823 30 Presbyteries reported revivals within their bounds. In 1824 the number was smaller but in 1825 more than 20 Presbyteries gave testimony to their being visited by outpourings of the Spirit of God. Between 1825 and 1835 the increase in church membership in the Presbyterian church was still more than 50%.

From 1826 to 1830 the average increase being about 10,000 people a year. Now I don't want to give you any more figures but these figures do speak. What I want to do now is to give you just a little indication of the quality of the preaching and of the caliber of the men who were used to reap in these great harvests.

And I think there are three names in particular that stand out. There were of course scores of ministers who were greatly used at this time. But if we must pick out three, I think the three would certainly be these.

In the first place, Edward Daw Griffin who was born in the year that Whitfield died, the year 1770. Edward Griffin. The other two names would be Asahau Nettleton and Edward Pace who were both born in the same year, the year 1783.

And these three men became three of the most remarkably used preachers in the whole of church history. Now I cannot really do much this morning beyond encourage you to study them for yourselves. In each case there is a biography of these leaders.

I suppose they are all forgotten today and one I suspect is totally forgotten. But just a few facts about them. Nettleton was a student at Yale after the revival of 1802.

He was licensed to the Congregational Ministry in New England in the year 1811. And from the year 1811 he labored without ceasing in revival scenes until the year 1822 at which time his health was completely broken. And for two years he was scarcely able to preach at all.

Then he resumed his labors as an assistant in revivals, encouraging pastors and advising. And he continued in that work practically down till his death in 1844. Asahau Nettleton.

The second man, Edward Payson. Now those of you who have read the life of Robert Murray M'Chayne will have seen there M'Chayne's testimony to the influence that Payson's life had upon him. Unhappily Payson's life is a very rare book today.

It was written by Asa Cummings and if you can get the unabridged version of Cummings' life of Payson well you have a great treasure. It was said of Payson that his love for preaching was as invincible as that of a miser for gold. His ministry was spent in Portland in New England, commencing in the second Congregational Church there in the year 1807 and continuing until his death in the same church in 1827.

And there were several powerful revivals through that ministry. I gave you a quotation from him on Monday morning. In the very year of his death, and I suppose it hastened his death, there was a great outpouring of the Spirit.

In the last year of his ministry there were something like 79 persons added to the church. And in the midst of this great revival, as I say, Payson died. Let me give you a few of his words.

Writing to a friend at this time, at the very end of his life, he says, but in the midst of it, that's in the midst of this outpouring of the Spirit, I am laid aside. My lungs have been failing for several weeks and I can preach no longer. The revival among the people increases.

You see it wasn't dependent upon Payson as a preacher. As death drew near, Payson rejoiced in triumph and assurance. The celestial city, he said, is full in my view.

Its glories beam upon me. Nothing separates me from it but the river of death, which now appears but an insignificant rill that may be crossed at a single step whenever God shall give permission. The sun of righteousness has been gradually drawing nearer and nearer, appearing larger and brighter as he approached.

And now he fills the whole hemisphere, pouring forth a flood of glory in which I seem to float like an insect in the beams of the sun. My poor eyes, he says, are blinded with excessive brightness and all I want is to be a mirror to reflect some of those rays to those around me. Such was something of Edward Payson.

I encourage you then to read his life and his sermons. The third name is the name that I suspect is the totally forgotten one, the name of Edward Griffin. Some years ago I first noticed Griffin's name in a footnote in Sneaton's volume on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

And being alerted to it, I then began to seek and I had to seek for many years until in a second-hand bookshop in Wales I discovered these two precious volumes, The Memoir and Sermons of Griffin, published in New York in 1839. Somehow a copy had got to Wales. The memoir is outstandingly good.

It is written by W.B. Sprague. I don't think you say Sprague, but we say Sprague. Do you say Sprague or Sprague? Well, you know who I mean.

Well, I better not try and change my pronunciation this morning. This is what Sprague says about Griffin in beginning his memoir. It was in revivals of religion that Dr. Griffin appeared with surpassing advantage.

The history of his life seems little less than the history of one unbroken revival. And it would perhaps be difficult to name the individual in our country since the days of Whitefield who has been instrumental of an equal number of hopeful conversions. But then Sprague goes on to point out that this was not due to

Griffin's preaching gifts.

He says, Had he lived at an earlier period, his commanding energies might have been exhausted in prophesying to bones upon which the breath of heaven had not begun to fall, even to the time of his going down to the grave. But he came upon the stage at the very time when the preparation in Providence seemed to have been completed for the introduction of a new order of things. The fields were white around him and what he had to do was to take his sickle and to go forth to the harvest.

Well, Griffin began his ministry in Connecticut, he was a native of Connecticut, in 1792. And at the very outset of his work he had a tremendous encouragement in his own family. The family in which he was brought up included ten persons.

And as a youth he was the only Christian in the family. But about that year, 1791-92, the work of conversion began in his own family until within a few years there were only two that remained outside the kingdom of God. Griffin began preaching near his home in a village where there was no church.

Then he was called to New Hartford in Connecticut. Then he became minister of Newark in New Jersey. Then of Park Street, Boston.

And he concluded his ministry as the president of Williams College in New England. And throughout these several ministries there were remarkable outpourings of the Spirit. At Newark in 1807, for example, 200 persons were added to the church in the one year.

The appearance, says Griffin, the appearance was as if a collection of waters long suspended over the town had fallen at once and deluged the whole place. Ored by the majesty of a present God, many could say with Moses, I exceedingly fear and quake. Let me, as I leave Griffin, give you one quotation from a hearer of Griffin.

When Griffin was becoming an aged minister of the gospel in the year 1829, this person went to hear him one Lord's day. They heard him preach in the morning. The day was excessively hot, but in the evening they walked back to the church to hear Griffin again.

Griffin, by the way, was a gigantic kind of man. He was six foot three, he weighed something over 300 pounds and he was a huge figure, perhaps the largest preacher that ever preached the Orthodox faith. But I tell you that because it has a bearing on this evening sermon really.

The evening text, says the eyewitness, the evening text was the harvest is past, the summer is ended and we are not saved. I have heard many sermons from these words, all I think impressive. But this one from Dr. Griffin was beyond almost any sermon I ever heard.

One felt as if he must cry out in amazement that any soul unprepared to die could be quiet and unconcerned. During most of the sermon his face was wet with tears. And for nearly an hour he spoke to us with such tender and appealing sentences that it seemed as if his hearers must cry out in an agony of fear and trembling.

But what a climax the ending was. It was a wonder how he had endured the strain so long and that he had not given up physically exhausted. The mental agony, the heart-breaking sympathy were enough to break an angel down.

Then, at last, he fell upon his knees as if he had been knocked on the head with an axe. And without stretched arms and tears coursing down his face he cried out, all my dying fellow sinners, I beseech you to give your hearts to the Savior now. Give your life to Jesus Christ.

Do not put it off. Do not leave this house without dedicating yourselves to His service. Lest you be left at last to cry, the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved.

Three men then, Hazer Hal Nettleton, Edward Payson, and Edward Griffin. And all have outstandingly good biographies and I hope that it may be one day they can all be reprinted. I don't know how long that may be.

Now, before we leave this period, let me just say a word or two on the third, the last period of revival before the Civil War. In the North, beginning in New York and simultaneously it appears in Hamilton, Ontario, and spreading until millions of people both in North and South were brought into the kingdom of God. One thing that stands out in the revival of that period, the late 1850s, is that God was gathering souls into His kingdom before the great tempest broke in 1861.

You know that God has different purposes in revival. Sometimes the purpose is to raise up a great multitude of young Christians who will become workers and preachers and missionaries for years to come. But there have been revivals.

I think, for example, of the revival in Korea in 1907 before the Japanese War and of other revivals in other places. There have been revivals when thousands have been brought into the kingdom in order that they might be transplanted to heaven within a very few years. And that certainly was the case in the late 1850s.

Many of you have been to the battlefield of Gettysburg, and you have seen in the museum there Bibles that were carried by troops, by Confederate troops coming up from the South. Bibles which undoubtedly in several cases had been used in great scenes of revival. And these young men both from North and South that were cut down prematurely by death by God's grace had been in many instances brought in in the years preceding the Civil War.

I quote you only, I think, from James Waddell Alexander. You may not know his name, but we have twice this week been singing his words, O sacred head sore wounded. That hymn is the work of James Waddell Alexander.

Of course, it's a translation from Gerhardt and before that from Bernard, possibly of Claveau. But J. W. Alexander was the outstanding translator of that hymn and its words owe so much to him. He was the son of Archibald Alexander of Princeton and his concluding years were spent in New York.

And once more in his case also, the revival, I believe, hastened his death. There was more work to do than he had strength to perform. Let me give you one quotation from a letter from J. W. Alexander written in April 1858.

And he's speaking in the midst of the awakening in New York. He says, in connection with all that he's filling his hands, study, he says, study I cannot, being run down by persons many of whom I never knew in search of counsel, in search of help. The uptown prayer meetings are very sober and edifying.

I am told that the general tendency in all is to increased order. The openness of thousands to doctrine, to reproof is undeniable. Our weekly lecture is crowded unendurably, many going away.

The publisher of Spurgeon's sermons says he has sold a hundred thousand. All booksellers agree that while the general trade is down they never sold so many religious books. You may rest assured that there is a great awakening going on among us of which not one word has yet got into the papers.

And there are meetings of great size as free from irreverence as any you ever saw. I have never seen sacramental seasons more tender and still than some meetings held daily in churches in parts of our town. And he goes on to describe the awakening.

Well, I don't want to spend longer on that. But I wonder if we could take a short break and perhaps sing a hymn because I have a complete break of subject. Would it be suitable for us to do that? To pause and to sing God's praise at this time? Now what I had planned to do this morning was having given you, as I hope, a general survey was to come down to a particular person and a more particular study within those 120 years.

And I hope then that in 20 minutes, 25 minutes we can, at any rate, give you an outline of the matter which was upon my heart to deliver at this time. I begin with trying to depict to you a scene which took place in the summer of 1843 in the town of Lexington in Virginia. It was an extremely hot day and there was a crowded congregation listening to an old man speaking.

Bent over a manuscript, grey hair falling on his shoulders and in the midst of his address he paused, turned pale and sat down suddenly in the chair behind him. And then when everyone thought that he must have finished he began speaking again not able to rise but speaking from his seat. And he continued despite exhortations from those that were sitting near him to stop he continued to the end of what he had to say.

And at length with an assembly that were deeply moved and with many in tears he spoke these final words. Having now finished what I wish to communicate at this time I must, my beloved friends take a solemn and last farewell of you all expecting never again to see the faces of most of you in the flesh. May heaven's richest blessings attend you.

The old man speaking was an old Virginian Archibald Alexander of Princeton of whom we have spoken already often this week. And it seemed to me that thinking as we were of revivals here in the United States it was particularly important that we should give some time to the biography and if possible to something of the thought of Archibald Alexander. He had been born very near to this place where he was speaking in Lexington.

He was born on an upper tributary of the James River in the year 1772. His father was an elder in the small Presbyterian church there. His grandfather had been converted in the Great Awakening.

His grandfather was one of the first settlers to move down to that part of the interior of Virginia. It was pretty wild. There were still wolves there.

When Alexander was a boy he was given a rifle. On his 11th birthday everybody had to shoot and to swim and to hunt. And it was in that environment that Archibald Alexander spent his early years.

His schooling was rather remarkable. His father purchased an Irish convict. He was called a redemptioner.

But this man was apparently useful for no manual labor like other Irishmen. I don't know if we have Irish friends here. So you don't know what I'm going to say yet.

Like other Irishmen he could talk well. But he wasn't very good at hard work. So he was made the teacher in a local school for children.

And this convict used to take Archibald Alexander when Archibald Alexander was about 3 or 4 years old. He used to carry him in his arms about a mile through the woods to this school where he would teach them. And Archibald Alexander said the only good the teaching did was for his lungs because they had to shout their memory lessons at such a volume that it certainly expanded their lungs but he learnt nothing.

A little later, I suppose when he was 10 years of age he became the pupil in the school of William Graham. That reminds me, I never told you what he was speaking on as an old man in Lexington in that summer of 1843. Graham was the subject of that address.

He wasn't preaching a sermon but he was speaking about the life of William Graham. So Graham comes in a good deal to what we have to say in this section. Well, he went to Graham's school when he was 10.

Graham was the local Presbyterian minister the minister of the church where his father was an elder. He was also a farmer. He was also a school teacher.

Not surprisingly, therefore, the school pupils didn't receive a great deal of attention from Mr. Graham. But in that school Alexander remained and he was able to make some progress until he was 17. Now, of Graham's ministry and of his preaching Alexander says this It is remarkable that I never paid any attention to what our own preacher said in the pulpit.

His voice was very low and much interrupted by continual hemming and clearing of the throat. I thought him the worst preacher of all that I'd ever heard. Well, he had a Presbyterian upbringing of a kind.

He was taught the catechism but there was no experimental religion at all. His father did not inherit and could not inherit the earnest piety of the grandfather. His father seems to have been orthodox and upright but there was nothing apparently beyond that.

There seemed to be very few conversions. The new birth was not a subject that was of any common conversation amongst the people and so church life was, as you may suppose, at a rather low ebb. And Archibald Alexander was an unconverted youth of 17 when he was sent away to the house of a man called General Posey who lived in the wilderness of Virginia about 140 miles down in the valley Valley, Virginia.

General Posey had an old lady living with him. Now, at some point in this week I had to speak about Baptists, didn't I? And this good lady will help me to bring that in. She had been brought up in the Church of England and was converted through the witness of Baptists and had become a member of a Baptist church in that part of Virginia, a small, earnest church.

And it seems that the true believers in that area were almost entirely Baptists. Well, this woman had been left a widow and she had been taken into the home of General Posey. And before Archibald Alexander had been there very long, tutoring the children of the family, he heard this woman's testimony.

And it was something that he had never heard before. And then he met one of the local Millwrights who was also a Baptist. And this man after speaking to Alexander and engaging in conversation on other matters, one day said to him whether he believed that a man could enter the Kingdom of Heaven without being born again.

Could he do so? I knew not, says Alexander, what to say, for I had for some time been puzzled about the new birth. However, I answered in the affirmative. He thought he needed to be born again to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

He then asked me whether I had any experience of the new birth. But what proof he had of it, I hesitated and said, not that I know of. Ah, said he, if you would ever experience this change, you would know something about it.

Now the good lady who I've already spoken of, a woman by the name of Mrs. Taylor, was evidently as wise as she was earnest. She saw that this young man was a Presbyterian, as she'd commenced, Presbyterian. And she had in her possession a volume by John Flavel.

And she thought, being able to tell Alexander that Flavel was of this persuasion, that he would read Flavel. Not only that, her eyesight was very poor. I don't know if it was perhaps as bad as she sometimes represented it, but she wanted Alexander to read Flavel aloud to her.

And this is what happened. Young Alexander was brought in to read John Flavel aloud. And this went on for some weeks.

And after a few weeks, not only was Mrs. Taylor present, but the family also were gathered. This is what Alexander says happened one Sunday night. My services as a reader were frequently required.

Not only to save the eyes of old Mrs. Taylor, but on Sundays for the benefit of the whole family. On one of these Sunday evenings, I was requested to read again out of Flavel. The part on which I had been regularly reading was the method of grace.

But now by some means I was led to select one of the sermons on Revelation 3.20. Behold I stand at the door and knock. The discourse was upon the patience, forbearance and kindness of the Lord Jesus Christ to impenitent and obstinate sinners. As I proceeded to read aloud, the truth took hold on my feelings.

And every word I read seemed applicable to my own case. Before I finished the discourse, these emotions became too strong for restraint and my voice began to falter. I laid down the book, rose hastily, and went out with a full heart and hastened to my place of retirement, a place for prayer that he had found in the woods.

No sooner had I reached the spot than I dropped upon my knees and attempted to pour out my feelings in prayer. But I had not continued many minutes in this exercise before I was overwhelmed with a flood of joy. This was the beginning of Alexander's spiritual experiences.

I cannot give you the full account of his conversion. It's very interesting, but I cannot give it you this morning. I want to pass on to his next visit home when he went back to church and to his parents and to hear Mr. Graham preaching.

The first Sunday he got home, it was a sort of holiday visit. He says, Graham was preaching on the text, but all our righteousness is our filthy rags. He says he drank in the doctrine that Graham was preaching.

But, he says, when I looked around upon the people, I had the impression that they were generally in the same state of darkness and legality in which I had lived so long. Before he went to General Posey's, he writes, my only notion of religion was that it consisted in becoming better. Among the Presbyterians, I had

never heard of anyone who had experienced the new birth, nor could I recollect ever to have heard it mentioned.

Now this was in the year 1788. William Graham, the minister, was a student of Princeton and one of his colleagues at Princeton had been John Blair Smith of whom we spoke yesterday, the President of Hampden-Sydney. It seems unhappily that after they left Princeton, there was some kind of estrangement between them.

And they had lost touch. Of course, they were separated by over a hundred miles. But when the Greek revival had begun in Hampden-Sydney, John Blair Smith wrote to William Graham and suggested he might come over and visit them.

God was blessing them with the outpouring of his spirit and he invited him to come. William Graham was willing to come. But not only did he go, but he took Archibald Alexander with him.

And you have in Archibald Alexander's biography a beautiful account of the visit that they made to Charlotte County and Prince Edward, to Hampden-Sydney, to the scenes of revival which were there taking place. They got there on a Saturday night. They were amazed as they were almost there to be overtaken by about 50 young people on horseback solemnly, joyfully singing hymns they had never seen or heard of such a thing before.

And on the next day, the Sunday, Alexander says how he heard preaching such as he had never heard. He gives, or one of his friends gives this description of the preaching of John Blair Smith. A more solemn appearance, he says, I have never seen.

Every feature and muscle of his face, every word and action as well as the lightning of his eyes seemed to bespeak a soul on fire. And another surprise that Alexander had was that his own minister, Mr. Graham, was asked to preach on that Sunday. He said people had expected from the visiting minister from Lexington a very cold and dry discourse.

Instead, he said, Graham preached from the words Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, and he preached with an eloquence and a pathos which was to be spoken of for years to come. And the remarkable fact is that from this very month, Graham became an entirely changed preacher. He was orthodox before.

He had preached in Lexington for 15 years. But now when Graham went back to Lexington, the grace and the unction of the spirit went with him. Alexander says how when they got back home, Graham called the church together and he spoke to them of the things which they had seen in Prince Edward.

He gave a narrative of all that they had seen and heard and then addressed the congregation in the most penetrating and pathetic manner, the tears meanwhile streaming from his eyes. The assembly were deeply and solemnly moved. Multitudes went weeping from the house.

Another meeting was appointed in the evening in the town in a larger room and here the solemnity was greater if possible than at the church. Many remained to converse with the ministers and the person of most sedate habits and moral life cried out in an agony, what must I do to be saved? Alexander goes on to speak of the conversions and the revival that spread in this part now of Virginia. Well shortly after this, Alexander himself felt called to the ministry.

He was authorized to speak as an exhorter when he was 18 and when he was 19 he was licensed to preach the gospel. Licensed I might say despite his own protests because he felt painfully aware that he was too young. Presbytery don't seem to have sympathized with his scruples and the fact is that when he was licensed he was given a sermon to preach from the text in Jeremiah say not I am a child.

That was the text that the Presbytery gave him. And in the course of his sermon Alexander made no reference whatsoever to his own youth. But the fact is that such was the revival that was now spreading in Virginia that Alexander instead of being able to proceed with further study as he had hoped, he had done some theological study with William Graham.

Instead of being able to proceed with it he was immediately called to help ministers who were literally being broken down with the labor of their work. I suppose there were not many in the whole of the state who could preach the gospel and those that could were doing it night and day. So Alexander was immediately plunged into the work of preaching and he became minister of the churches at Cub Creek and Breary where John Blair Smith himself had been minister.

Let me just give you one instance of many in these early days of his ministry. After one service in which the presence of God was markedly felt an old man asked Alexander if he could speak with him. He led me as far from the house as he could without crossing a high fence and then bursting into tears he said, I am a poor sinner.

His weeping was so profuse that he could say no more except to request me to visit his house later. This Alexander says he did the next day and he found this old man who was practically illiterate desperately attempting to read the New Testament and his wife spinning flax beside him. After speaking further with the man Alexander turned to the woman and said and what does your wife think of these things? She had once ceased her work and without speaking a word she also began to shed tears.

Here says Alexander was a family of which the heads had grown grey without having ever attended public worship and who until now knew no more of a saviour than the heathen. But they were now like persons come into a new world. Salvation had come to their house.

Well Alexander continued in Virginia to the end of the century. Indeed to a little beyond that he was called to Church in Philadelphia in 1807 and then in the year 1812 he became the first professor at Princeton Seminary. His biography is a huge book.

I must say I started to read it about 15 years ago and gave up. But these last few months I've read every page and enjoyed it immensely but it's a very large volume. I just want to give you if I can put my hand on it a few words on the formation of Princeton.

You know as we said yesterday that Princeton College was established in 1756 but the college was not purely for the raising of men for the pulpit. The seminary in 1812 was raised specifically for that purpose. Alexander says our seminaries of learning although increasing in literature and numbers do not furnish us with preachers.

And the purpose of Princeton was preachers. And in the constitution that was drawn up by the assembly they have these words which are well worth hearing. As filling the church with a learned and able ministry without a corresponding portion of real piety would be a curse to the world and an offense to God and to his people, so the general assembly think it their duty to state that in establishing a seminary for training

up ministers, it is their earnest desire to guard as far as possible against so great an evil.

And they do hereby solemnly pledge themselves to the churches under their care that in forming and carrying into execution the plan of the proposed seminary, it will be their endeavor to make it under the blessing of God a nursery of vital piety as well as of sound theological learning and to train up persons for the ministry who shall be lovers as well as defenders of the truth, friends of revivals of religion and a blessing to the church of God. Well, Alexander was 40 when he went to Princeton and in his 81st year he was still doing the work of a professor at Princeton. Indeed until the last few weeks of his life he seemed to possess the strength of a man very much younger, but he died at last in the year 1851.

When he died, let me just give you this and I think it's time we were closing. When he died the news of his death reached Virginia at a time when the Synod was meeting. Of course it was too far for them to travel to Princeton and they were in the course of debating the college and its work at Hampden-Sydney and this was evidently a lengthy debate.

There were various difficulties and problems and one of the speakers after the Synod had begun one day, the next day, one of the speakers on this subject was William Henry Foote whose name I gave you yesterday and he told the Synod that the previous night he had had a dream and this is what he dreamt. He said in his imagination the night before he had seen the whole Synod rise up and go to the graveyard at Princeton and they had got to Princeton just as it were in time for the funeral of their beloved friend Archibald Alexander and he says the moderator of the Synod leading them, they knocked at the gate and they demanded of those assembling for the funeral some of the precious dust that was lying there. First of all they claimed the body of Samuel Davis then that of another Virginian, the brother of John Blair Smith who was buried also at Princeton and finally of Alexander himself we must have him, said the moderator in this dream of Foote's we must have him for he is ours we loaned him to you but we never yielded him they resisted, said Foote they resisted but you took him Foote said to the moderator then what goes on in this dream that he had to describe the homecoming back to Virginia what a procession it was with these bygone spiritual leaders accompanying them back the idea was I should have told you that they would be buried at Hampton Sydney, that they would give to the future students a reminder of the ministry that they had exercised that's why they wanted their remains.

As we entered your native county moderator you told the excited citizens that you had got the giants of the last generation and at Old Cumberland you said we must pause for the night and there we talked over the revivals after revivals through the last hundred years and it seemed that the spirits of the dead mingled with us and the eternal world brooded over us but then, Foote said in his dream the procession passed away and all we, he said, all we also passed from the earth and he said I saw something new coming into view a procession of men that would be in the future and a future, he said to the synod who were listening a future full of brightness and glory and gospel success. There came upon the stage some like Samuel Davies laying the foundations of churches whose lips were touched with a live coal from God's altar and some like John Blair Smith wonderful in revivals and raising up ministers of the gospel and some like Archibald Alexander fit to mold a host of ministers for the gospel well if these men dreamed like that my friends does it not show us something of the truth so entwined in their hearts and their affections and their dreams were also their prayers and I believe that we are living to see the fulfillment of prayers that were offered by bygone generations. We are seeing the fulfillment of prayers even in our present time.

Let us pray O Lord our gracious God thou who art the habitation of thy people in all generations we thank thee that as thou didst lead our fathers through this pilgrimage so thou hast also promised to lead us in

this day. We bless thy name that thou art all sufficient in thy grace for us in our needs O Lord do thou reveal to us more deeply our poverty and the extent of the need which is ours but we thank thee also that with that knowledge we have the assurance of the promises of thy word that great though our need is, great though our deadness is, yet thine arm of grace and power is sufficient to raise and to quicken even the dead. We pray then that thou wouldst breathe upon us and that thy Holy Spirit would descend to scatter the darkness of our minds and to quicken our hearts in love and devotion and prayer and do thou O Lord continue to accompany us this day bless to us the preaching of thy word further this morning and this evening and grant that we may know thy presence in our midst that thy will may be done upon earth that thy kingdom may come that thy name may be hallowed and that the gospel of Jesus Christ might triumph in the earth.

Do thou hear our crying and pardon all our sins as we ask it in the name of our Lord and Saviour even Jesus Christ Amen

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