A LUTHERAN PREACHER'S ACCOUNT OF THE 1801-02 REVIVAL IN NORTH CAROLINA

By Homer M. Keever

Paul Henkel (1754-1825) was a Lutheran pastor in piedmont North Carolina in 1801-02 when a great revival swept through that region. Henkel's journal, written in German, comments at some length on the revival movement and his part in it.

In 1935-37, William J. Finck, a Lutheran minister in New Market, Virginia, translated Henkel's journal. In 1957, C. V. Henkel, Jr., Statesville, North Carolina, had about 50 copies of the English version of the volume printed for the members of the Henkel family. Mr. Henkel authorized the writer to make use of the work in compiling this article.

Paul Henkel was born in 1754 in the section called the Forks of the Yadkin River, in what is now Davie County, North Carolina. His father, Jacob Henkel, the grandson of a Lutheran minister who emigrated to Pennsylvania in 1717, migrated to North Carolina from Pennsylvania. Though born in North Carolina, Paul Henkel spent most of his life in the valley of Virginia; he considered New Market his home and he worked out from there. However, in 1800, Henkel moved to North Carolina and took charge of several churches on either side of the Yadkin River in the vicinity of the Moravian settlement in what is now Forsyth County. His home during this period was south of the Moravian center of Salem at a place which they called "Opossum Town." Henkel remained in North Carolina until 1805, when he returned to New Market.

The History of the Tennessee Synod says that Paul Henkel was "well proportioned, large, erect, standing six feet, with well developed physical organs, full of energy and perseverance. As a preacher he had few superiors in his day. He was animated and eloquent." Henkel's son Andrew, who served as a Lutheran preacher in Ohio, said of his father, "As a preacher he possessed more than ordinary power, and in the commencement he was slow, but as his subject opened before him, he would become animated, with a full flow of appropriate thought and flowing language. His illustrations were lucid and forceful, simple and natural."

2 Jacob L. Morgan, ed., History of the Lutheran Church in North Carolina, p. 28.
Paul Henkel was in a sense the Francis Asbury of American Lutheranism, riding up and down the frontier and keeping an unofficial watch over the Lutheran congregations. He traveled from Pennsylvania to the Carolinas and from Tennessee through Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana. In 1806 Henkel’s sons established a publishing house in New Market which served to increase their father’s influence in the Lutheran connection.

If Henkel can be likened to Francis Asbury as a traveling overseer of the Lutheran churches, he can also be compared to James O’Kelly, the early American Methodist maverick, because like O’Kelly, Henkel was a divisive factor in his denomination. In May, 1820, Henkel withdrew from the North Carolina Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church which met at Lincolnton, North Carolina, because of a dispute over the ordination of one of his sons. Two months later Henkel helped to organize the Tennessee Synod in Cove Creek Church, Greene County, Tennessee. In starting the new organization, Henkel was not launching another synod in a separate geographical area. He was rather gathering around him a group of churchmen who differed in polity and doctrine from the North Carolina Synod, and until the Tennessee Synod and the North Carolina Synod united in the 1920’s, the two bodies represented a profound schism in the Lutheran connection in North Carolina and the surrounding states.

When Henkel moved to piedmont North Carolina in 1800, he perceived that the region was in need of a revival of true religion. He wrote, “We now found ourselves in that great field where I spent five years as in a real labyrinth, as well as in a devastated vineyard.” He went on to say that a German Lutheran minister and a Reformed minister in the area were worldly in their conduct and lacking “the Christianity of experience.” He added, “On all sides I had to do battle for the truth, for some of the leaders walked in a very disorderly manner.”

According to Henkel, the emotional revival which came in 1801 involved mainly the Presbyterians. He mentions the Baptists, or “immersionists” as he calls them, frequently; he had difficulties with them concerning the revival. Surprisingly there are not many references to the Methodists in Henkel’s journal in connection with the revival. In a way this seems strange, because there were Methodist preachers and Methodist societies in piedmont North Carolina at the time. Moreover, the Methodists generally had a reputation for revival fervor.

---

6 Ibid., p. 243.
7 Ibid., p. 83.
8 Ibid., p. 225.
9 Morgan, op. cit., pp. 41-50.
10 Finck, op. cit., p. 23.
11 Ibid., p. 24.
One or two references in Henkel's journal to the Methodists are derogatory. Eleven years before the revival began, Henkel wrote, "I ended the year 1789 and began 1790 in Powell's Fort, Virginia, where I preached and administered the Lord's Supper. I had the help of a young English preacher who left the Methodists at the time when they began to introduce their new mode of shouting and tumult. He remained with me for three months and now lives in Wythe County and serves several congregations as an English minister." 12 When three or four Methodist preachers cooperated with a Presbyterian layman in arranging for a camp meeting in the woods in February 1802, as indicated below, Henkel seems to infer that such might have been expected of the Methodists.

In another reference to the Methodists, though, Henkel seems to take them for granted as just another denomination in the region. On his way home from a tour among his congregations, he seems to have been scheduled to preach, or was at least expected to preach, in a Methodist church. Some of his own parishioners went along, as the Methodist church was only six miles away. They found a regular congregation and the Methodist minister waiting for them. Henkel preached two sermons, one in English and one in German. Henkel wrote that the people listened quietly and attentively and that "the [Methodist] minister too expressed himself as well satisfied, even though I based all my words and admonitions on the Scriptures only." 13

It may be said in passing that notwithstanding the paucity of Henkel's references to the Methodists, it was they who reaped the greatest benefits from the revival fervor in North Carolina at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The Methodists adapted the camp meeting, which appeared in the state during the 1801-02 revival, and made it a part of their perennial evangelistic work. They found the camp meeting admirably suited to the propagation of religion in pioneer days. William K. Boyd, longtime professor of history at Duke University, wrote, "Here is one of the strategical points in the religious history of the state. The Calvinistic forces, both Presbyterian and Baptist, were divided as to the value and advisability of the revival; but the Methodists were not divided, their Arminian doctrine made them unanimous and hence in the end,

12 Ibid., p. 1. Speaking of the English minister without giving his name is characteristic of Henkel throughout his journal. Frequently he mentions people and places in vague terms, such as "my informer" or "my second preaching place," thereby making it difficult and sometimes impossible for the reader to identify the persons and places.
13 Ibid., p. 35.
they reaped the greater harvest. By 1810 they had outstripped other denominations in point of numbers."

Henkel's account supplements other records of the revival and helps the student to understand what happened. William H. Foote gives one of the best factual accounts of the revival in North Carolina. He says that it began in mid-August, 1801, at Cross Roads Presbyterian Church, which was north of what is now Mebane in Alamance County. This was somewhat to the east of Henkel's Lutheran congregations, but not beyond his influence. The revival soon spread to the Hawfields Presbyterian Church to the south of what is now Mebane. According to Foote, it was there that the first camp meeting in the state was held. From Hawfields the revival moved on into Guilford, Rowan, and Iredell counties. Henkel heard of the revival soon after it began; his first personal contact with it was in a camp meeting in the Forks of the Yadkin country in what is now Davie County.

Much of Henkel's journal consists of day by day entries, but nearly all of his comments on the 1801-02 revival are obviously summaries written sometime afterward. For this reason the excerpts given below are grouped by years. Most of what he had to say about the revival is printed with such explanatory notes as seem appropriate. Material not particularly relevant to the revival is omitted from the quotations.

1801

"We were daily hearing reports of the work two young Presbyterian preachers were doing in the neighborhood by preaching here and there. They had recently come from Cumberland. Much was said about the energy and uncommon zeal that they manifested in their preaching and the powerful revival of religion that they were producing in the neighborhood, which according to their reports had made such wonderful progress in Cumberland and Kentucky to the astonishment of the whole country. Accordingly they gave assurance

---

15 This claim is disputed, especially by Rohoboth Church in Catawba County, which claims pro-revival encampments as early as 1794.
17 This was the meeting Foote described at Cross Roads. Henkel had been at Freudon's Lutheran Church in Guilford County helping his son in instructing the youth.
18 The Cumberland region included eastern Kentucky, northeastern Tennessee, and southwestern Virginia. The revival of religion in that area culminated in the great Canoe Ridge Camp Meeting in August, 1801, and spread in a lesser degree into North Carolina.
that the work would soon begin in this region. This created a great sensation among the people and aroused great expectation. . . . We saw wagons crowded with people pass by, which aroused our curiosity.

"Sunday evening we received the report that in the church on Hawfields there had been such a working on the minds and spirits of the whole large congregation that it seemed like the work of the Holy Spirit on the day of the Pentecost in Jerusalem, and the Holy Communion was administered at which four or five ministers labored. These results had been produced by the fiery sermons of the two young preachers mentioned, which they had delivered in houses. Women were driven into fear, causing them to cry for mercy; others were aroused in their emotions, causing them to express their sympathy and to join in the shouting. The preachers took advantage of the opportunity by offering the assurance that this was but the beginning of the spiritual work; therefore it would soon be seen that it would rapidly reach further, and this proved to be the case.

"The before-mentioned young preacher in recent days lived in the neighborhood; they had discussed the matter with him, and he had opposed them in every particular but lately was moved by curiosity to attend some of their meetings. And it happened as he tried to study the movement, he himself was carried away by the delusion like his colleagues and fellow ministers. The delusion was that of the so-called Millenium, that according to their reckoning it had come in and that they must make the beginning. Therefore the movement not only met with his hearty approval but he at once began to cooperate and do all he could, and the movement as a consequence made great progress.¹⁹

"Two or three other meetings of the same kind were held in other congregations, at which the number of the audience and their excitement were greatly increased. As the houses were no longer large enough for the meetings, tents and huts were erected in which they remained in common from Fridays to Mondays. During this time there was constant preaching, or exhortations were given. Anybody who wished could preach: men, women, young men, young women. The ordained preachers officiated at the beginning of the service, during which time everything was quiet, as they mostly preached in an orderly manner. After their sermons came the exhortations in which no order was observed but everyone said what came to his mind, and many intentionally uttered the severest things about death, the devil, judgment, and hell. Though there were many who spoke, they all spoke at the same time. As a consequence some

¹⁹ Finck, op. cit., p. 29.
of the hearers were stunned; others were driven into fear; while others fell to the earth in unconsciousness and became pale as death; others were in great confusion, imagining wonderful things like the most fearful objects and crying out in the most anxious manner. When they regained their consciousness, some declared that they fully realized their sinfulness and depravity and had received full assurance of their reconciliation with God. Others received peace for their souls only sometime afterward, and everything was done to aid them to come through and experience the grace of God.20

"The report was speedily sent to the rest of the Presbyterian preachers in Rowan, Iredell, and Lincoln counties, where most of them live. This report created not only great surprise but also great joy. As the ministers in Guilford County had appointed a similar meeting in Randolph for New Year's Day,21 which was a distance of 20 miles from my home, and had invited their colleagues from Iredell and Rowan to attend, about eight from the two counties, together with as many as a hundred from their respective congregations went to the meeting place. As they lodged in a small village 12 miles from my home for the night and had made inquiries about me, they sent a man to me with a letter in which I found a short account of the hope these men entertained; that the glorious period of time had arrived when there would be one shepherd and one flock; when all schisms should cease in all Christendom; that according to a report which they had received, the Germans of Guilford had also experienced the powerful working of the revival and were now harmoniously cooperating with the English. I was bidden by the joint union of the mentioned preachers to attend the meeting in Randolph. As I had just reached home the evening before New Year's Day and found my wife sick in bed and also had appointments in my own congregations, I could not accede to their request. Of course, it would have been agreeable to me to attend in order to see and learn what views the 'old doctors' held of their matter.22

1802

"After the lapse of several days, I received another letter from one of their chief preachers,23 who reported that he had experienced that the matter beyond all expectations was a work of God and urged me to withhold my judgment until I had myself seen, heard,  

20 Ibid., pp. 29-30.  
21 This meeting was held at Bell's Cross Roads in northern Randolph County. William Bell's wife was the mother, by a former marriage, of two leaders of the Cumberland revival, William and John McGee.  
22 Ibid., p. 30.  
23 The letter may have been from James Hall, pastor of Bethany Church in Iredell County, or from his nephew, Richard Hugg King.
and proved the revival, and then accept my first opportunity to do this. I decided to follow his advice.

"About January 10th Mr. King came to one of my congregations to make a trial of it, but it was all in vain; the people did not understand the subject. I made an appointment myself in one of my English congregations and gathered as many of my English neighbors as I could. They were mostly of the Quaker persuasion. These also failed to grasp the teaching or new doctrine. Mr. King was a man who had obtained the required knowledge of a Presbyterian minister but who, because he was not inclined to follow a call to the ministry, never accepted the office of a minister. He was a man of means and served as a manufacturer of anise brandy but recently had been converted and had become a believer. He at once went forth as a fiery preacher, who used all the fearful and terrible expressions he could think of or invent. He was still a young man with a strong body and a harsh voice. He arranged a pilgrimage to the woods with several Methodist preachers for the 8th of February. This was 15 miles away from my home. I was invited to attend by several of his agents. I decided to attend in order that I might from experience learn more about revivals."

"The news of the powerful revivals had spread through the neighborhood and created quite a sensation among the people. Everybody was talking about the affair. Almost every evening someone would come to see me and discuss the subject."

"February 8th arrived, the date on which the camp meeting arranged by the before-mentioned Mr. King was to be held not far from the congregation on Dutchman's Creek. As this was at that time something altogether new for the region, both priest and common man of every denomination made it his business to be present. The three or four Methodist preachers had the best understanding with Mr. King and became his co-workers. Several of the

---

24 Richard Hugg King of the Snow Creek community in Iredell County was graduated from Princeton in a course leading to the ministry. The Presbyterians refused to license him, so he turned to the Methodists and was licensed as a local preacher. In 1806 he was one of the trustees of the Snow Creek meeting house, called in the deed "King's meeting house." However, when bad weather kept Asbury from reaching Salem in 1808 in time to ordain a large number of candidates, King, disappointed at not being ordained, made his peace with the Presbyterian Church and became one of its leading preachers, especially in East Tennessee where he moved after a few years.


26 Ibid., p. 31.

27 This is the only meeting described by Henkel that is not also mentioned by Foote.

28 These were probably James Douthet, presiding elder; Daniel Asbury, who was on the Yadkin Circuit; Wiley Jones, assistant on the Yadkin Circuit; and Jesse Coe, who was on the Salisbury Circuit.
immersionists joined themselves to them. It seemed as though a union would be formed among them, and judging from outward appearance, it seemed to be a fact. . . . As far as I know, their union came to nought in a very short time. Mr. King was the sole director of the affair and ordered how the official business was to be transacted. At his command the camp was placed in the densest woods, where briars and brush were thickest. The pulpit, or platform, was built on a small elevation large enough to seat ten men.

"At first several preached in due rotation, but as the crowd could not be moved in this way, three or four preachers harangued at the same time with the most fearful expressions they could invent until finally two young women rushed to the platform among the preachers, began to sink to the floor, and to cry out with much agony and agitation. Through this others were aroused—some on account of sympathy, some out of fear—until soon everybody was shouting and screaming. I stood about five feet from the platform. Mr. Kramsch, a Moravian minister, stood at my side. He deplored and regretted the work as a tragedy. At my side stood a weak woman with a child in her arms, who was so deeply agitated that in a few moments she began to tremble and became quite pale. I expected to see her fall over and hated to see her lie helpless with the child in her arms; therefore I spoke to her and told her the true evangelical way to salvation. Her husband, who stood at the other side of her, thanked me and begged me to continue my conversation with her, as she was almost unconscious. At first she answered neither me nor him, but she revived and began to speak. The director, seeing me speak to her, openly rebuked me for speaking to her, but I let it pass.

"Some of my members and friends who were present thought I should also preach on this occasion, and without thinking deeply in regard to the matter, being only zealous for preaching the true gospel, I consented; but Mr. Kramsch, who had considered the matter and its consequences for a longer time, advised me against it. He took hold of my arms with the words, ‘Come, Brother, and let us go: this is not the place for us. This spiritual fanaticism is too great. All our efforts are in vain that could be made at this time. I came last night and followed the operations all night. I see it quite clearly that on other occasions we can be more useful in our calling.’ I gave him my approval and we went away together. This much was the result of my first visit to a camp meeting."
On Monday, February 23, 1802, Henkel and his wife started on a trip that took them to Guilford, Orange, and Richland counties where he preached, gave catechetical instruction, and baptized children. He had to "speak with the greatest care" because his hearers differed greatly in their sentiments and opinions about the revival. He observed that the mere report of the revival had made an impression on the Germans. Other preachers, whom he does not identify by name or denomination, came to hear him as he delivered sermons in several churches. While on this tour he preached in a Methodist church, as indicated above.

On Friday, March 6, 1802, Henkel was to go to Cabarrus County to assist "Pastor Storch" in a church on Buffalo Creek with catechetical instruction of young people and a communion service. But Storch on hearing that "a great camp meeting" was to begin in Iredell County, 23 miles from his home, on the second Sunday in March, canceled the engagement and urged Henkel instead to join him in attendance at the camp meeting. Henkel says that Storch "had received such information from old Dr. [Samuel E.] McCorkle, the Presbyterian minister, about the work that he assuredly believed that revivals are the certain works of God through which he will unite the minds of the people of different religions and bring about a universal conversion of mankind." Henkel notes that Storch's enthusiasm for the revival created "suspicion and mistrust" of the man in his congregations, and some of the parishioners urged Henkel to accompany Storch to the camp meeting, hoping "that I could show up the deception in such a way that he himself could see it." Henkel "yielded to their entreaty" and went to Storch's home two days in advance of the meeting only to find that in his enthusiasm Storch had already departed for the camp site in Iredell County. Henkel followed, and he describes in his journal what happened at the camp meeting, beginning on Sunday morning, March 8, 1802:

"After breakfast we went to the camp. The first thing that attracted my attention was the large assembly that had gathered. The report of the number of wagons was not exactly given, but there

---

32 Probably Rockingham County, rather than Richland.
33 Ibid., p. 33.
34 Ibid., p. 35.
35 Carl Augustus Storch came from Germany to North Carolina in 1788, in response to an appeal for pastors, and became the pastor of Lutheran churches in Rowan and Cabarrus Counties, where he remained until his death after 41 years of service.
36 Finck, op. cit., p. 35.
37 This meeting, described by Foote in detail, took place at Shepherds Cross Roads, near the present Mooresville, N. C. Vanderburg Methodist Church, now on the site, is of recent origin and has little, if any, connection with the camp meeting.
were no fewer than 300 besides other vehicles, like carriages, chaises, etc. And just as many fires as wagons—and as many tents. The meeting began on Friday and continued through Tuesday. Almost all the wood was consumed for fires and for the erection of huts and platforms. An immense quantity was required for the fires, as the exercises continued day and night without interruption. It was at the coldest time of the year. The wagons and tents were placed in a regular circle, and those who were within this circle were also placed in order. In different directions, a person could see small groups like little villages.

"On all sides were heard preaching, exhorting, weeping, lamenting, shouting, singing, praising God, thanking, etc. In many of the tents people were seen lying with covered faces, praying, exhorting and reproving. Some were lying in a trance. On every platform there was unceasing preaching. Some of the old Presbyterians preached the gospel as I love to hear it, in spite of the fact that they let all that was said which was wrong and unscriptural pass unnoticed and unchallenged.

"I had formed the firm resolution by no means to preach either for or against the movement. I considered this course would be wisest for me, but it happened a service for the Germans to be held at two o'clock had been appointed by Pastor Storch. The sermon was to be preached from a wagon standing near the tent in which we lodged. He had expected to preach the sermon, but as he was always weak on account of the fever from which he suffered and at this time the excitement made him feel worse than usual, when the hour arrived he was altogether unfit to conduct the service and preach the sermon. He, therefore, pressed me into service, and as the Germans had gathered in large numbers, I was compelled against my will and better judgment to take his place. By the time I had finished, Pastor Storch felt better and sufficiently strong to preach a second sermon, which he did in a beautiful manner, setting forth the pure and wholesome truth. Our service attracted many English people, among whom were several who had heard me preach in English. When both sermons were ended, Pastor Storch noticed the desire of the English folks and at once urged me to preach to them, but I declined. He continued to urge me to speak at least a few words and pronounce the benediction in English. I consented to do this, having no intention to do anything more; but how speedily my intentions were forgotten, because as soon as I was upon my feet before the congregation, I was led into giving a presentation of the true order of salvation and, in consequence, a long sermon followed. Thus, unintentionally, I was led on to set forth many a principle
contrary to the teachings of the revivalists, and in accordance with the divine order.

"What moved me in this sermon I do not know, but I became so bold that I finally offered myself to continue the discussion and to defend my fundamental doctrines with words of the Holy Scriptures against anyone who wished to argue with me. I soon became a double wonder to the English: first, that I as a native German, preached English, and then that I denied what was openly taught by the revivalists. Crowds gathered about us from all directions. The report soon spread rapidly through the whole camp. Almost all the Presbyterian preachers forsook their platforms, stopped preaching, and came to listen. Later I reduced the whole address to writing, translated it into German, and still have it in my possession. I expected the approval of the preacher mentioned. After the address I was ready to defend my position. What the reason is that no one opposed me I do not know. My greatest surprise, however, was that several came to me, shook hands with me, and thanked me that I had borne testimony to the truth on this occasion also. They even invited me to preach on their platform the next day.

"Pastor Miller," an English Lutheran preacher, made himself fully known to me on this occasion for the first time as one who was in full harmony and agreement with me. At twilight he preached in a tent and gave expression to his views. I heard part of his sermon. After that I wandered through the camp. Just as it was beginning to get dark, I came to the platform of the Presbyterians, and there I heard one of their preachers declaim in a way that made me stand still and listen. It was enough! I went to our tent and offered myself to preach the gospel the whole night through from tent to tent, provided someone who knew the people and could introduce me would accompany me, and also if before leaving, someone would give me a warm supper, as I had eaten little the whole day and consequently was suffering from a headache. We had sufficient food with us, but that was not ready. Upon making my wishes known, some of the American women said, 'If that is all that is needed, we can help at once!' They unlocked their chests, set the table, and soon a good cup of coffee was ready, with all the other items of food

Robert Johnson Miller, of Scotch birth, had been trained for the Anglican ministry, migrated to America in time to become involved in the Revolutionary War and went with the Patriot army to the South. After the war he joined the Methodist movement and Asbury appointed him to the Yadkin Circuit in 1787. He organized a union church and was ordained by the Lutherans in 1794. Before his death he returned to the Episcopal Church and led a movement to unite the Episcopal and Lutheran churches in North Carolina.
so that we could all eat with pleasure and satisfaction. This suited me much better than the sermon I had heard.  

"Pastor Miller, Pastor Storch, a young man to lead the singing, my wife, Pastor Storch's wife, and our hostess made the circuit with me through the camp. We passed over a little brook upon a slight elevation where several tents were pitched and offered our services. The folks willingly accepted the offer. A certain man was requested to lead the singing, as our leader was absent at the moment. This person consented to do so immediately, but as he was in such a frame of mind that he trembled with bodily agitations, we could not use him; so I led the singing myself as well as I could. Mr. Miller and I both preached the gospel, for which our hearers thanked us.

"We went together to a very large tent in which the people were holding a strong and boisterous revival during the time of our first sermons—in fact, we had been disturbed in our service by their shouting. At our arrival Mr. Miller suggested to me that I should preach there, as so many members of his congregation were present. When I entered the tent, everything became quiet, no exercises, no shouting except that one man stood at the foot of the tree to which his tent was fastened with his right arm about the tree and his child resting in his arm, laughing over-loud, like a person who had lost his senses. I asked Pastor Miller what this meant, and he answered, 'It is religious laughter,' and urged me to pay no attention to it but just to preach the gospel. I followed his advice and preached, whereupon the man became quiet and sat down. Mr. Miller took a seat back of the tent to see how the matter would end, and he told me that the man with a clear voice had joined in the singing of the last hymn. All the audience showed themselves to be attentive and well-satisfied.

"At the end of my sermon Dr. Hall, an old Presbyterian preacher, stepped forward. He had been in the tent before me and had started the revival movement with the shouting, etc. He had been thoroughly aroused by my sermon and the effects on the...

---

39 Finck, op. cit., pp. 36-37.
40 Ibid., pp. 37-38.
41 James Hall is traditionally connected with the Rehobeth camp meetings and, more than any of the other Presbyterian divines, was sympathetic to the Methodist movement. From early Revolutionary days until 1780 he was pastor of Fourth Creek (Statesville), Concord and Bethany churches. In 1790 he accepted a missionary assignment which took him over western North Carolina and as far as Natchez, Miss. He often came in close contact with the Methodists. Dr. Hall is better known as an educator than as a minister, having established Clio's Nursery of Arts and Sciences in Iredell County during the Revolutionary War. He taught in his home at Bethany until his death. He is said to have been the first teacher of natural science in North Carolina.
You people know that we learn that the Lord led the prophet Ezekiel to a large, wide field in a vision in the spirit, in which field there lay, dry, dead bones, that upon the repeated proclamation of the prophet at the command of the Lord were covered with skin and flesh and sinews, and breath came into them and they lived and stood upon their feet, and [were] an exceeding great army. (Ezekiel 37). This vision was a prophecy of the Jewish people, it is true, who were at that time living in servitude in the Babylonian captivity, with the fulfilled prophecy of their return to their land, the restoration of their city, temple and worship. But surely it can be applied to present conditions and circumstances. Just think how in the circle in which we live, for years and years everything was dead and destroyed, and how for those dry bones no preaching and no efforts were of any avail to bring them to life until recently at the Lord’s command we, inspired by his Holy Spirit, prophesied to you dry bones, and then life came among you, and then the rustling was heard among you, and it was a pleasure and joy to be among you. Now that everything is dried up again and everything is dead, what may be the cause? Must we begin all over our labor among you? Will it be possible to bring life into you again?  

"The man looked perplexed and almost beside himself. He applied all the powers of his mind and body to relight the fires of revival. He spoke for a long time after this fashion, but everything was dry and dead, and therefore he concluded his address with indignation. "I did not remain to hear his address to the end but went to different tents and sought an opportunity to preach, but every tent had its preacher it seemed to me, except the tent where we were lodging, and this I reached about 2 o’clock in the morning. I had lost all my company, and here I found them with many others waiting for me, in the hope that I would give another address. For these I made a very long address, making five sermons from 2 o’clock in the afternoon to 2 o’clock in the morning, besides other exhortations. I had an invitation also to preach in the morning from the main pulpit of the Presbyterians, but my wife opposed this and prevented me from preaching, for she feared I might expose myself to harm of body and life. She harbored a mistrust due to what she heard at the side of the fire while I was preaching during the afternoon from the wagon, spoken by some that she did not know. I was not concerned about this, but as I considered the matter, I felt that in spite of all my efforts, I had accomplished but little and that I would accomplish but little by any sermons I might preach in the future. We spent the night by the fire, and in the morning at break of day we drove away and came home.  

\[42\] Finck, op. cit., p. 38.  
\[43\] Ibid., pp. 38-39.
"After my arrival home I served my congregations in the regular order. The audiences increased in size, for the report of the work made the people very attentive, and it was constantly expected of me that I would express my judgment on the new doctrine (as it was called), which many desired to hear. I was also requested on other occasions to express myself, but I always declined as much as I possibly could, especially by saying that it would not be long before they could see and hear for themselves, as on the first Sunday in May such a meeting had been appointed to be held in a church of the immersionists only five miles away.

"For years this congregation had lain uncultivated like fallow ground, but recently their pastor and many of his members had visited the camp meeting of the Presbyterians and had become aroused and soon had lively revivals among themselves. Throughout the whole winter they carried on their meetings day and night. Their congregation was greatly strengthened by accessions: on the first Sunday in April, 27 were baptized in Ebert's [Abbots'] Creek and the next day 11 more. They had requested the Presbyterians to hold their so-called Big Meeting with them, with the offer of holding a union communion service together in order that at last the beginning be made for a general union of all denominations. But as they had made so many recruits before this, they held their communion on the Sunday before and made it known that it was by a misunderstanding that the appointment had been made. Their purpose was, it seems, that through the revival of the Presbyterians they might secure more converts.

"In consequence of this appointment many gathered at the time of the camp. It began on Friday and lasted until the following Monday. I attended the camp on Saturday but kept away from the crowds, merely observing and studying the revival machine and its working. I spoke to but few and answered few questions. All day I felt that I stood alone in my sentiments and that all were against me. I rode home early."

"Sunday morning I went to my second congregation and preached there. . . . Up to this time I had seen and heard much at the various camp meetings that I attended but I was destined to have much more sad experience in connection with the revivals before the storm blew over.

"On May 18th I preached in Friedens Church to a large and attentive congregation, as was my custom. My sermon seemingly made a deep impression on the minds of my hearers, but it was altogether spoken in the spirit of the gospel. Upon its conclusion I was put on

---

"Ibid., p. 39."
trial by a young woman as to whether I would approve and support movements of the kind now in vogue in the big meetings. She began to whimper during the sermon about as much as I wished to hear, and at its conclusion fell backward into the lap of one of the women and cried out with all her might, 'I am lost; I am condemned!' Others joined in and let themselves be heard. After the matter had been going on a short time, I stepped up to her, took her by the arm, set her up erect and asked her, 'How do you know you are lost?' She answered, 'I heard it from the sermon. The people began to laugh and to mock me. But let them laugh, for they will get their reward soon enough!' Thus she had heard it from the English preachers, and thus the Germans were also to hear it. In the meantime several men stepped up to me and urged me to treat her tenderly and treat the matter kindly for they considered it a work of great importance; they believed it was the work of the Holy Spirit, and that should not be hindered. I assured them that I had no desire to hinder the work of the Holy Spirit, but much more wished to further it. I hold that the Holy Spirit could work in no better way than through the word of truth, and that they should now hear. I pictured to her her careless ways which I had observed in her conduct last fall as I had her in my class of instruction with others; gave her too the command to examine herself carefully to learn whether her conduct now was of the right sort or whether it was based on false imaginations and representations. By this course, I soon brought her to the end of her revival exertions and everything became quiet.

"As my son Philip and Pastor Diefenbach, both young preachers, were surrounded on all sides with this revival fire, and therefore had many attacks to withstand, the conditions demanded of me (especially in the case of my son) that I often should make a circuit through their fields. Consequently, I made a trip almost every month through his congregations. I had usually large audiences for each sermon. This much, at least, I must acknowledge: as a consequence of this revival in religion, the people were moved to attend the services and sermons frequently, became eager to learn, and more thoughtful and studious in matters of their spiritual welfare.

"I had other assaults of the same character during the summer before us. Among others I might mention that on July 25th I preached in my third congregation. I had there the largest congregation that ever gathered of both Germans and English. At the request of a certain number who desired to have the conformity of infant baptism explained in relation to the Scriptures, the church council consented that I should give a sermon covering that subject, which, however, I knew nothing until the Friday before. The report that this sermon was to be preached brought together many people,
both German and English. As many as there were, they had to crowd themselves into the church building because of a rain that was threatening; otherwise I would have preached from a forest pulpit.

"The German sermon was delivered first and then followed the English. In the last, as in the first, I treated of baptism, as also of regeneration. There were many immersionists in the audience who were unbending and obstinate in their own belief. These found my sermon so contrary to their taste that they strongly disapproved, even though I defended my theme as tenderly as possibly I could. One of their company who carried a large club in his hand stepped up to the pulpit and interrupted my sermon. He ordered me to be silent. I requested him to keep quiet until I was through, and then he might speak as much as he wished, but he continued to interrupt me until I had to stop. I left the pulpit and stepped before the table in order to speak with the fellow, but I was immediately surrounded by all his companions, men and women, and all seemed ready to attack me. The leader wished to speak to me, but one of the elders came forward and told him to keep quiet, that the church was not built for quarreling and fighting. For the second time he offered to speak, but I told him I had more important business to attend to on that day than to dispute with a mad fellow. The action of this man seemed so strange and shocking to all our Germans that everything else was silent. I motioned to the deacons, and they went to the door and beckoned all the people to follow them, that they might lock the doors. We thought that if it should come to blows, it should not be done in the church.

"Still to my surprise all the Germans were of one mind. Though they outnumbered the others three to one, not one threatening word was heard. Each one went away from the church and let the English stand before the church. They were violently quarreling with each other. The immersionists were at variance, as some approved the man's action and others took a contrary position. Those who were opposed to the man were curious to hear the end of the sermon. They were so angry that they had to vent their fury on themselves, as we had all left the church. One of the women, on leaving the building, showed her anger by seizing a young, simple-minded woman by the arm and giving her a pull and saying, 'I am surprised that you can listen to this preacher. You will go to hell with him!' The young woman was so frightened from the attack that she was sick for several weeks. Once more I had evidence of what the English Baptists would do if they dared. Still it gave me and others satisfaction that it was at the end of my sermon that I was interrupted. I had not been speaking long when I felt that I was quite indisposed,
as I had ridden as much as 20 miles before the sermon and had just as long a journey to go home, which I was compelled to make on account of appointments I had made. It was therefore a burdensome day for me." 45

It was obvious to Henkel that the members of the German congregations were interested in the revival. He said they found it possible to come to church several times in the week if they thought that something would be said bearing on the "storm sermons," as he called the revival preaching. He said they were pleased with Pastor Storch's interest, recognizing it as the beginning of the revival fervor among the Germans. But as for himself, Henkel commented, "After I had attended a number of these revivals I decided that I could well allow myself to be satisfied with what I had seen and heard. It was enough. I decided also that neither in my public nor private utterances would I offer any opposition. I gave myself wholly to my service in my congregations." 46 But by the middle of July, 1802, Henkel was aware that the Germans expected their pastors "to begin [the] work of revivals the way it was done among the Presbyterians." 47 Henkel admitted that he was called to account on the subject by a layman; the man "maintained that I was the only preacher in the state who did not yield to the revival movement but held to the regular order of the church." 48 He charged that Henkel had become an instrument with others "to cast the people on the earth." Henkel replied, "My good man, I desire to bring no one lower than on his knees before the throne of grace." As he preached in different churches during the summer, Henkel found that the people "were at all times eager to try my doctrine and to find out if it agreed with the doctrine of the revival of religion; this desire was evident both on the part of those who were for the revivals and of those who were opposed to them." 49

1803-06

By the summer of 1803, following a two months' visit to Virginia, Henkel wrote, "I noticed that most of the people everywhere were beginning to cool off after the fire of the revivals with their storm sermons." He cited as proof of his observation that when the English Baptists announced that they would hold a camp meeting which would produce "the very greatest revival demonstrations" ever, practically nobody came. "Everything was cold and weak; no machine would work right, and nothing would make an impression or

45 Ibid., pp. 39-41. 46 Ibid., pp. 41-42. 47 Ibid. 48 Ibid. 49 Ibid.
create an outburst of interest." He said that from that time on there were few efforts to hold revivals in the woods.50

Judging by the comments in his journal, Henkel was not at all sympathetic toward the revival. Indeed, at times he was antagonistic toward the movement and the preachers of whatever denomination, including his own, who promoted it. He had little or no confidence in the camp meeting, surcharged with emotionalism as it was, to win souls and build up the church. Outwardly he tried to remain neutral toward the movement as it swept over the part of North Carolina in which he lived and worked. He resolved not to be drawn into it, and he refrained from condemning it openly. Nevertheless, as the religious excitement increased, and as it came into his own community and his own congregations, he was unable to hold himself completely aloof. Against his will he was persuaded to preach at one camp meeting, but instead of trying to stir the emotions of his hearers, he sought to calm them. Instead of denouncing the revival and its leaders, he tried to preach sound doctrine based on the Scriptures. He was pleased to note that his preaching and his procedures in the camp meeting and in his churches calmed some individuals who were overcome with excitement or fear. While concerned lest the religious excitement should prove hurtful to the Lutheran churches, Henkel nonetheless tried at times to be objective in assessing the meaning and the impact of the revival. He frankly admitted that the movement brought more of his own people to the regular church services and made them more serious about religion. Referring to the North Carolina revival four years later in a report to a Lutheran conference in Virginia, Henkel said, "The German ministers were at first divided in their opinions on the subject; nevertheless it drove them to a more intimate communion with each other in their official acts, and thus they had the opportunity to investigate the matter more closely."51

50 Ibid., p. 45.  
51 Morgan, op. cit., p. 30.