

Historic Protestant Missiology and the Urgent Release of the Missionary Task to Local Believers

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Recent missiological debates among evangelicals have centered on "movement"¹ modes of missionary practice.² The relationship of movement missiology to historic protestant missiology is an aspect of those debates.³ This article will argue that historic protestant missiology consistently aspired

¹ Although "movement" does not describe a monolithic missiological category, a general definition is helpful. The 24:14 Coalition says, for instance, that a "CPM (Church Planting Movement) is a multiplication of disciples making disciples, and leaders developing leaders, resulting in indigenous churches...planting more churches...spreading rapidly through a people group or population segment..." Dave Coles and Stan Parks, eds., *A Testimony to All Peoples: Kingdom Movements Around the World* (Spring, TX: 24:14, 2019), 315; quoted in Warrick Farah, ed., *Motus Dei: The Movement of God to Disciple the Nations* (Littleton, CO: William Carey Publishing, 2021), xiii.

² A list of resources critiquing movement methods can be found at Kenneth Hayward and Matt Rhodes, "A Bibliography for the Proclamational Approach to Church Planting Overseas (and Critique of Movement Methods)," *Biblical Missiology* (blog), September 27, 2022, <https://biblicalmissiology.org/blog/2022/09/27/a-bibliography-for-the-proclamational-approach-to-church-planting-overseas-and-critique-of-movement-methods/>; A recent publication provides responses to critiques of movement methods. Farah, *Motus Dei: The Movement of God to Disciple the Nations*.

³ Cf. Warrick Farah, "The Genesis and Evolution of Church-Planting Movements Missiology," *Missiology*, 2022, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/00918296221097652>.

to the priority of the release of the missionary task to local believers. This tradition is expressed today explicitly in movement missiology.

The International Mission Board (IMB) defines the missionary task as consisting of six parts: entry, evangelism, discipleship, healthy church formation, leadership development, and exit to partnership. This framework is implicit in the present article's argument and is comparable to frameworks held by missionaries throughout this history of protestant missions, especially by the authors discussed below.⁴ A key aspect of this framework, as it is described by the IMB, is an emphasis on the multiplication of disciples and healthy churches.⁵ Likewise, multiplication is an important emphasis in the missiology discussed by these authors.⁶

William Carey is often regarded as the "father of modern missions." Though this characterization is somewhat hagiographic, Carey's importance for the genealogy of protestant mission thought and practice is unassailable.⁷ His ministry in India, especially after joining with William Ward and Joshua Marshman in Serampore, is "one of the most famous...in the whole history of the Christian Church..."⁸ At the onset of their ministry together, this "Serampore Trio," as the missionary team is often called, developed a statement of belief and practice. "The Bond of the Missionary Brotherhood

⁴ "Exit to partnership" is the element of the IMB's definition that is least developed in these authors.

⁵ International Mission Board, *Foundations*, 4th ed., (Richmond, VA: International Mission Board, 2022), 44. They write, for instance, "...(The) most effective way to advance the gospel into the unreached world is to multiply churches that multiply churches."

⁶ Stefan Paas provides a helpful survey of the concept of church planting throughout the history of Christianity. He notes the shift from "planting the church" to "planting churches" that took place within protestant missions. Stefan Paas, *Church Planting in the Secular West: Learning from the European Experience* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2016), 10–33.

⁷ Cf. Rufus Anderson's comments about Carey's influence on modern missions: Rufus Anderson, *Foreign Missions: Their Relations and Claims* (Florida: Hardpress, 2017), Chap. 2, Kindle.

⁸ Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, 2nd ed., vol. 6, *The Penguin History of the Church* (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 224.

of Serampore" described the fundamental values upon which the team would develop their missionary engagement.⁹ In it, a key theme is a clear emphasis on the priority of the release of the missionary task to local believers. They write:

It is only by means of native preachers that we can hope for the universal spread of the Gospel throughout this immense continent.¹⁰

If the practice of confining the ministry of the word to a single individual in a church be once established amongst us, we despair of the Gospel's ever making much progress in India by our means.¹¹

Let us therefore...continually urge our native brethren to press upon their countrymen the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.¹²

Still further...we think it our duty, as soon as possible, to advise the native brethren who may be formed into separate churches, to choose their pastors and deacons from amongst their own countrymen...as much as possible, without the interference of the missionary of the district... who will...give them advice...correct any errors into which they may fall, and...direct his efforts continually to the planting of new churches in other places, and to spread of the Gospel throughout his district as much as in his power.¹³

⁹ A copy of this document is included in the appendix of the biography of Carey written shortly after his death by George Smith. George Smith, *The Life of William Carey, D.D.: Shoemaker and Missionary* (London: John Murray, 1885), 441–50.

¹⁰ Smith, *The Life of William Carey*, 446.

¹¹ Smith, *The Life of William Carey*, 447.

¹² Smith, *The Life of William Carey*, 447.

¹³ Smith, *The Life of William Carey*, 447.

Under divine blessing, if, in the course of a few years, a number of native churches be thus established, from them the word of God may sound out even to the extremities of India, and numbers of preachers being raised up and sent forth, may form a body of native missionaries...¹⁴

The advantages of this plan are so evident, that to carry it into complete effect ought to be our continued concern.¹⁵

These quotes from the Serampore Trio describe an emerging conception of what would eventually be called, as described below, the "three-self formula" whereby churches planted in missionary contexts have indigenous leadership and are propagated through indigenous efforts. However, Carey and his colleagues faced a tension in the pursuit of this value. Carey writes:

God has given us several native Brethren who have good gifts for making known the Gospel. They must be employed, but it is desirable that they, for the present, should be under the eye of a European brother.¹⁶

We are thinking much of scattering them over the country that they may be more extensively useful, but we need more European Brethren to superintend them.¹⁷

Carey wanted to entrust the leadership and multiplication of disciples and churches to local believers, but he worried about a lack of "knowledge or experience," especially of young believers.¹⁸ Such challenges are to be

¹⁴ Smith, *The Life of William Carey*, 447.

¹⁵ Smith, *The Life of William Carey*, 448.

¹⁶ William Carey, *The Journal and Selected Letters of William Carey*, ed. Terry G. Carter (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2000), 251, Kindle.

¹⁷ Carey, *Journal and Selected Letters*, 311.

¹⁸ Carey, *Journal and Selected Letters*, 311.

expected in the context of Carey's missionary praxis. Cross-cultural missions was a radically new endeavor for Carey, his colleagues, and the churches who sent them. Subsequent generations of missionaries who were committed to the value of committing the missionary task to local believers would face similar tensions. However, the priority and urgency of releasing the missionary task to local believers would grow among mission theorists.

Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson were born shortly after Carey arrived in India and represent the protestant missionary movement's second generation. They are remembered as 19th-century missionary statesmen who championed a vision for the three-self formula of "self-governing, self-expanding and self-supporting churches."¹⁹ Venn and Anderson "assumed they were living in a period when missionary principles were inchoate," and therefore "took as their personal responsibility the task of carefully examining past and present missionary experience with a view to identifying underlying principles of action."²⁰ Anderson documented his convictions about missionary practice more extensively than Venn.²¹ He wrote a book from a series of lectures on the topic, following years of observing missionary practice around the world.²² In it he writes:

(A) foreign missionary should not be the pastor of a native church. His business is to plant churches...committing them as soon as possible to the care of native pastors; himself sustaining a common relation to all, as their...adviser...related to a score of churches, and even more.²³

¹⁹ Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2004), 232; See Wilbert Shenk's article on the remarkable similarities in the two men's lives in Wilbert R. Shenk, "Rufus Anderson and Henry Venn: A Special Relationship?" *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 5, no. 4 (2016): 168-72.

²⁰ Shenk, "Rufus Anderson and Henry Venn: A Special Relationship?" 170.

²¹ See Henry Venn, *To Apply the Gospel: Selections in the Writings of Henry Venn*, ed. Max Warren (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971).

²² Anderson, *Foreign Missions*.

²³ Anderson, *Foreign Missions*, chap. 8.

Anderson's strategy accords with similar statements recorded by Carey above. Of note is Anderson's motivation for espousing this strategy:

I am now prepared to state...what I believe to be the true and proper nature of a mission...(based on) the mission of the Apostle Paul...When he had formed local churches, he did not hesitate to ordain presbyters over them, the best he could find; and then to throw upon the churches... the responsibilities of self-government, self-support, and self-propagation.²⁴

Anderson compares contemporary mission practice with that of the Apostle Paul and laments the fact that missionaries had been "slow to believe, that native churches, or native pastors...could stand without foreign aid."²⁵ Not only did Anderson espouse the value of releasing the missionary task to locals as primary in missionary practice, he used this value as a means of evaluating the fruitfulness and faithfulness of missionary efforts. That is, for Anderson, a key question in evaluating missionary practice was if churches planted by missionaries were "self-propagating from the very start...(with) as soon as possible, a native pastor..."²⁶

Of course, "as soon as possible" is subjective. How soon is that exactly? Anderson's perspective on this matter was impacted by prejudices about the superiority of Western society and its representatives.²⁷ However, John Nevius, a missionary to China, in the next generation of protestant missions, would insist on pressing missionary practice further towards the urgent release of the missionary task.

²⁴ Anderson, *Foreign Missions*, Chap. 8; See also Venn, *To Apply the Gospel: Selections in the Writings of Henry Venn*, 68.

²⁵ Anderson, *Foreign Missions*, Chap. 6.

²⁶ Anderson, *Foreign Missions*, Chap. 7.

²⁷ See Anderson's comments Anderson, *Foreign Missions*, Chap. 7; Similarly, compare to comments of Henry Venn in Venn, *To Apply the Gospel: Selections in the Writings of Henry Venn*, 78.

Nevius is remembered for developing missiological strategies in response to what he called the "old method."²⁸ That is, he developed a critique and response to the approach to the missionary task which he observed among many preceding missionaries based upon "principles...distinctly traceable in the New Testament."²⁹ He writes of the "new method":

The characteristic feature of our stations is that the principal care of them is entrusted, not to paid preachers set over them...but to leaders belonging to the stations...These leaders are simply church members, pursuing their daily calling.³⁰

Nevius makes a clear distinction between preachers, who in his view occupy formal paid positions, and "leaders." This distinction is related to the formal Presbyterian ecclesial system of which Nevius was a part. Nonetheless, his missionary system envisions, for his time, radically indigenous expressions of church government, without immediately and completely divorcing himself from his own denominational commitments, through this distinction between pastors, elders, and "leaders."³¹ As to these leaders, "Though (their) knowledge...may be elementary and incomplete...what they do know is just what the others need first to learn."³² Ultimately, Anderson develops a missionary praxis whereby organic self-propagation and self-

²⁸ "These two systems may be distinguished in general by the former depending largely on paid native agency, while the latter deprecates and seeks to minimize such agency." John L. Nevius, *The Planting and Development of Missionary Churches*, 3rd ed. (New York: Foreign Mission Library, 1899), 9, Kindle. The immediate context of Nevius' thesis is the use of finances. However, he insists in his explication of the "new system" upon entrusting local believers and local churches, from the beginning, with both self-propagation and self-governance (i.e. self-leadership).

²⁹ Nevius, *The Planting and Development of Missionary Churches*, 55.

³⁰ Nevius, *The Planting and Development of Missionary Churches*, 31.

³¹ See his discussion in Nevius, *The Planting and Development of Missionary Churches*, 58–65.

³² Nevius, *The Planting and Development of Missionary Churches*, 35.

governance emerges in which "each man, woman, and child (is) be both a learner...and a teacher of someone less advanced."³³

In this way, Nevius envisions the missionary task being entrusted immediately to local believers and churches. That is, churches develop internally and externally through their own agency, with the missionary serving in a supporting role from the start by providing systematic instruction, which is subsequently spread throughout the community.³⁴ Not only does Nevius suggest that missionaries entrust the inward and outward growth of churches to the local believers themselves, but Nevius encourages these churches to then plant new churches in new areas with which they are connected. In this way, new churches "radiate from self-propagating centers."³⁵

Roland Allen belonged to the fourth generation of missionaries in China. He, like Nevius, was critical of much of the mission practice that he observed.³⁶ Indeed, Allen suggested, going further than Nevius, that rather than founding missions with "leaders" rather than "pastors," missionaries "ought to return to the Apostolic practice and found Churches in every place where we make converts, Churches equipped with all the divine grace and authority of Christian Churches."³⁷

To the point, Allen writes:

We are quite ready to talk of self-supporting, self-extending and self-governing Churches in the abstract as ideals; but the moment that we think of ourselves as establishing self-supporting,

³³ Nevius, *The Planting and Development of Missionary Churches*, 31.

³⁴ Nevius, *The Planting and Development of Missionary Churches*, 34–38.

³⁵ Nevius, *The Planting and Development of Missionary Churches*, 41.

³⁶ Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962), 3.

³⁷ Roland Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church: And the Causes That Hinder It* (1927; reis: Jawbone Digital, 2011), 35, Kindle. Like the men discussed above, Allen's inspiration comes largely from a comparison of the missionary practice he encountered to his reading of the example found in the New Testament, especially in its accounts of Paul's missionary activity.

self-governing Churches in the Biblical sense we are met by...a terrible, deadly fear...We instinctively think of something which we cannot control as tending to disorder.³⁸

For Allen, a key missing element to the missiology which he saw as falling short was a robust pneumatology. Allen believed that "(t)he fatal mistake has been made of teaching the converts to rely on the wrong source of strength...Instead of seeking it in the...Holy Spirit...they seek it in the missionary.³⁹" Instead, Allen believed that, like the Apostle Paul, missionaries should trust the Holy Spirit to equip and sustain believers and churches. He promoted a simple formula for establishing new churches. Missionaries should:

(Deliver) to them what St. Paul called "the tradition" (of which the Apostles' Creed is the later expression)

(Deliver) to them the Gospel, that they may know where to turn for instruction. For they must learn from the very beginning to rely upon God, not upon men, for spiritual progress; upon the Bible, not upon human teachers, for spiritual instruction.

(Make) sure that they have learnt the manner and the meaning of (the Sacraments). They must be taught how to administer them, and how to receive them, practically.

(Deliver) the authority to administer the Sacraments and to guide and govern the Church in its religious services and its daily social life (to ordained ministers)

(Tell) them what to do when they have made converts in their neighbourhood too remote to be intimately attached to their own body, or in case people from a neighbouring village came to them

³⁸ Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*, 15.

³⁹ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 81.

to learn the Christian Faith. He should tell them first to make sure that the new converts are really converts to the faith of Christ and understand the use of the Creed, the Gospels, the Sacraments and the Ministry...⁴⁰

Allen, thus, builds upon the value espoused in the previous three generations of missionary theory and praxis in his insistence that missionaries can fully follow the pattern of the Apostle Paul and release the missionary task to local believers. The missionary should give the Bible along with simple instructions to new believers and churches. Then, with confidence rooted in the Holy Spirit's work to keep and grow new believers and churches, Allen insists that they can be immediately autonomous, vested with full spiritual authority.⁴¹

Allen, Nevius, Anderson, and Carey, represent four successive generations of protestant missionary thought and practice. Moreover, they are regularly regarded as key thinkers in the history of protestant missions. Their words as presented are abstracted from the broader context in which they were originally written, but they present an accurate synthesis of a key strand of each thinker's conviction, nonetheless. Found therein is a clear line evolving through the history of protestant missions up until the early twentieth century. Namely, historic protestant missiology has considered the release of the missionary task to local indigenous believers and leaders as an urgent priority.

A few aspects of this synthesis are important to note.

First, each account grounds the priority of releasing the missionary task to local believers in the New Testament, especially in the example of Paul.⁴² This is particularly important given the context in which Western

⁴⁰ Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*, 171–75.

⁴¹ Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*, 1.

⁴² The one exception above is that there is no explicit reference to the New Testament in Carey's quotes. However, throughout the articles from which these quotes come, Carey appeals to the example of Paul and other New Testament Apostles.

missionaries were developing their missiology in the first century of the protestant missionary movement. Mission theory and practice during this period were epistemologically linked to colonialism. This entailed a frequent conviction that mission required, for instance, the establishment of Western culture alongside the planting of the church. Although these authors did not recognize and account for all of the ways European culture impacted their missiology, their insistence on following the New Testament example enabled breakthroughs which in some respects put them ahead of their times.⁴³

Besides the common grounding in the New Testament and the writings of Paul, several consistent methodological similarities emerge across the writings of these men, though the tactics in their application differ. For one, both evangelism of non-believers and discipleship of new converts are commended to local believers from the moment of, or soon after, their conversion. A strong emphasis on mobilizing the laity to participate in the missionary task is clear. Two, there is an emphasis on planting churches that are quickly led by local leaders, sometimes with the formal installation of pastors and sometimes without. This conviction develops over time, culminating in Allen's pneumatologically grounded insistence that new churches be led immediately by pastors from their own communities. Finally, there is an expectation that new churches be multiplied through the efforts of young believers and churches.

This value of the release of the missionary task to local believers was aspirational from early on in protestant mission efforts, and the efficacy of missionary practice in realizing this aspiration was a consistent point of critique throughout this history. That is, as practitioners and missiologists sought to evaluate and adjust mission practice, the pursuit of this central value guided innovation and adaptation. Missionaries sought to understand

⁴³ See for instance Dana L. Robert, *Christian Mission* (United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), Chapter 4, Available at: <https://www.perlego.com/book/1009186>.

why it was so difficult to achieve this goal, and they adjusted their practice in an attempt to more consistently realize it.

The point here is not to suggest that historic protestant missionaries and their missiology were without problematic elements. While their wisdom should be availed, it must also be remembered that they were people of their times.⁴⁴ Twenty-first century readers have the privilege of hindsight. They can assess and describe the ways in which protestant missionaries were always socially located and unaware of cultural blinders that impeded their progress towards the goal of indigeneity. They can also find examples of missionary practice where this goal was seemingly absent. Nonetheless, it is clear that within the broad landscape of historic protestant missions, this goal of releasing the missionary task from the control of the foreign missionary was a chief and fundamental aspect of the missiological imagination.

Shortly before Allen published *Missionary Methods*, the Edinburgh world missionary conference took place. This important event in the history of Western missions is remembered, in part, after more than one hundred years of Western protestant missionary advances around the globe, for being woefully underrepresented by non-Western delegates. It also took place on the cusp of rapid upheavals in the social and political contexts across the globe through world wars, the breakdown of colonialism, and a global reckoning with racism. These upheavals led to fundamental shifts across Christian consciousness towards the question of missions. Shifts rapidly occurred, as well, within Protestantism, leading to specifically evangelical missionary thought and practice in the latter half of the twentieth century. As such, Edinburgh's conference marks a reasonable demarcation for the end of historic protestant missions. It also provides a means of adjudicating the previous century's success in bringing the value and vision of indigeneity to

⁴⁴ Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 231; See also, Dana L. Robert, "Rethinking Missionaries' from 1910 to Today," *Methodist Review* (19465254) 4 (January 2012): 59, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=sso&db=asn&AN=124598945&lang=nl&site=ehost-live&custid=s3628809>.

life. Ultimately, "Edinburgh 1910...gives no reinforcement to the supposition that the commitment...to the *principle* of the three-self formula had weakened...that commitment in principle was one thing and the will to achieve practical implementation quite another."⁴⁵

A century later, evangelical mission thinkers and practitioners find themselves in a different geo-political context while wrestling with many of the same questions from throughout the history of protestant missions, not least among these: the priority of the release of the missionary task to local believers. The points derived from the brief analysis of the four authors discussed above create a constellation around this priority of indigeneity for historic protestant missions. They are also hallmarks of the values that undergird movement approaches to the missionary task. For instance, in the first resource published describing elements of CPM approaches to the task, David Garrison suggests ten universal elements followed by ten common factors. Among these he notes:

Missionaries involved in Church Planting Movements often speak of the self-discipline required to mentor church planters rather than do the job of church planting themselves.

(A) reliance upon lay leadership ensures the largest possible pool of potential church planters and cell church leaders.

(N)ew believers are expected to become witnesses immediately; these new disciples immediately become disciplers of others and even church planters.

It is important that every cell or house church leader has all the authority required to do whatever needs to be done in terms of evangelism, ministry, and new church planting without seeking approval from a church hierarchy.

⁴⁵ Brian Stanley, "The Church of the Three Selves: A Perspective from the World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh, 1910," *Journal of Imperial & Commonwealth History* 36, no. 3 (September 2008): 437, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03086530802318524>.

A key concern is to minimize foreignness and encourage indigeneity. Rather than waiting for new believers to prove themselves worthy of leadership, missionaries begin by drawing new believers into leadership roles through participative Bible studies and mentoring pastors from behind the scenes.⁴⁶

Garrison's booklet would soon be followed by several foundational texts for movement missiology.⁴⁷ Although there are certainly important differences between these various works, the ideas drawn from Garrison's seminal work remain consistently foundational for these contemporary missiological thinkers. Importantly for the present article, these ideas are remarkably consistent with the values of the early protestant missiology described above. Namely, a fundamental animating value of movement missiology is its insistence on the urgent release of the missionary task, especially multiplying disciples and churches, to local believers. Indeed, from an analysis that finds indigeneity to be a crucial and foundational aspiration of historic protestant missiology, movement missiology is a contemporary mode of Western missionary praxis particularly consistent with the trajectory initiated by William Carey and many of those that followed in the generations after him.

This is not to claim that there are no important differences between movement missiologists and the four authors cited as representative of historic protestant missions. Much more could be drawn from an analysis of their writings and their work in comparison to contemporary missionary theory and practice. Movement missiologists would likely be well served to reflect carefully on the wisdom found in their missional forbearers.

⁴⁶ This booklet was followed up a few years later with a book length presentation of the material. Other authors began contributing to the discussion about movement missiology. David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements* (Richmond, VA: International Missionary Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1999), 33–40.

⁴⁷ Cf. Steve Smith and Ying Kai, *T4T: A Discipleship Re-Revolution* (Monument, CO: WIGTake Resources, 2011); and David Watson and Paul Watson, *Contagious Disciple Making: Leading Others on a Journey of Discovery* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014); For a more recent example see Mike Shipman, *Reenact Missions: The Post-Pentecost Pattern* (La Habra, CA: i2 Ministries, 2024).

At the same time, any approach to the missionary task today, especially from the West, which does not adequately prioritize indigenous authority in it, is simply untenable in today's global world. Missions is firmly established as the purview of the global Church. Movement missiologists should certainly be open to critique and correction, from voices old and new. Those new voices should, likewise, recognize and attend to this fundamental substance of movement approaches to the missionary task, the challenge of prioritizing the release of the missionary task to local believers. Western missionaries can ill afford to advocate for indigeneity while practicing modes of mission that prevent the urgent release of the missionary task to local believers. This urgency is not the only value that a robust missiology should include, to be sure. However, movement missiologists have matured historic protestant mission practice on this point, developing a praxis which accomplishes that to which previous generations aspired.

In summary, it is beneficial to compare contemporary modes of missionary practice to those of previous generations. In so doing, indigeneity is an important point of comparison. Previous generations of missionaries aspired to the priority of the release of the missionary task to local believers, but this aspiration was consistently impeded in various ways and for various reasons. Indeed, this same challenge remains today. Movement missiologists have established missional praxes that make this aspiration a reality. These praxes should stand open to evaluation and wise correction, but any correction should not come at the expense of maintaining the faithful empowerment of local believers with the missionary task as a primary and urgent value.

The debate about movement missiology in some corners of evangelicalism is often charged. It is an important conversation, with implications for the future of evangelical missiology and its relationship to God's mission through his global Church. Amidst these debates, all participants would be aided by remembering the words of Jonathan Edwards and his own thoughts about "movements."

Instead of coming to the help of the Lord, we shall actually fight against him, if we are abundant in insisting on, and setting forth the blemishes of the work...Not but that the errors that are committed ought to be observed...and the most probable means should be used to have them amended: but an insisting much upon them...or speaking of them with more appearance of heat of spirit, or with ridicule, or an air of contempt...has no tendency to correct the errors; but has a tendency to darken the glory of God's power and grace, appearing in the substance of the work, and to beget jealousies and ill thoughts in the minds of others, concerning the whole of it.⁴⁸

*Name denotes pseudonym.

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⁴⁸ Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of President Edwards*, vol. iii (New York: R. Carter and Bros, 1879), 332, <http://archive.org/details/workspresidente16edwagoog>.