

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

## On Revivals of Religion:

### Review of Charles Finney—Part One

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We proceed to exhibit to our readers the measures recommended and the spirit displayed in Mr. Finney's Lectures on Revivals. We do this at the known hazard of being denounced as enemies to revivals, and friends of Satan. But it is a very small thing with us that we should be judged of Mr. Finney's judgment. We, in common with all the friends of pure and undefiled religion, have a sacred duty to discharge in relation to this subject, from which no considerations of fear or favor should deter us. Mr. Finney, and his followers, have shown a resolute determination to persevere in their course. It is surely then the duty of those who believe that course to be detrimental to the best interests of religion, to proclaim their dissent. We believe; therefore will we speak.



Our first remark is upon the disingenuousness of which Mr. Finney is guilty, in stating the question of New Measures. These measures, he says, are opposed "on the grounds that they are innovations". Now he knows perfectly well, and all the world knows, that this is not the ground on which they are opposed. Of the many testimonies against them, which have been published, we defy him to point to a single one in which their novelty is made the cause of their condemnation. And yet he seeks continually to make upon his reader the impression, that naught has been or can be said against them, save that they are new. Who does not know that he has picked up his measures, as well as his theology, among the castaway rubbish of past times? The only novelty in the matter is, that these measures should be employed in the Presbyterian church, in combination with a false theology and a fanatical spirit. Why then, when Mr. Finney is professedly defending his course from the objections which have been urged against it, does he confine himself so exclusively to the single ground of opposition, that his measures are new? Why, if he felt himself equal to the task, did he not fairly and honestly meet the real objections which

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have been urged against him? Such disingenuous evasions always injure the cause in defence of which they are employed.

A similar artifice may be detected in his enumeration of New Measures. "They are Anxious Meetings, Protracted Meetings, and the Anxious Seat." He must have known, while uttering this sentence, that the public estimation has never ranked these three things together; and we very much doubt whether he has ever heard the term New Measures applied to the Inquiry Meeting or the Protracted Meeting. Meetings (( We are aware that the Editor of the New York Evangelist has said that, "before Mr. Finney arose, Mr. Nettleton was much blamed for his irregularities and imprudence." This piece of information it seems came to Mr. Leavitt, all the way round by St. Louis. Such statements are intended to cast over Mr. Finney the broad mantle of Mr. Nettleton's reputation; or possibly the design may be to make Mr. Nettleton jointly responsible for the evils which are now seen to be pouring in upon the church, through the flood-gates which the modern reformers have hoisted. Whatever may be the object, it is exceedingly unfair and dishonorable to attempt to associate the name of Mr. Nettleton with a class of men, of whom we know, and they too, he has ever said, "Oh, my soul, come not thou into their secret!" Would it not be well for the Rev. Editor, before putting forth statements which reach him by such a circuitous route, to make some inquiry as to their truth nearer home? Mr. Nettleton's life has been spent chiefly in New England, and we challenge Mr. Leavitt to produce, as authority for his statement, the opinion of any settled minister in New England, of the denomination to which Mr. Nettleton belongs, who was not an avowed enemy to all revivals. )) of the kind thus designated have been held in all parts of our church, and when wisely instituted and controlled, have never within our knowledge met with any opposition. Why then should he place the Anxious Seat in the same category with these institutions, unless it were furtively to borrow for it a portion of their admitted respectability? Doubtless he intended that his triumphant vindication of things which no one has opposed, should leave a general impression on the reader's mind, of which the Anxious Seat might receive the benefit. But does he not know, that while there are some who will be imposed upon by such chicanery, there are others who will penetrate the flimsy deception, and turn with disgust from a cause thus advocated? Or does he take it for granted, that among his "fit audience" (would that we could add, "though few"), there will be no discrimination of mind?

In his formal defence of his peculiar measures, Mr. Finney undertakes to establish the position, "that our present forms of public worship, and everything, so far as measures are concerned, have been arrived at by degrees, and by a succession of New Measures." His remarks under this head are so curious that we are sure they would amaze our readers. We wish we could quote them all. He descants with most admirable perspicacity and force upon cocked-hats, fur caps, bands, silk gowns, stocks, cravats, wigs, and small-

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clothes. He then passes on to the discussion of Psalm Books, lining the hymns, choirs, pitch-pipes, whistles, and fiddles. In the course of his profound and edifying remarks upon these topics, he relates several stories, of which the following may be taken as a specimen:

“I have been told that some years ago, in New England, a certain elderly clergyman was so opposed to the new measure of a minister’s wearing pantaloons, that he would on no account allow them in his pulpit. A young man was going to preach for him who had no small-clothes [knee breeches], and the old minister would not let him officiate in pantaloons. ‘Why,’ said he, ‘my people would think I had brought a fop into the pulpit, to see a man there with pantaloons on, and it would produce an excitement among them.’ And so, finally, the young man was obliged to borrow a pair of the old gentleman’s small-clothes, and they were too short for him, and made a ridiculous figure enough. But anything was better than such a terrible innovation as preaching in pantaloons.” Again, he says: “I remember one minister who, though quite a young man, used to wear an enormous white wig. And the people talked as if there was a divine right about it, and it was as hard to give it up, almost, as to give up the Bible itself.”

We dare not reproach him for these instructive little stories in which he abounds, since he is a strenuous advocate for the propriety, nay, the necessity, of telling such stories from the pulpit. “Truths, not thus illustrated,” he says, “are generally just as well calculated to convert sinners as a mathematical demonstration.” But as, besides himself, “there are very few ministers who dare to use these stories,” he calls upon them to “do it, and let fools reproach them as story-telling ministers.” Speaking too, of such as contend for the dignity of the pulpit, he cries out, “Dignity, indeed! Just the language of the the devil.”

We do not pretend to be as well acquainted as Mr. Finney seems to be with the language of the devil; but knowing who it is that has said, “Whosoever shall say,thy fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire,” we would rather abide the consequences of the malediction against those who censure “story-telling ministers,” than stand in the predicament of him who uttered it. “Fool” and “devil” are in truth very hard names, but we will not be angry with Mr. Finney for employing them; we can bear them from him, and it would be cruel to deny him the use of his most effective weapons. We trust that we may be excused, however, from attempting to reply to such arguments. Nor can it be reasonably expected that we should answer his stories about cocked-hats, wigs, whistles, etc.; or controvert the important truths they were intended to illustrate. Indeed, so far are we from wishing to controvert them, that we will furnish him with an additional truth of like kind, and one of such vital moment, that we can only wonder how it escaped his penetrating survey.

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It is unquestionably true that the ministers in New England, within the last half century, were very generally in the habit of wearing long queues, and riding on switch-tailed horses; and if he will apply to us, we can furnish him with some instructive stories to illustrate this truth. We shall leave to him, however, the duty of explaining how the “new measure” of cutting off the queues, carried through like that of wearing pantaloons, black stocks, and round hats, in the face of persecution and danger, was made instrumental in promoting the purity and power of revivals of religion. We should be glad if he would inform us too, whether the men, who in the spirit of martyrs introduced these innovations, regarded conformity to them as the only credible evidence of true piety. Did any of these worthies ever say of “wearing pantaloons instead of small-clothes,” as he has said of the “Anxious Seat,” that it occupied the precise place that baptism did with the apostles? Or has the signal honor been reserved for him of discovering and introducing a measure co-equal in importance with a divine institution?

The object of Mr. Finney, in this miserable farrago, is to produce the impression that the objections which have been brought against his measures are as trivial and ridiculous as those which were urged against the innovations of which he here speaks. Whether he has succeeded, however, in making any other impression than that of pity for the man who can thus ineptly trifle with a serious subject, we leave our readers to judge.

It has often been objected against the modern reformers, that granting the beneficial tendency of their measures, they unduly magnify their importance. This charge they have denied, and have maintained that they considered them important, but yet unessential, circumstances, attending and favoring the exhibition of truth. We rejoice that evasion of this kind is no longer possible. Mr. Finney throughout his Lectures insinuates, and often directly asserts the paramount importance, nay, the indispensable necessity of the new measures. “The object of the ministry,” he says, using that “Saxon colloquialism” which his reporter so much admires, “is to get all the people to feel that the devil has no right to rule this world, but that they ought all to give themselves to God, and vote in the Lord Jesus Christ as the governor of the universe. Now what shall be done? What measures shall we take? Says one, ‘Be sure and have nothing that is new.’ Strange! The object of our measures is to gain attention, and you must have something new. As sure as the effect of a measure becomes stereotyped, it ceases to gain attention, and you must try something new.” In the exercise of a wise economy “of our new things,” he thinks public attention “may be kept awake to the great subject of religion for a long series of years, until our present measures will by and by have sufficient novelty in them again to attract and fix the public attention. And so we shall never want for something new.”

All this would be abundantly unintelligible, if interpreted by the light of Mr. F’s own definitions. On the page preceding that from which it is taken, he says, “building houses

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for worship, and visiting from house to house, etc., are all 'measures,' the object of which is to get the attention of the people to the gospel." And in another Lecture from which we have made some extracts, he dignifies with the name of "measures" the several articles of the clergyman's dress, the chorister's pitch-pipe, and various other like things. As "building houses for worship" is a "measure," it must, according to his theory, soon cease to produce its effect; and the gospel cannot gain attention then unless we "try something new," such for instance as preaching in tents instead of our present church edifices. In the revolving cycle of these "measures," too, the time will come when the cocked hat, small clothes, and wig, must be restored to their former honors, or the truth cannot make any impression upon the minds of men. Will Mr. Finney calculate the length of this cycle, that the public may know when they will be favored with the opportunity for observing the impulse which will be given to the spread of the truth by the return of these ancient observances?

Admitting the truth of Mr. Finney's favorite maxim that "obligation and ability are commensurate," he cannot perhaps be considered bound to write with anything like logical precision or consistency. But we have a right to expect honesty. We are entitled to demand that he shall not use terms in one sense, when seeking to relieve his system from odium, and then artfully change the meaning to subserve his purpose. This he has evidently done in the passage above quoted. Let us assign, however, to the term "measures," in this extract, the signification which it was intended here to bear, and yet how revolting is the doctrine taught! According to this theory, the gospel, which its divine author left complete in all its parts and proportions, and most admirably adapted to secure its destined ends, must utterly fail of its effect unless there be added to it a set of machinery of man's invention. A great, if not the chief part of ministerial wisdom is made to consist "in devising and carrying forward measures" for exciting public attention. The very perfection of Christian wisdom, the height of religious prosperity, are to be sought in that state of things in which "we shall never want for something that is new." How is the temple of God dishonored by this alleged necessity for a continual shifting of its services, like the scenes of some rare-show, to attract the vulgar gaze! How is the gospel degraded by being thus made dependent for its effect upon a kind of jugglery which shall be studiously adapted to surprise and startle beholders, and thus "attract their attention!" It is the very nature of truth to be severely simple; and in this simplicity she delights to go forth to win her victories. She leaves to error the use of stratagem and guile.

The quotation we have made is not a solitary passage in which the writer, in an unguarded moment, has claimed for his new measures a degree of importance, which, in his more sober moods, he would rather disavow. Deliberately and often does he assert the unqualified necessity of these new measures, to the success of the gospel. "Without new measures," he says, "it is impossible that the church should succeed in gaining the

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attention of the world to the subject of religion." And again, "But new measures, we must have." It will be seen in the sequel, that this is only one illustration of Mr. Finney's disposition to claim infallibility and supreme importance for all his own opinions, even when the smallest matters are in question. His argument, in the paragraph from which the sentences last quoted are taken, may certainly claim the merit of originality. "There are so many exciting subjects constantly brought before the public mind, such a running to and fro, so that cry 'Lo here,' and 'Lo there,' that the church cannot maintain her ground, cannot command attention, without very exciting preaching, and sufficient novelty in measures to get the public ear." He then proceeds to explain what these "exciting subjects" are, which call upon the church to institute specific measures for producing a counteracting excitement. They are such as "the measures of politicians, of infidels and heretics, the scrambling after wealth, the increase of luxury," etc. It should seem, then, that the church must vary the method of celebrating divine worship, and modify all the arrangements for presenting religious truth to the minds of men, according to the dainties of their tables and the elegance of their furniture and equipage, the degree of commercial enterprise among them, or the extent of infidel machinations, the number of railroads and canals in progress, and of Presidential candidates in the field. The measures we must use are some determinate function of all these variable quantities; and its form should be, in each case, most carefully calculated. Every change in the state of speculation, trade, or politics, must call for such a change of measures as will be "calculated to get the attention of men to the gospel of Christ," under these new circumstances. Religion must descend from her vantage ground, and on the level with all this world's concerns and by kindred arts, must she bustle, contrive, and intrigue "to get the public ear." To make use of one of Mr. Finney's own illustrations, because "the politicians get up meetings, circulate handbills and pamphlets, blaze away in the newspapers, send their ships about the streets on wheels with flags and sailors, send coaches all over town with handbills to bring people up to the polls, all to gain attention to their cause and elect their candidate," the church is bound to imitate their wisdom, and institute a similar system of manoeuvres. Where then is the contrast which Paul so often draws between the weapons of our warfare, and those with which the world contends?

How widely do these ad captandum measures differ from the direct, single-hearted course of the apostles! They evidently relied upon the truth, as the only instrument they could lawfully employ in the accomplishment of their errand. Their miracles were not intended, like the glaring show-bill of some exhibition, to attract the attention of the public; their object was to convince, not to amaze the people. They felt that they were the heralds of God, commissioned to bear a weighty message to the children of men; and while to their miracles they appealed for proof of their commission, upon the intrinsic overwhelming importance of their message they founded their claim to the public attention. If we may credit their own statements, they "renounced the hidden things of

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dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." They seem to have had no idea that they must set in operation some preliminary mechanism to awaken the attention of conscience to the truth. If this complicated and ever-shifting system of "exciting measures" is necessary to the success of the gospel, why do we find no trace of it in their practice, and not a syllable of it in their writings? If, as Mr. F. says, "new measures are necessary from time to time to awaken attention, and bring the gospel to bear upon the public mind," why has it been left for him to reveal to us these necessary means for the propagation of the gospel?

Mr. Finney refers distinctly to the character of the present age as furnishing a special argument for the use of new measures in religion, and as determining the kind of measures to be employed. The substance of his argument is, that this is an age of great excitement, and therefore the same kind of preaching and of measures, which did very well in the days of our fathers, will not answer now; we must have something more exciting, or religion cannot obtain a hearing. From the same premises, we should arrive at a very different conclusion. This is, indeed, an age of extraordinary excitement. The great improvements in the mechanic arts, and the wide diffusion of knowledge, have given a strong impulse to the popular mind; and everywhere the social mass is seen to be in such a state of agitation, that the lightest breath may make it heave and foam. This being the case, should religion fall in with this excitement, and institute measures for fostering it up to a certain point, that she may gain a favorable moment for presenting her claims? We had thought that one great object of religion was to allay this undue excitement of the human mind; to check its feverish outgoings towards earthly objects, and to teach it without hurry or distraction, in self-collectedness, to put forth its energies in a proper direction, and to their best advantage. This self-possession being included in the final result at which religion aims, can it be wise to commence the attempt to produce it, by exasperating the contrary state of mind?

Paul was once placed among a people who were proverbial for their excitability. Their feelings would kindle and flame with the lightest spark, and, like all persons of this mercurial temperament, they delighted in excitement, and were continually seeking its procuring causes. "For all the Athenians and strangers which were there, spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing." Here, then, according to Mr. Finney's theory, was the very people upon whom it would be necessary to play off some preparatory measures to excite them, and gain their attention to the Word. But the apostle appears to have felt that nothing was necessary beyond the simple declaration of the Word. He looked upon the truth, declared by his lips, and prospered in its course by the energy of the Holy Spirit, as amply sufficient to secure the needful attention, and accomplish the purpose whereunto it was sent. Nay, so desirous was he to prevent the

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surprise of novelty, that he represents himself as aiming, by the truth which he exhibits, merely to supply a chasm in their knowledge which they had themselves discovered. He presents Jehovah to them as the God of an altar already existing, and declared to them Him, whom they had ignorantly worshipped.

Nor did this Apostle ever vary his course to suit the latitude of the place he was in, or the temperament of the people around him. Among the pains-taking and thrifty Jews; the learned and witty Athenians; the dissolute Corinthians; the more phlegmatic and martial Romans, he employed but one measure, the declaration of the truth. Will it be said that, in his day, the gospel was so novel, its truths so surprising, that the necessity for other measures was superseded, but that now, when men have become familiar with the revelations of the gospel, something else than the "thrice-told tale" must be employed to awaken public attention? And is it conceivable, then, that the Great Head of the Church, foreseeing that the time would come when the preaching of the gospel would lose its effect, and other means become necessary for its propagation, should leave human reason to grope in the dark for these additional measures? Such imperfection does indeed, often mark the ways and proceedings of man, but may not be attributed unto Him, "whose thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways."

We have assumed, thus far, that the new measures cannot be defended under the pretext that they are only a particular mode of preaching the gospel, or of exhibiting the truth, and are therefore virtually comprised in the appointed means for the promotion of religion. The measures for which Mr. Finney pleads are something distinct from the truth, aside from it, and intended to exert a separate influence. He plainly presents them as the precursors of the gospel, to prepare the way for its coming. It is surely incumbent on him, therefore, to explain why the Scriptures make no allusion to these indispensable appendages, or rather prefixes, of the gospel.

Pressed with this difficulty, and unable to work a miracle in confirmation of his right to supply the deficiencies of the revelation already made, will he yield the position that these new measures are necessary, and content himself with maintaining, that as they tend to favor the impression of the truth, and it is our duty to preach the truth in its most efficient form, it is both expedient and right to make use of them? Upon this ground some of Mr. Finney's fellow laborers have rested their cause, and have constructed for it a much better defence than he has made. The principle is here assumed, that it is the right and the duty of every man to make use of any measures for promoting religion that seem to him well adapted to co-operate with the truth and aid in its work; and this principle is, within certain limits, both just and safe, but when pressed beyond them it is false and dangerous. If there are no restraint upon the application of this principle, then are the means for the diffusion of Christianity left, as before, at the mercy of human discretion.



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Each minister should, in this case, be keen as a Metternich in foreseeing the final effect of the machinery he puts in operation; and the most eagle-eyed would often find themselves mistaken. Hence experiment after experiment must be made to try the efficacy of different measures; and the house of God becomes transformed into a kind of religious laboratory.

Upon this same principle the Roman Catholic church has introduced the worship of images and pictures, and overlaid the simplicity of the gospel with the tinsel and glare of her pompous ritual. She has cast upon religion such a profusion of ornaments wherewith to deck herself, that she has expired beneath the burden. The measures of the Catholic church, though adopted with the honest design of favoring the operation of the truth, are readily condemned by all Protestants. We might imagine, too, many other measures which would temporarily assist the impression of the truth, and which would yet meet with universal condemnation.

It was Domitian, we believe, who invited some of his senators, on a certain occasion, to sup with him, and when they arrived at his palace, they were ushered into a room hung with black, and against the walls of which were placed coffins, each one, by the dim, blue light of a sulphur lamp placed within it, showing the name of one of the horror-stricken guests. At a signal from the emperor, executioners rushed into the room, each with a drawn sword in his hand. There can be no doubt, that a homily on death, delivered just then, would have produced a wonderful effect upon the audience. But would anyone recommend such measures for giving effect to the truth of man's mortality? Or would anyone, save the preacher and the trumpeter who are said to have actually tried the trick, approve of stationing a man in the belfry of the church to give emphasis, by a blast from his horn, to the preacher's account of the blowing of the archangel's trump? Phosphoric paintings might be drawn upon the walls of the church, which being rendered suddenly visible by the extinguishment of the lights, at the proper point in the preacher's discourse, would most powerfully aid the impression of the truth he was delivering. A thousand devices equally effective, and equally objectionable, might be invented by the exercise of a little ingenuity. Where then shall we draw the line between what is right and what is wrong?

If compelled to run this boundary line, we should make it divide between those measures which might be considered vehicles of the truth, or intended simply to provide for the exhibition of the truth, and those which are designed of themselves to produce an effect. There are various methods in which the truth may be presented, such as from the pulpit, in Bible classes, or Sunday-schools, and in private conversation. Of all such measures, if measures they must be called, those are best which are best adapted to make the truth effective. Means must also be provided for the proper exhibition of truth, such as building

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convenient houses for public worship, collecting children in Sunday-schools, visiting from house to house, forming Bible and other benevolent societies. To this class may be referred also protracted meetings and inquiry meetings. The design of these meetings is simply to collect the people together that they may hear such truths as are deemed suitable to their state of mind. It was never intended that the mere institution of such a meeting, or the act of going to attend upon it, should produce any religious effect. Such arrangements as these may undoubtedly be made if they are fitted to favor the operation of the truth. And this limitation will be found to include the condition that the measures themselves, the bare mechanism of the arrangements for the presentation of the truth, instead of being constructed with the design and the tendency to surprise and captivate the attention, should be so ordered as to attract no notice. The perfection of pulpit eloquence is when the manner of the preacher attracts no attention, and the truth is left to work its unimpeded effect upon the hearer; and so those are the best measures which themselves pass unregarded, and suffer the mind to be entirely occupied with the truth.

## ANXIOUS SEAT

The measures which are peculiar to Mr. Finney and his followers are of a very different class. The anxious seat, for instance, is intended to produce an effect of its own. Its object is not simply to collect in one place those who are in a particular state of mind, that they may be suitably instructed and advised. No, there is supposed to be some wonder-working power in the person's rising before the congregation and taking the assigned place. This measure then, and all that resemble it in its tendency to occupy and excite the mind, we should condemn on scriptural grounds as inexpedient and unauthorized.

The distinction we have here made we think is just and important; and we could urge many reasons why it should be taken as the dividing line between right and wrong measures for promoting religion. But this position might be contested by some, and we are anxious here to reason from premises universally conceded. There are many cases where right and wrong run into each other, and the bounding line between them, like that between neighboring states, is involved in dispute and doubt. We will grant therefore, to save all cavil, the universal truth of the principle that it is right to make use of any measures in our efforts to promote religion that are adapted to aid the truth in its operation upon the minds of men. Here then we are called upon to examine the tendency of the particular measures proposed and insisted by Mr. Finney; and when he shall have worn out these, and, in accordance with his Athenian notion that we must continually find something new, introduced others, we shall be under the necessity of testing them in like manner.

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For reasons already given we shall throw out of consideration inquiry meetings and protracted meetings. We shall first consider what Mr. F. calls the anxious seat. His formal definition of this measure is, "the appointment of some particular seat in the place of meeting, where the anxious may come and be addressed particularly, and be made subjects of prayer and sometimes conversed with individually." Let this definition be well marked. It points out with sufficient distinctness the nature and design of this measure. What then will be the surprise of the reader to learn, that on the same page he implicitly admits that the real design is totally different from the avowed one! In defending this measure from objection, he says, "the design of the anxious seat is undoubtedly philosophical and according to the laws of mind:—it has two bearings." These two bearings are, that "it gets the individual (who is seriously troubled in mind), willing to have the fact known to others;" and secondly, "it uncovers the delusion of the human heart and prevents a great many spurious conversions, by showing those who might otherwise imagine themselves willing to do anything for Christ that in fact they are willing to do nothing."

In defending this measure, who would not have supposed that his arguments would have been drawn from the importance of having those who were troubled in mind collected together that they might "be addressed particularly," etc.? But there is not one word of his defence that has the remotest connection with the avowed object of this measure. He was evidently thrown off his guard; and the plainness with which he thus incautiously reveals the true in distinction from the professed design, is only a new instance to illustrate the difficulty of maintaining a consistent system of deception. We have understood from the beginning the guileful character of this measure, and it has constituted in our minds a strong objection against it; but we had not expected to find so distinct an acknowledgment of it in Mr. Finney's defence.

Can any measures, thus marked by insidiousness, be lawfully employed in the promotion of religion? How careful is the Apostle Paul to inform us that he did "not walk in craftiness;" and when some of his enemies at Corinth charged him with having "caught them with guile," how promptly did he repel the odious accusation! We are told too that in the Savior's lips, "there was found no guile;" but that his enemies used crafty measures to ensnare him. Christian wisdom becomes worldly cunning the moment that it ceases to be united with the artlessness and simplicity of the dove. But we need not multiply arguments to prove that deception can never be lawfully employed in the support and furtherance of the truth. The only difficulty heretofore has been to substantiate the charge of guile against the new measures, and Mr. Finney has saved us all further trouble on this score.

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Deception may seem, for a time, to aid the progress of truth, but its ultimate effects must always be injurious. In the case now under examination, it is easy to foresee the evil. Many will doubtless go to the anxious seat, and finding that no counsels or prayers are offered on their behalf, which might not have been delivered with as much propriety and effect while they occupied their former seats, will perceive that the apparent and professed design of this measure was intended merely as a lure to draw them within the sphere of its real operation. They will feel that they have been deceived, and there is nothing which the mind more instinctively and quickly resents than the least approach to fraud or imposition upon itself—nothing which more surely awakens its unfriendly and hostile feelings. A still larger class will see at once the deception of this measure, and will turn away in disgust from a cause which calls in the aid of such fantastic trickery—a disgust which we should not hesitate to pronounce reasonable, if the conduct which excites it were lawful and right. The best cause imaginable, on trial before a jury, would be prejudiced and probably lost, by any appearance of fraud in the matter or management of it. What impression then must be made respecting religion, when her friends employ such measures, and represent them as essential to the success of the gospel! What multitudes will conclude, and conclude justly, if the sayings and doings of these reformers are true and right, that the cause itself thus supported, must be a bad one! The character of religion is known to the world chiefly from the conduct of its professed friends; and they cannot be too careful, therefore, to pursue such an open and honest course, as will plainly show, that, in the strong consciousness of the merits of their cause, they reject with disdain the tortuous policy and intriguing arts of worldly men.

## FINNEY'S FIRST DEFENCE OF THE ANXIOUS SEAT

The substance of Mr. Finney's first argument in defence of the anxious seat is comprised in the following extract. "When a person is seriously troubled in mind, everybody knows that there is a powerful tendency to try to keep it private that he is so, and it is a great thing to get the individual willing to have the fact known to others. And as soon as you can get him willing to make known his feelings you have accomplished a great deal." The anxious seat he supposes will produce this willingness, will "get him to break away from the chains of pride," and thus "gain an important point towards his conversion."

It is true that there is often found the tendency, here spoken of, to conceal the state of the feelings from public observation. But this is not always the effect of pride. However strange and inconceivable it may be to Mr. Finney, there can be no doubt that there is such a thing as a diffidence, which has its origin in modesty rather than pride. There are those, and they form perhaps a much larger class than he supposes, whose minds shrink from everything like a parade, or public display of feeling. Every refined mind possesses more or less of this retiring delicacy. Its tenderest, most cherished feelings are those which

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are least exposed save to the objects of them; it feels indeed, that its affections would be profaned by being laid open to the stare of vulgar curiosity. It is easy to see how such a mind will be affected by the anxious seat. In proportion ordinarily to the intensesness of the feelings awakened within a man of this mood, will be his aversion to the public exhibition of them, which is demanded. He knows that there is, in every community, a circle of religious gossips, who are always found among the earliest and warmest patrons of the anxious seat, and who attend continually upon it, to satisfy their prurient curiosity, and gather materials for conversation from the disclosures there made of the feelings of their neighbors. And he cannot bear the thought that his most private and sacred emotions should be thus idly bruited about. After a severe struggle of mind, he will decide not to go to the anxious seat, and, as he has been taught to consider this step necessary to his conversion, there is much reason to fear that his decision not to take it will put an end to his seriousness. The spark, which, properly fostered, might have been kindled into a bright and ever-during flame, is thus quenched by a kind of rude and harsh dealing for which the word of God affords no warrant.

There are others, in whom the unwillingness to make known their religious concern proceeds from the dread of ridicule. This dread has a place in most minds, and with some men it constitutes one of the strongest feelings of their nature. There are many young men who could better brave almost any danger than endure the laugh or face the sneer of their thoughtless companions. The religious anxiety of such must become deep and strong, before it will drive them to break through the restraints which this fear imposes upon them. Can it be deemed wise or safe then to expose them unnecessarily to so severe a trial as the anxious seat? This trial may in some cases effect, so far as this is concerned, the desired result, but there is a dreadful risk incurred of repelling some, upon whom the truth had taken hold, to their former state of thoughtless unconcern. And what is the counterbalancing advantage to warrant this risk? Why, the anxious seat, argues Mr. Finney, " gets the individual who is seriously troubled in mind, willing to have the fact known to others; and as soon as you can get him willing to make known his feelings, you have accomplished a great deal."

The true state of the question is here very artfully concealed from view. The real operation of the anxious seat is not to make the individual upon whom it takes effect, willing to have his feelings known to "others;" it is to make him willing to display them before the whole congregation. And this is so far from being "an important point gained towards his conversion," that it should be deprecated as fraught with almost certain evil. It is important that some one or more should be made acquainted with his state of mind, that he may receive the instructions adapted to his case; but it is highly undesirable that the whole community should know it, lest the thought that he is the object of general observation and remark should turn away his mind from the contemplation of the truth,

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and call up an antagonist influence, which shall prevail over that which had begun to work within him. The risk, then, which is involved in the use of this measure, is incurred for the attainment of an end, which is of itself a positive and serious disadvantage.

In this connection, too, we would remark, that the tendency of the anxious seat, and of the whole system of public pledging, voting, etc., or, as Mr. Finney calls it in his Saxon English, "of speaking right out in the meeting," is to obstruct the operation of the truth. They distract the mind and divert it from the truth, by producing a distinct and separate excitement. Suppose an individual, listening to the message of God, feels the truth manifested to his conscience. As the preacher proceeds, the truth takes deeper hold upon him, the penitential tear starts from his eye, and he resolves that he will begin to seek the Lord. When the sermon is closed, his heart still meditates upon the truth he has heard, and his feeling of anxious concern becomes each moment more intense. But now comes the call to the anxious seat. He hears himself exhorted in the most impassioned manner, to exchange the seat he now occupies for another designated one; and the vehemence with which this measure is urged upon him, and the motives and illustrations employed to enforce it, seem to imply that the salvation of his soul depends upon his taking this step. Here is a new subject presented to his mind, and one of a very agitating nature. The divine truth, which was but now occupying his mind, is forced away, while he revolves the question, 'Shall I go or not?' The excitement thus produced, obliterates the impressions which the truth had made, and, but for the consideration we are now about to present, it would then be a matter of small moment whether he went to the anxious seat or not.

## FINNEY'S SECOND ARGUMENT FOR THE ANXIOUS SEAT

The consideration just alluded to, is the tendency of the anxious seat to form and cherish delusive hopes. Mr. Finney has, indeed, assigned as his second argument, and the only additional one to that already examined, in favor of this measure, that its bearing is "to detect deception and delusion, and thus prevent false hopes." This argument would have astonished us beyond measure, had we not ceased to be startled by anything which Mr. Finney can say or do. He has worn out all our susceptibilities of this kind, and no measures from him, in argument or action, however new, could now surprise us. This case is but one out of several similar ones, in which Mr. F. resorts to the forlorn hope of reversing what he knows and feels to be the most formidable objections against him, and changing them into arguments in his favor. As might have been anticipated in every attempt of this kind, he has utterly failed. He supposes that the anxious set operates as a test of character. "Preach," he says "to him (the awakened sinner) and at the moment he thinks he is willing to do anything, -but bring him to the test, call on him to do one thing, to take one step, that shall identify him with the people of God, or cross his pride-his

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pride comes up, and he refuses; his delusion is brought out, and he finds himself a lost sinner still; whereas, if you had not done it he might have gone away flattering himself that he was a Christian."

This argument involves the capital error that no sinner who is truly awakened can refrain from obeying the call to the anxious seat. It assumes that to go to the anxious seat is "to do something for Christ," and that it is impossible for him who refuses to go, to be a Christian. It supposes that these things are true, and that every awakened sinner is ignorant or undiscerning enough to believe them true. Some test of this kind, he says, the church has always found it necessary to have. "In the days of the Apostles, baptism answered this purpose. It held the precise place that the anxious seat does now, as a public manifestation of their (the people's) determination to be Christians." So it appears that baptism, like all other measures, wears itself out, and must be replaced by something new. Will Mr. Finney inform the church how long we must wait before this measure will be again fitted to accomplish the purpose for which the Savior intended it? Though he supposes that the anxious seat occupies "the precise place" that baptism did, we can by no means consent to receive it as an equivalent. Baptism was, indeed, a test of character, since obedience or disobedience was exercised in view of a divine command; but the anxious seat cannot operate thus, except by arrogating to itself a similar authority. We trust that this may be deemed a sufficient answer to Mr. F.'s argument for the anxious seat as a test of character.

## THE ANXIOUS SEAT CREATES FALSE HOPES

The tendency of this measure to foster delusion and create false hopes is very evident. There are some persons who are fond of notoriety, and ever ready to thrust themselves forward on any occasion, or in any manner which will attract to them the notice of others. To such the anxious seat holds out a powerful temptation. This measure, if used at all, must be used without discrimination. It applies the same treatment to all, and does not permit us, according to the apostolic direction, to make a difference, "having compassion on some," "and pulling others out of the fire." While it unduly discourages, and in many cases overwhelms with despair, the timid and diffident, it invites forward the noisy and bustling, who need to be repressed.

Others again will go to the anxious seat, who are not properly awakened, upon whom, indeed, the truth has produced no effect; but they go because they have been persuaded that to do so is "to do something for Christ," and that it will be "an important point gained towards their conversion." Mr. Finney agrees with us in supposing that such public manifestations will often be made by persons who have not the feelings indicated; for however irrational a man's theories may be, he cannot refrain, sometimes, out of

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connections with them, from talking common sense. On one occasion, when he is out of his controversial attitude, he says to his congregation, "perhaps if I should put it to you now, you would all rise up and vote that you were agreed in desiring a revival, and agreed to have it now;" and he then goes on to prove to them, that nevertheless they are not agreed. Doubtless it would be so, and in like manner will many go to the anxious seat, who are not "anxious." And the great majority of all who go will go under the influence of erroneous impressions and wrong excitement. Whatever may be the theory of the anxious seat, in practice it is not used for the purpose of making visible and thus rendering permanent, the impressions made by the truth, nor is such its effect. This is most fully disclosed by Mr. Finney. Those who have been affected by the truth, and who obey the summons to the anxious seat, will not go with the view of making known their state of mind to their spiritual adviser. They will ordinarily make this "pilgrimage to Mecca," because they have been deceived into the belief that it is a necessary step towards their salvation; and they are rendering to Christ an acceptable service by thus attending upon an institution which is as good as baptism, or perhaps a little better. The excitement which draws persons of these different classes to the anxious seats, not being produced by the truth, and yet partaking of a religious character, must tend to conduct the mind to error and delusion. Some, no doubt, who in the heat of the moment, have taken this step before so many witnesses, will feel that they are committed, and rather than be talked of as apostates through the whole congregation, they will be induced to counterfeit a change which they have not experienced. We have not been surprised, therefore, to learn, what is an unquestionable fact, that where this measure has been most used, many hypocrites have been introduced into the church—men professing godliness, but living in the practice of secret wickedness. And a still greater number, through the operation of the same influence, have been led to cherish false hopes. In the mind of an individual who has gone to the anxious seat, an important place will be filled by the desire to come out well in the estimation of the multitude who have looked upon this declaration of his seriousness; and, already too much disposed to judge favorably of himself, he will be thus still more inclined to rest satisfied with insufficient evidences of a gracious change. Every extraneous influence of this kind, which is brought to bear upon a mind engaged in the delicate business of forming an estimate of itself, must tend to mislead and delude it.

The anxious seat, no matter how judiciously managed, is liable to the objection here advanced. It excites the mind and thus urges it forward, at the same time that it thrusts aside the truth, the attractive power of which is alone sufficient to draw it into its proper orbit. But the intrinsic tendency of this measure to lead the mind astray is very greatly enhanced by the manner in which it is conducted by Mr. Finney and his imitators. The ordinary course of proceeding with those who come forward to occupy the anxious seat is on this wise. They are exhorted to submit to God during the course of the prayer which the preacher is about to offer. They are told that this is a work which they can perform of



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themselves. They have only to summon up all their energies, and put forth one Herculean determination of will, and the work is done. A strong pull, as in the case of a dislocated limb, will jerk the heart straight, and all will be well. At the conclusion of the prayer, they are called upon to testify whether they have submitted. All who make this profession, without any further examination, are at once numbered and announced as converts. Sometimes a room, or some separate place, is provided to which they are directed to repair. Those who remain are upbraided for their rebellion, and again urged to energize the submitting volition during another prayer. And this process is continued as long as there is a prospect of its yielding any fruit.

Does it need any argument or illustration to show, that the anxious seat, thus managed, must be a very hot-bed of delusion? The duty here urged upon the sinner is not, as we have shown in our former article, the duty which the Bible urges. We are at no loss to understand why Mr. Finney presents the sinner's duty in this form. Submission seems to be more comprised than some other duties within a single mental act, and more capable of instant performance. Were the sinner directed to repent, it might seem to imply that he should take some little time to think of his sins, and of the Being whom he has offended; or if told to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, he might be led to suppose that he could not exercise this faith until he had called up before his mind the considerations proper to show him his lost condition, and the suitableness of the offered Savior. Repentance and faith, therefore, will not so well answer his purpose. But with submission, he can move the sinner to the instant performance of the duty involved, or, as he says in his Saxon way, can "break him down," "break him down on the spot," "melt him right down clear to the ground, so that he can neither stand nor go." In the mental darkness, consequent upon this unscriptural exhibition of his duty, and while flurried and bewildered by the excitement of the scene, the sinner is to perform the double duty of submitting, and of deciding that he has submitted. Who can doubt that, under these circumstances, multitudes have been led to put forth a mental act, and say to themselves, "There, it is done," and then hold up the hand to tell the preacher they have submitted, while their hearts remain as before, except, indeed, that now the mists of religious delusion are gathering over them? Had this system been designed to lead the sinner, in some plausible way, to self-deception, in what important respect could it have been better adapted than it now is to this purpose?

The test-question propounded to the occupant of the anxious seat is not always made as definite as we have represented. Sometimes it is proposed in as loose and vague a form as this: "Would you not be willing to vote that God should be the Supreme Ruler?" and an affirmative answer to this question has been deemed and proclaimed adequate evidence of submission, and the assenting individual filed off among the "new converts." So unbecoming and foreign from the true nature of religion have been the attempts often

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made by these preachers to produce an excitement; so indecent the anxiety manifested to force upon the anxious sinner some expression or sign which might authorize them to make use of his name to swell their list of converts, that we can liken it only to the manner in which the recruiting sergeant, by the display of drum and fife and banner, and if this will not answer, by the intoxication of his dupe, persuades him to accept a piece of the king's money, and thus binds him to the service and increases his own reward. The chief difference is, that the enlisted soldier soon perceives that he has been caught with guile, and bitterly deplores the consequences of his delusion, but the deceived sinner will, in many instances, remain deceived until he learns his mistake at the bar of his Judge.

## IMMEDIATE ADMISSION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

Lest the proclamation, upon the most slight and insufficient grounds, that the anxious sinner is a convert, should not act with sufficient power upon his sense of character to make him counterfeit a Christian deportment, or deceive himself into the belief that he is a true disciple of Christ, there is provided an additional new measure, the immediate admission to the Lord's Supper, of all who profess themselves converts. It will be at once seen how this measure plays into the rest of the system, and assists the operation of the whole. Mr. Finney, to perfect his system, has but to take one further step, and maintain that no church has the right to discipline any of its members who have been thrown in by the operation of the new measures. This is evidently wanting to complete his plan, which ought to provide some method for retaining his converts in the church, as well as for their easy introduction into it. And why should he hesitate to make this small addition? It is surely more defensible than many other parts of his system. We should not be surprised to find a denial that the "set of old, stiff, dry, cold elders," that have crept into our churches, have any authority to discipline his converts, figuring at large in the neat pattern-card which he issues, of the newest fashion in measures.

Mr. Finney endeavors to show that it is the duty of the young convert to apply immediately for admission to the church, and the duty of the church to yield to this application. In Chatham Street Chapel, it seems, their practice is to propound applicants for a whole month, but the reason of this long delay is, that in a city many strangers will apply, and it is necessary for the session to have opportunity to inquire respecting them. In the country, however, the church will "sin and grieve the Holy Spirit," by debarring from the communion any who apply, "if they are sufficiently instructed on the subject of religion to know what they are doing, and if their general character is such that they can be trusted as to their sincerity and honesty in making a profession." "Great evil," he says, "has been done by this practice of keeping persons out of the church a long time to see if they were Christians." No doubt great evil has been done to the credit of his system, wherever the converts made by it have been thus tried, but this is the only evil that we

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have ever known to result from the practice. Under the ordinary ministrations of the gospel there is much that springs up having the semblance of piety, but without root, so that it soon withers away. And it cannot be doubted that much more than the usual number of these fair-looking but rootless plants will start up in Mr. Finney's forcing-bed. Surely, then, the voice of wisdom and of duty calls upon the church to wait until the blossom, if not the fruit, shall have appeared. When the seeming but deceived convert has been once admitted within the pale of the church, the motives and means of continued self-deception are so greatly multiplied, as to leave but little ground for hope that he will ever be awakened from his false security until the dawning light of another world breaks in upon him. The church also owes a duty to herself in this matter. The addition of unworthy members to her communion, by rendering frequent acts of discipline necessary, will expose her to distraction within, and to scandal without. But these weighty considerations, plainly involving the eternal welfare of individuals and the true prosperity of the church, must all give way to provide for the effectual working of Mr. Finney's system. Better that the church should be filled with the hypocritical and the deluded, than that the new measures should lose their credit.

Many of Mr.F.'s opinions tend to this same point, to provide for smuggling his converts into the church, before they themselves, or the session to whom they apply, can have had full opportunity to judge whether they have undergone a change of heart. "There is no need," says he, "of young converts having or expressing doubts as to their conversion. There is no more need of a person's doubting whether he is now in favor of God's government, than there is for a man to doubt whether he is in favor of one government or another. It is, in fact, on the face of it, absurd for a person to talk of doubting on such a point, if he is intelligent and understands what he is talking about." Though it might perplex a man of plain understanding to conceive how such instruction as this could be reconciled with the scriptural account of the deceitfulness of man's heart, yet its meaning and drift are perfectly intelligible. Its tendency, and it would hardly be uncharitable to say, its design, is to form a bold, swaggering, Peter-like confidence, which may preserve the fresh convert from misgivings of mind during the brief interval of a few hours, or at most days, which must elapse between his professed submission and his reception into the church. The next thing is to impress him with the belief that it is his duty to apply at once for admission to the Lord's Supper, and this is most fully done. He is told that if he waits, "he will probably go halting and stumbling along through life." No, there must be no waiting—drive on, or the tempestuous gust will die away. Then the church must be taught to throw open her doors, and this she is told to do under the pains and penalties of "grieving the Holy Spirit" if she refuse.

Some examination, however, must be held, and the result of this might be to show that many of the applicants had been insufficiently or erroneously instructed in the plan of

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salvation. And see how beautifully Mr. Finney provides for this difficulty. "In examining young converts for admission to the church, their consciences should not be ensnared by examining them too extensively or minutely on doctrinal points." The meaning of the phrase, "too extensively or minutely," may be readily understood from the exposition we have given of Mr. Finney's theological system. The church session who should ask of one of these converts, what is the ground of your hope of salvation? might receive for an answer, "My submission to God:—the world is divided into two great political parties, the one with Satan, the other with God at its head; and I have energized a mighty volition, and resolved to join the latter and vote in the Lord Jesus Christ as governor of the universe."

Suppose the examination to proceed a little further—Have you been led to see the depravity of your heart? "I know nothing of a depraved heart. All I know on this subject is, that ever since Adam sinned, every person begins to sin when he becomes a moral agent." But does not David say, I was shapen in sin? "Yes, but the substance of a conceived fetus cannot be sin, and David only meant that he sinned, when he sinned."

Have you any reason to believe that your soul has been washed in the fountain set open for the remission of sin? "I know nothing of any such operation. I have been taught that it is a great error introduced into the church by the accursed traditions of the elders, to speak as though in religion there occurred anything like the washing off of some defilement."

Upon whom do you rely for strength in the conflict which is before you? "Upon the might of my own arm."

Do you not pray to God to strengthen you and enable you to discharge your duties? "No, it would be an insult to God to pray thus, as though he had commanded me to do what I am not able to perform."

Do you believe that God is all-powerful? "Yes; that is, I believe he can do some things, and others too, if his creatures will not oppose him."

Can he preserve and promote the prosperity of the church? "Yes, by taking advantage of excitements."

The session, somewhat dissatisfied, we may suppose, with this examination, resolve to question the candidate more closely on some of these points. But, 'Hold, hold,' cries Mr. Finney, take care how you ensnare the conscience of this young convert by examining him too extensively or minutely on doctrinal points.

MEASURES TO KEEP FINNEY'S CONVERTS IN THE CHURCH

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The way is thus laid perfectly open for the entrance of his converts into the church. But how shall they be kept there? There are two new measures proposed by him that might seem to aim at this end, but both of them inadequate.

The first is, that they shall be kept in ignorance of the standards of the church they have entered. Young converts, he says, ought to be indoctrinated, but he avowedly excludes from the means of indoctrination, "teaching the catechism." This would answer if he could only keep in the first ones, until he had introduced a majority into every church who should know nothing of the catechism or confession of faith.

The other measure proposed is, that his converts should not be made to "file in behind the old, stiff, dry, cold members and elders." No doubt, if they could be permitted to take the lead and manage all things in their own way, there would be no difficulty. But there is reason to apprehend, that age, combined with Christian experience and clothed with official pre-eminence, will still insist upon its right to direct the young and inexperienced.

Nothing can be more evident than that these new measures are remarkably adapted to form and propagate a false religion. Indeed, we have little doubt that the whole system has originated in a total misconception of the true nature of religion. This charge (( See a pamphlet, published in 1828, entitled, Letters of the Rev. Dr. Beecher and Rev. Mr. Nettleton on the New Measures in promoting Revivals of Religion. This pamphlet contains a masterly discussion of the subject. Though it was written before the new measures had as fully disclosed themselves as now, its allegations have been more than sustained, and all its prophecies of evil time has already converted into history. We fear that the continued press of new publications has crowded this pamphlet out of sight. It deserves more than an ephemeral existence, and we shall be glad if this notice has, in any degree, the effect of calling attention to it. It has never been answered. Mr. Finney, we are told, makes it his rule never to reply to any attacks upon him; it should have been added, save by bitter vituperations from the pulpit. A very convenient principle this. )) was, in substance, alleged against Mr. Finney several years since, and substantiated from the only production which he had then given to the public. It was fully made out, to the conviction, we imagine, of every candid mind that examined the evidences, but its only effect upon Mr. Finney, so far as we can perceive, has been to induce him to throw in an unintelligible paragraph upon the difference between emotion and principle. "One of the first things," he says, "young converts should be taught, is to distinguish between emotion and principle in religion . . . By emotion I mean, that state of mind of which we are conscious, and which we call feeling, an involuntary state of mind that arises of course when we are in certain circumstances, or under certain influences. But these emotions should be carefully distinguished from religious principle. By principle, I do not mean any substance or root or seed or sprout implanted in the soul. But I mean the voluntary

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decision of the mind, the firm determination to act our duty and to obey the will of God, by which a Christian should always be governed."

Does he intend here, by maintaining that our emotions are involuntary, to deny them any moral character? Does he mean to tell us, that the emotion of complacency towards holiness is not an adequate or proper motive for the cultivation of holiness in ourselves? Are all those actions which are prompted by our emotions divested of morality, or, if moral, are they sinful? And, then, what a definition of a principle, as distinguished from an emotion? A voluntary decision of mind? A man decides to do some act because he thinks it right. His decision is a principle. He had stumbled into this arrant nonsense, over his dislike to mental dispositions. But we will not puzzle ourselves or our readers in the attempt further to analyze this mysterious paragraph. Whatever may be its meaning or design, it will not turn aside the charge that the general tendency of Mr. Finney's representations is to give an undue predominance to the imaginative emotions in religion.

## EMOTION: IMAGINATION AND MORAL SENSE

We are susceptible of two very different classes of emotion,—the one connected with the imagination, the other with the moral sense; the one awakened by objects that are grand, terrible, etc., the other called into exercise by the perception of moral qualities. These two kinds of emotion produce widely different effects upon the animal frame. Let a predominant emotion of terror fill the mind and it will fever the blood, quicken the pulse, blanch the cheek, and agitate the whole frame. Each moment that the emotion becomes more intense, the bodily excitement increases, and it may be heightened until life is destroyed by it. But let the mind be occupied with disapprobation of moral evil, and in the intensest degree of this emotion, how feeble in comparison is its effect upon the powers and functions of animal life? This close sympathy of the imaginative emotions with the bodily frame gives them a dangerous pre-eminence. The same object often calls into simultaneous action emotions belonging to both these classes. The contemplation of his sinful life may call up at once in the mind of a man abhorrence of sin and dread of its evil consequences, and there is reason to fear that, without great care, the latter feeling will absorb the former. Now, it is just here that we think Mr. Finney has erred, and gone over into the regions of enthusiastic excitement. He is evidently possessed of an ardent temperament, and the calm and gentle excitement attending the exercise of the moral emotions, disconnected with the imaginative, has not sufficient relish for him. It is comparatively tame and tasteless. For the same reason, he discards as "animal excitement," all the gentler feelings; such as like the "soft and plaintive music of an Eolian harp." spread themselves through the soul and dissolve it in tender sadness or pity. He turns from these to the stronger and more boisterous emotions, which, stirring both soul

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and body like the sound of the trumpet, can yield the luxurious play and revel of intense sensation. When a feeling of this character is awakened by religious objects, though it should swallow up the accompanying emotion inspired by conscience, yet the imaginative mind entertains no doubt of the religious character of the passion which fills and moves it. It is this region, where prevails the awakening din of the storm and tempest of pious passion, that Mr. Finney, as it appears to us, has constructed the chief dwelling-place of religion.

For the proof of this, we appeal to the general tone of swelling extravagance which marks all his sentiments, and to the habitual tenor of his illustrations and instructions. He teaches in various places and ways, that the progress of religion in the heart cannot properly be set forth under the symbol of the growth of "any root or sprout or seed, implanted in the mind." Now it so happens that one of these figures, the growth of a seed, was employed for this very purpose, on more than one occasion, by our Lord himself, and by his apostles. And it must be acknowledged that this is a very fit and instructive emblem, if the progress of religion be dependent on the growth of principle—that is, of that which is the beginning, or which lays the ground for a series of actions, and determines them to be what they are; but inappropriate and deceptive, as he represents it to be, if religion has its origin in a "deep-seated" act of the mind, and for its increase depends of the fitful gusts of passionate fervor.

To the same effect are the many representations which he puts forth, of the repugnance which the Christian will feel when brought into contact with a fellow Christian who is more spiritual than himself. This electric repulsion will take place only when their minds are under the dominion of the imaginative emotions. The Christian, whose religion is the offspring of principle, and has its range among the emotions of the moral sense, will love Christian excellence, and be attracted by it in proportion to its purity and brightness. The effect of greater holiness than his own, whether seen in men, in angels, or in God, will be to increase his admiration and draw him onward in the divine life. This repellent effect of the exhibition of greater piety, Mr. Finney supposes, will take place only in those who are considerably below it. If those around are anywhere "near the mark," it will "kindle and burn" among them, until it has warmed them all up to its own temperature. Hence, in a prayer meeting, if a spiritual man leads, who is "far ahead" of the rest, "his prayer will repel them;" but it "will awaken them if they are not so far behind as to revolt at it and resist it." And again he says, "In the midst of the warm expressions that are flowing forth, let an individual come in who is cold, and pour his cold breath out, like the damp of death, and it will make every Christian that has any feeling, want to get out of the meeting." A precise account this of the operation of a kind of religion which has cut loose from principle and conscience, and surrendered itself to the emotions of the imagination. And in accommodation to this species of religion must all the arrangements of the prayer

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meeting be ordered. "There should be," he says, "but one definite object before the meeting." Forgetful,—perhaps we ought to say, reckless,—of the model our Savior has given us, in which there are as many objects brought before the mind as it contains sentences, he censures and ridicules every prayer which is not confined to a single point. Unless some short passage of Scripture can be found which bears upon this specific point, he says, no portion of the Bible should be read at the meeting. "Do not drag in the Word of God to make up a part of the meeting as a mere matter of form,—this is an insult to God." There must be no "joyful singing." "When singing is introduced in a prayer meeting, the hymns should be short, and so selected as to bring out something solemn, some striking words." There must be no adoration of the Deity.

Yes, incredible as it may appear, Mr. Finney proscribes and burlesques that sublimest, holiest exercise of the human mind, in which it rises to the contemplation of Infinite Excellence, and prostrates itself before it, rehearsing the perfections which it feels it cannot worthily celebrate. "Some men," he says, "will spin out a long prayer in telling God who and what he is!!" The tendency of all this is easily perceived. We have mentioned the correspondence which always takes place between the movements of imaginative emotions and of the animal frame. Mr. Finney contends that the spirit of prayer is, in its very nature and essence, a spirit of agony; and he mentions with commendation a state of mind in which "there is but one way to keep from groaning, and that is by resisting the Holy Ghost." Nay, he brings forward, with very special praise, the case of a man "who prayed until he bled at the nose!!" Another pattern is afforded by a woman, "who got into such a state of mind that she could not live without prayer. She could not rest, day nor night, unless there was somebody praying. Then she would be at ease; but if they ceased, she would shriek with agony." Of himself he says, "Brethren, in my present state of health, I find it impossible to pray as much as I have been in the habit of doing, and continue to preach . . . Now will not you, who are in health, throw yourselves into this work, and bear this burden, and lay yourselves out in prayer?"

## OVER IMAGINATIVE — PREY TO DELUSION

Again, it is well known that persons who are under the dominion of imagination soon become a prey to delusion. All their inward impressions are projected into the form of external realities. The forebodings of mind are to them the shadows of coming events, and they assume the character and authority of prophets. This peculiarity is fully endorsed by Mr. Finney, under the name of "spiritual discernment." There was a woman, in a certain place—almost all his stories of this kind are about women—who "became anxious about sinners, and went to praying for them—and she finally came to her minister and talked with him, and asked him to appoint an anxious meeting, for she felt that one was needed. The minister put her off, for he felt nothing of it. The next week she came



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again, and besought him to appoint an anxious meeting; she knew there would be somebody to come, for she felt as if God was going to pour out his Spirit. He put her off again. And finally she said to him, 'If you don't appoint an anxious meeting I shall die, for there is certainly going to be a revival' The next Sabbath he appointed a meeting." The result of course was, as in all other published predictions of this kind, that the oracle was fulfilled. He had several other stories to the same effect; and the expectation of these women founded on no evidence save that of individual feeling, he calls "spiritual discernment;" and gives warrant to those who possess it to arraign their ministers and elders, and fellow members of the church, as "blind" and "sleepy." "Devoted, praying Christians," he says, "often see these things so clearly, and look so far ahead, as greatly to stumble others. They sometimes almost seem to prophesy." They do indeed not only almost, but altogether, seem to prophesy, and so has many an enthusiast before them. This disposition to put faith in spectral illusions is indeed a very common mark of enthusiasm, and the reason of it is well understood by all who are acquainted with the philosophy of the human feelings.

## A NECESSITY FOR EXCITEMENT

In like contradiction to the true nature of religion, but in perfect keeping with the false notion of it which we suppose Mr. Finney to have adopted, are his opinions respecting the absolute necessity of excitement to the general prosperity of religion in the world, and to its growth in the Christian's heart. "The state of the world is still such, and probably will be till the millennium is fully come, that religion must be mainly promoted by these excitements." His professed theory on this subject is that there must be an alternation of excitement and decline—that after a great religious stir among the people, they will decline and keep on declining "till God can have time so to speak, to shape the course of events so as to produce another excitement,"—then comes another decline, and so on. He represents this same spasmodic action as taking place in each Christian's experience. It is impossible, he thinks, to keep a Christian in such a state as not to do injury to a revival, unless he pass through the process of "breaking down" every few days. "I have never labored," he says, "in revivals in company with any one who could keep in the work and be fit to manage a revival continually, who did not pass through this process of breaking down as often as once in two or three weeks." He adds, "I was surprised to find a few years since that the phrase 'breaking down' was a stumbling block to certain ministers and professors of religion—they laid themselves open to the rebuke administered to Nicodemus, 'Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?'"

We are surprised that any one should have been ignorant of the meaning of this "breaking down." It is very intelligible. In consequence of the law to which we have several times referred, when the imaginative emotions are strongly excited the bodily frame

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sympathizes powerfully with the excitement, and all the chords of the system are so tensely strung that they cannot long bear it. Hence follows reaction, exhaustion, "breaking down." If religion be founded in principle, if its peculiar and cherished emotions be those of the conscience, then can there be no call for this breaking down and jumping up—this cicadic movement. But we have dwelt at sufficient length upon this point. We were anxious to present as complete evidence of the truth of our position as our limits would permit; for we do believe that Mr. Finney's mistaken views of the nature of religion lie at the bottom of his measures, and have given to them their character and form; and that these measures, therefore, wherever used, will tend to propagate a false form of religion.

These measures might have had their origin in the "New divinity," for they are in harmony with the theology as well as the religion of the system. Historical facts, however, have guided us in assigning their origin to erroneous views of religion. The new measures we believe were in full action before the theology of New Haven shed its light upon the world. We recollect that it was matter of surprise to many when the conjunction took place between the coarse, bustling fanaticism of the New Measures, and the refined, intellectual abstractions of the New Divinity. It was a union between Mars and Minerva—unnatural, and boding no good to the church. But our readers will have observed that there is a close and logical connection between Mr. Finney's theology and his measures. The demand created for the one by the other, and the mutual assistance which they render, are so evident, that we will spend no time in the explanation of them.

## DEFENSE OF EDWARDS

There is one argument of Mr. Finney in favor of the new measures which we have not noticed, and to which we should not now allude, but for a purpose which will soon disclose itself. This argument is, in true importance, on a perfect level with that drawn from the small-clothes, wigs, and fur caps. It consists in producing the names of a great number of wise and eminent men who have been prominent in introducing innovations. All this has nothing to do with the question—it is perfectly puerile indeed to introduce it—unless these men introduced such innovations as he contends for. Among these new-measure men he introduces the name of President Edwards. And on several occasions he makes such a use of the name of this great man, as is calculated to leave upon the reader's mind the impression that Edwards had sanctioned his proceedings. He has no right thus to slander the dead, or impose upon the living. It is well known that Davenport, against whose extravagant fanaticism Edwards wrote at length, is redivius in Mr. Finney, and that the same scenes over which he grieved and wept have been re-acted in our day under Mr. Finney's auspices.

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For one of his measures, lay exhortation, he does distinctly claim the authority of Edwards. "So much opposition," he says, "was made to this practice nearly a hundred years ago that President Edwards actually had to take up the subject and write a labored defence of the rights and duties of laymen." We were not surprised by Mr. Finney's ignorance in confounding Mary, Queen of Scots, with "bloody Queen Mary" of England; we do not demand from him historical accuracy; we do not look indeed for anything like a thorough knowledge of any one subject, for, should he obtain it, it would surely pine away and die for want of company. But we were not quite prepared for such ignorance of Edwards's opinions and writings. Can it be ignorance? Charity would dispose us to think so, but we cannot. In the same work from which Mr. Finney has taken long extracts, and to which he often refers, as if familiar with its contents, Edwards makes known with all plainness his opposition to lay exhortation. He expressly condemns all lay teaching which is not "in the way of conversation." He censures the layman "when in a set speech, of design, he directs himself to a multitude, as looking that they should compose themselves to attend to what he has to say . . . and more still, when meetings are appointed on purpose to hear lay persons exhort, and they take it as their business to be speakers." In a published letter of his to a friend, who had erred in this matter, he tells him, "You have lately gone out of the way of your duty, and done that which did not belong to you, in exhorting a public congregation; . . . you ought to do what good you can by private, brotherly, humble admonitions and counsels; but 'tis too much for you to exhort public congregations, or solemnly to set yourself by a set speech, to counsel a room full of people, unless it be children or those that are much your inferiors."

These are the sentiments of Edwards, and it is hardly possible that Mr. Finney should have been unacquainted with them. Whence then this bold misrepresentation? This is one illustration of that unscrupulousness in the use of means for the attainment of his ends, which he too often manifests. With perfect nonchalance, he will make figures, facts, Scripture, everything, bend to the purpose he has in hand. We have often been reminded, while reading his pages, of the calculator who, being applied to, to make some computations, asked his employer with perfect gravity, "On which side, sir, do you wish the balance to come out?"

Another illustration of Mr. F's peculiar facility in this way is at hand, and we will give it. In one of his Lectures, when endeavoring to persuade the people not to contradict the truth preached, by their lives, and, as usual, inflating every sentiment to the utmost degree for the accomplishment of his purpose, he says, "If Jesus Christ were to come and preach, and the church contradict it, it would fail—it has been tried once." But in another Lecture, where he is laboring might and main to prove that every minister will be successful in exact proportion to the amount of wisdom he employs in his ministration, he is met with the objection that Jesus Christ was not successful in his ministry. But,

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reader, you do not know the man if you imagine that this difficulty staggers him at all. Not in the least. In disposing of it he begins by showing that "his ministry was vastly more successful than is generally supposed," and ends by proving that "in fact, he was eminently successful." And no doubt, if his argument required it, he could prove that Christ was neither successful nor unsuccessful. This unscrupulous use of any means that seem to offer present help, whether for the attainment of their objects within the camp or without, was early noted as a peculiar mark of the new-measure men. Dr. Beecher says, in a letter written eight years since, "I do know, as incident to these new measures, there is a spirit of the most marvellous duplicity and double-dealing and lying, surpassing anything which has come up in my day." (( This letter was addressed to the Editor of the Christian Spectator. It seems that there had been some symptoms of a disposition on the part of this Editor, to compromise with the new measures, from a desire to promote the circulation of his work in those regions where these measures were then burning in all their fury. Dr. B. immediately writes this letter of strong remonstrance, in which in the most rousing strain, he exhorts to firm, open and decided resistance. "The more thoroughly we do the work," he says, "of entire demolition of these new measures, the sooner and safer we can conciliate." His opinion of Mr. Finney, at that time, may be gathered from the following extract. "Now, that such a man as he (Mr. Nettleton) should be traduced, and exposed to all manner of evil falsely, in order to save from deserved reprehension such a man as Finney (who, whatever talents or piety he may possess, is as far removed from the talent, wisdom, and judgment, and experience of Nettleton, as any corporal in the French army was removed from the talent and generalship of Bonaparte), is what neither my reason, nor my conscience, nor my heart will endure." These were Dr. Beecher's sentiments in 1827. Since that time he is understood to have patronised the Coporal, when he visited Boston; and but lately he delivered a high eulogy upon him at the West, in the course of which he says, "I have felt the beating of his great, warm heart before God," and professes to have heard more truth from him than from any other man in the same space of time. Dr. B's opinions, expressed in the letter from which we have quoted, profess to have been formed from the most full and accurate acquaintance with facts. Dr. Beecher has an undoubted right to change any of his opinions, but he cannot expect the public to give him their confidence if he makes such changes as this, without rendering a more satisfactory account of them than he has yet given of this one. )) And the heaviness of this accusation will not be much lightened by any one who has been an attentive observer of their movements since.

## DEFENSE OF NEW MEASURES BY THEIR SUCCESS

There only remains to be noticed, the argument for the new measures which Mr. Finney draws from their success. We shall not stop to dispute with him the position which he assumes, that the success of any measure demonstrates its wisdom and excellence. No

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man can maintain the ground which he takes upon this subject, without denying that it forms any part of the plan of God in the government of the world, to bring good out of evil. But there is no need of discussing this matter now. We will grant him the benefit of the criterion. It is too late in the day for the effect of this appeal to success. The time was when an argument of this nature might have been plausibly maintained. Appearances were somewhat in favor of the new measures. At least wherever they were carried, converts were multiplied, and though the churches were distracted, ministers unsettled, and various evils wrought, yet it might have been contended that, on the whole, the balance was in their favor. But it is too late now for Mr. Finney to appeal, in defence of his measures, to the number of converts made by them, to the flourishing state of religion in the western part of New York, where they have been most used, and to the few trivial evils which have been incident to them. Indeed, he seems to have a suspicion that the public possess more information on this subject than they did a few years since, and he pours out his wrathful effusions on the informers. He is animated with a most special dislike to letter-writing. "Some men," he says, "in high standing in the church, have circulated letters which never were printed. Others have had their letters printed and circulated. There seems to have been a system of letter-writing about the country." "If Christians in the United States expect revivals to spread, they must give up writing letters", etc. "If the Church will do all her duty, the millennium may come in this country in three years; but if this writing of letters is to be kept up, etc . . . the curse of God will be on this nation, and that before long." "Go forward. Who would leave such a work and go to writing letters?" "If others choose to publish their slang and stuff, let the Lord's servants keep to their work."

Who will not feel thankful that Jack Cade's day is gone, and a man cannot now be hung "with pen and ink-horn around his neck," for being able to write his name? But thanks to these much abused letter-writers, we have received their testimony, and neither Mr. Finney's assertions nor his ravings will shake the public confidence in it. It is now generally understood that the numerous converts of the new measures have been, in most cases, like the morning cloud and the early dew. In some places, not a half, a fifth, or even a tenth part of them remain. They have early "broken down," and have never got up again. And of those that yet remain, how many are found revelling in the excesses of enthusiastic excitement, ready to start after every new vagary that offers, and mistaking the looming appearances, the "fata morgana" of the falsely refracting atmosphere in which they dwell, for splendid realities! How many more, the chief part of whose religion consists in censuring the established order of things around them, in seeking to innovate upon the decent and orderly solemnities of divine worship, and in condemning as unconverted, or cold and dead, the ministers, elders, and church-members, who refuse to join them! From the very nature of these measures they must encounter the conscientious and decided opposition of many devout Christians, and hence wherever

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they have been introduced, the churches have been distracted by internal dissensions, and in many cases rent asunder. Ministers who have opposed them have been forced to abandon their charges; and those who have yielded to them have been unsettled by their inability to stimulate sufficiently the seared surface of the public mind; so that it is now a difficult matter among the western churches of New York to find a pastor who has been with his present flock more than two or three years.

Change and confusion are the order of the day. New ministers and new measures must be tried, to heighten an excitement already too great to admit of increase, or to produce one where the sensibility has been previously worn out by overaction. Rash and reckless men have everywhere rushed in and pushed matters to extremes, which the originators of these measures did not at first contemplate. Trickery of the most disgusting and revolting character has been employed in the conduct of religious assemblies; and the blasphemous boasts of the revival preachers have been rife throughout the land. Mothers have whipped their children with rods to make them submit to God; and in this have done right, if there be truth in the theology, and fitness in the measures of Mr. Finney. Men of taste and refinement have been driven into scepticism by these frantic absurdities of what claims to be the purest form of religion, or they have sought refuge in other denominations from these disorderly scenes in ours.

Doctrinal errors and fanatical delusions of the wildest kind have started into rank existence. The imposture of Matthias and Perfectionism of New Haven, are monster-growths, in different directions, of this same monster-trunk. (( See the history of Matthias and his Impostures, by Col. William L. Stone. Col. Stone has rendered an important service to the public by the publication of this work. It furnishes a train of facts which will astonish those who have looked upon this noted imposture as a sudden and isolated freak of the human mind. It was our purpose to make copious extracts from this work to illustrate the opinion of its author, that the delusion of Matthias and his victims "originated in the same spirit of fanaticism which has transformed so many Christian communities in the northern and western parts of New York, and states contiguous, into places of moral waste and spiritual desolation." But we must content ourselves with this reference. We hope the work will circulate widely. It furnishes a salutary lesson of warning to all who can learn from the past. )) And no one can tell what new and yet more monstrous growths it will cast out. No form of enthusiasm develops at once, or soon, all its latent tendencies. Though its present course may be comparatively regular and near the truth, no mind can predict in what erratic wanderings it may be subsequently involved. The path of the comet within the limits of the solar system can scarcely be distinguished, by the nicest observations, from the regular orbit of the planet; but it ultimately rushes off into unknown fields of space; and the course of enthusiasm while in sight, like that of the comet, will not suffice to furnish us with the elements of its orbit.

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To what blackness of darkness it may finally rush, we know not. We might fill a volume with describing evils already wrought by the new divinity and new measure system, and then fill many more by collating this system with history, and showing what evils are yet within the limits of its capabilities.

We would not be understood to mean that no good has been produced under the preaching of the new divinity, and the operation of the new measures. They have, doubtless, in some cases, been overruled for good, and been made instrumental in producing true conversions. But we do maintain, for we fully believe it to be true, that the tendency of this system, of all that is peculiar to it as a system of doctrine and of action, is unredeemably bad. We have brought forward every argument which we could find in Mr. Finney's pages, in favor of his reforms, and in canvassing them have presented our own objections. And our readers must now judge between us.

## SPIRIT OF FANATICISM

We have one more objection still to present, and it would alone be sufficient to outweigh all the considerations which Mr. Finney has presented in favor of his measures. We mean the spirit which accompanies them. We shall be under the necessity of giving a much briefer development, and fewer illustrations of this spirit than we had intended, but we shall succeed, we think, in showing that it is the essential spirit of fanaticism.

The first feature of it to which we invite attention, is its coarseness and severity. Mr. Finney's language is habitually low and vulgar. He revels in such Saxonisms as these: "Let hell boil over if it will, and spew out as many devils as there are stones in the pavement." "Look at that sensitive young lady; is she an impenitent sinner? then she only needs to die to be as very a devil as there is in hell." "Devil" and "hell" are, indeed, familiar to him, "as household words." The young men in some of our theological seminaries, he says, "are taught to look upon new measures as if they were the very inventions of the devil. So when they come out, they look about and watch, and start, as if the devil was there." We imagine that all the young men in our seminaries know that there are men who are equal to these things, without any help from the devil. In condemning those who pray, "Lord, these sinners are seeking thee, sorrowing," he says, "It is a LIE."

The men who had promised to pay, each, a yearly sum to the Oneida Institute, but who afterwards refused, on the ground, as one of them assured us, that the pledge under which they subscribed, that a thorough course of instruction should be established in the institution, had been violated, are rated after this manner: "Is this honest? Will such honesty as this get them admitted into Heaven? What! break your promise, and go up and carry a lie in your right hand before God? If you refuse or neglect to fulfil your

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promise, you are a liar, and if you persist in this you shall have your part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone." He subsequently adds, "You cannot pray until you pay that money."

In dealing with impenitent sinners, he will allow no symptoms of compassion or pity. The church, in all her conduct, must show that she "blames them." We must at all times make it plain, by our deportment, that we "take God's part against the sinner." He thinks it a dreadful error even for us to make use of our Savior's language in praying for sinners, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." Every sentence and every term must be charged with fierce accusation against them. To this harsh severity all the tender amenities of social intercourse, and the still more tender charities of the domestic affections, must be sacrificed. He maintains that parents can never pray for their children "in such a way as to have their prayers answered, until they feel that their children are rebels." And he narrates a story to show that no mother can expect her son to be converted, "until she is made to take strong ground against him as a rebel." Had we space for comment here, we might easily show that no spirit can claim fellowship with the gospel of Jesus Christ, which thus runs rough-shod over all the tender sympathies and affections of the human heart. But it is thoroughly consistent with the fierceness of fanatical zeal, which has its play among the stronger passions of our nature, and looks with contempt upon whatever is kind, tender, gentle, or compassionate.

## THEIR EXTRAVAGANCE

The next feature of Mr. Finney's spirit to which we turn, is its extravagance. It is a peculiar mark of the fanatic that every dogma, every little peculiarity to which he is attached, is made to be infallibly certain, and infinitely important. Should he admit anything less than this he would feel the ground sliding from under him. To hold natural sentiments, and express them plainly, and with proper limitations, would be to sink all his advantage and bring himself down to a level with others. His own mind, too, is often in an uneasy and self-doubting state which needs confirmation. Hence for the double purpose of making a strong impression on others, and of strengthening himself, every opinion and sentiment are inflated entirely beyond their natural limits. To quote all the illustrations of this disposition to extravagance which Mr. Finney's lectures afford, would be to cite no inconsiderable portion of the whole volume which contains them. The minutest things are made matters of indispensable necessity. Every rag which he touches is henceforth endowed with the power of working miracles.

He is himself addicted to telling stories and parables from the pulpit to illustrate the truth, and we have no objection to this provided it is done—as Mr. F. says the devil wishes it done—so as to comport with the proper dignity of the pulpit. We have known many



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preachers who excelled in this style of preaching. But Mr.F. is not content with maintaining that this is a good, and for some men, the best way of presenting and enforcing the truth. No, nothing less will satisfy him than that “truths not thus illustrated are generally just as well calculated to convert sinners as a mathematical demonstration.” Many excellent men, who have no taste or turn for this illustrative method of preaching, will be astonished and grieved to learn that to deliver a plain, unvarnished statement of scriptural truth to their congregations, is as hopeless a means of doing good, as to prove to them that two sides of a triangle are greater than the third side.

Again, Mr. Finney is given to extemporaneous preaching, and of course, this is not merely the best, it is the only way of preaching. He can find no resting place for the sole of his foot but on the broad ground that “we never can have the full meaning of the gospel till we throw away our notes.” We do not like forms of prayer, not thinking them adapted to promote the spirit of prayer; and we shall always oppose them, unless they should be found necessary to protect us from such prayers as Mr. Finney is in the habit of offering. But we can by no means agree with him in saying that “forms of prayer are not only absurd in themselves, but they are the very device of the devil.” We have seen many a pious old lady, when she had finished reading a portion of her Bible, placing a piece of paper or a string, or perchance her spectacles, between the leaves, that she might readily open to the place again, and it certainly never occurred to us that this custom was any evidence of want of piety. But Mr. Finney says to all such, “The fact that you fold a leaf or put in a string demonstrates that you read rather as a task than from love or reverence for the Word of God.”

Of the prayers of pious females, who have assembled by themselves without inviting impenitent sinners to be present, he says, “such prayers will do no good—they insult God.” To those who are in the habit of praying with submission to the divine will, he says, “You have no right to put in an if, and say, Lord, if it be thy will, give us thy Holy Spirit; this is to insult God.” Mr. Finney, like all other fanatics, makes additions of his own to the scriptural code of morals. Matthias forbade his disciples the use of pork. Mr. Finney condemns tea, coffee and tobacco, evening parties, ribbons, and many other things. He is just as confident in supporting his false standard, as extravagant too in denouncing those who transgress it, and in launching against them the thunderbolts of divine vengeance, as if it had been communicated to him by express revelation. He says, “if you are not doing these things”—among which he had enumerated the disuse of tea, coffee and tobacco—“and if your soul is not agonized for the poor, benighted heathen, why are you such a hypocrite as to pretend to be a Christian? Why, your profession is an insult to Jesus Christ.”

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Again, he says, "Perhaps he is looking upon it (the use of tobacco) as a small sin," and then proceeds to prove that the sin is as gross as a merchant's clerk would commit in robbing the money drawer. He lifts up his hands in astonishment at an agent who is in the city soliciting funds for some charitable purpose, and actually uses all three of these abominations; and he enters his protest against the Home Missionary Society for aiding churches in which the members use tea, coffee, or tobacco.

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Again, speaking of the ministry as refusing to give up the use of coffee, he cries out, "Is this Christianity? What business have you to use Christ's money for such a purpose?" Matthias surely could not have raved in better style over a delinquent caught in the horrible act of eating a piece of pork.

Of evening parties, even when none but "Christian friends are invited, so as to have it a religious party," he says, "this is the grand device of the devil." These social assemblies are often concluded with prayer:—"now this," he says, "I regard as one of the worst features about them." When there is to be a circle of such parties in a congregation he advises them "to dismiss their minister and let him go and preach where the people would be ready to receive the word and profit by it, and not have him stay and be distressed, and grieved, and killed, by attempting to promote religion among them while they are engaged heart and hand in the service of the devil."

To the young lady who wears "a gaudy ribbon and ornaments upon her dress," he cries, "Take care. You might just as well write on your clothes, No truth in religion." And over this fondness for dress, tight-lacing, etc., he says, "Heaven puts on the robes of mourning, and hell may hold a jubilee."

The man who stands aloof from the temperance cause has "his hands all over red with blood,"—he who drinks cider, beer, or anything else, until "you can smell his breath," is a drunkard—and no slave holder "can be a fit subject for Christian communion and fellowship."

We had marked some twenty other passages, many of them worse than any we have given, but we suppose enough has been furnished to satisfy our readers of Mr. Finney's extravagance.

## SPIRITUAL PRIDE AND ARROGANCE

We turn then, to his spiritual pride and arrogance. We have not been able to find one sentence in his book which wears the semblance of humility. But there is arrogance and assumption beyond anything which it has ever been our fortune previously to encounter. Such a swelling, strutting consciousness of self-importance looks forth from almost every

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page, that we have been compelled again and again to turn from it, not in anger but in pity. Any one who should read his book and believe it, would be led to suppose that until he came forth in the plenitude of his wisdom and goodness to instruct mankind, all had been darkness. The Bible had been misunderstood, and its doctrines perverted; ministers had been preaching "an endless train of fooleries;" the pulpit had never "grappled with mind;" "very little common sense had been exercised about prayer meetings;" everything had been managed in the most ignorant and bungling way. But he comes and all things are set right, or at least would be, if his measures were not opposed. All the wise and good, however, fully agree with him.

We encounter this arrogant and exclusive spirit at the very outset. In his preface he says, "But whatever may be the result of saying the truth as it respects some, I have reason to believe that the great body of praying people will receive and be benefitted by what I have said." Speaking, in one of his Lectures, of "ministers, who by their lives and preaching give evidence to the church, that their object is to do good and win souls to Christ," he says, "This class of ministers will recognize the truth of all that I have said or wish to say." In the full magnitude of a self-constituted bishop of all the churches, fully entitled by his superior wisdom to rebuke with authority all other ministers, he exclaims in another place, "I will never spare ministers from the naked truth." "If the whole church," he says, "as a body had gone to work ten years ago, and continued it, as a few individuals, whom I could name, have done, there would not now be an impenitent sinner in the land." The greatest appearance of modest humility which we have seen in him, is his refusing, on this occasion, to name himself at the head of the "few individuals."

He claims, in no guarded terms, the exclusive approbation of God for his doctrines and measures. "They" (the church) "see that the blessing of God is with those that are thus accused of new measures and innovation." Desirous as he is to monopolize the favor of Heaven, we do not wonder at finding him, in another place, declaring, with great naivete, "I have been pained to see that some men, in giving accounts of revivals, have evidently felt themselves obliged to be particular in detailing the measures used, to avoid the inference that new measures were introduced." And if the accounts of all the revivals that have occurred without any help from the new measures, were as much noised abroad as those aided by them have been, he would be still more "pained" by the more abundant evidence that the symbol of the Divine presence does not shine exclusively upon his camp.

In presenting to his hearers "the consequences of not being filled with the Spirit," he says to them, "You will be much troubled with fears about fanaticism—you will be much disturbed by the measures that are used in revivals; if any measures are adopted that are decided and direct, you will think they are all new, and will be stumbled at them just in

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proportion to your want of spirituality; you will stand and cavil at them, because you are so blind as not to see their adaptedness, while all heaven is rejoicing in them.”

Again, of those that are opposed to “new measures,” to “this new-light preaching,” and to “these evangelists who go about the country preaching,” he says, “Such men will sleep on till they are awakened by the judgment trumpet, without any revival, unless they are willing that God should come in his own way.”

This fanatical claim to the exclusive favor of God, this arrogant identification of all his opinions and measures with the Divine will, is very frequently put forth. After having proved that his system has been greatly prospered, that it has been successful beyond anything the world had yet seen, he says, “If a measure is continually and usually blessed, let the man who thinks he is wiser than God call it in question—take care how you find fault with God.” Of the Cedar-Street Church, in New York, which had taken a decided stand against the new divinity and new measures, or, as Mr. Finney states it, had pursued a course “calculated to excite an unreasonable and groundless suspicion against many ministers who are laboring successfully to promote revivals,” he says, “They may pretend to be mighty pious, and jealous for the honor of God, but God will not believe they are sincere.” Of this same church he afterwards says, in allusion to their requiring an assent to the Confession of Faith from all applicants for admission to the Lord’s Supper, a step which would exclude his converts, unless their consciences should be as elastic as their teacher’s, “No doubt Jesus Christ is angry with such a church, and he will show his displeasure in a way that admits of no mistake, if they do not repent.”

In the prospect of a rupture with France, he tells his people, “No doubt”—it will be observed that he never has any doubt about the divine feelings, when his measures are in question—“No doubt God is holding the rod of war over this nation; the nation is under His displeasure, because the church has conducted in such a manner with respect to revivals.”

The “dear fathers,” who have the training of our young men for the ministry, he thinks unfit for their office, and in this opinion he is perfectly confident that he has “the mind of the Lord.” “Those dear fathers,” he says, “will not, I suppose, see this; and will perhaps think hard of me for saying it; but it is the cause of Christ.” But we have given specimens enough of this offensive self-glorification.

## CENSORIOUSNESS

In close connection with this trait stands his censoriousness. The passages we have already adduced, for other purposes, so far illustrate this disposition, that it will not be necessary to produce many in addition. Of those who have circulated what he calls

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“slandrous reports of revival men and measures,” he says, “It is impossible, from the very laws of their mind, that they should engage in this work of death, this mischief of hell, if they truly loved the cause of Christ.”

“Hell” is with him nothing more nor less than the state prison of his system, to which all are condemned who dissent or doubt. Again he says, “No doubt the devil laughs, if they can laugh in hell, to hear a man pretend to be very much engaged in religion, and a great lover of revivals, and yet all the while on the look-out for fear some new measures should be introduced.” And of prayers which ask “that sinners may have more conviction,” or “that sinners may go home, solemn and tender, and take the subject into consideration,” he says, “All such prayers are just such prayers as the devil wants.”

This is but a common and very vulgar method of cursing. It contains no argument. It would be very easy for his opponents to reply, that the devil is thus exclusively busy among the adversaries to the new opinions and measures, because he is aware that among their friends his work is well enough done without him. And the argument would be as good in the one case as in the other.

Mr. Finney has some mystical notions respecting the “prayer of faith,”—notions in which none, we believe, out of his own coterie agree with him. (( It was our purpose, had our limits permitted, to notice at length his wild opinions on this subject. We the less regret the necessary exclusion of our intended remarks on this topic, as we are able to refer the reader to a very excellent discussion of it, in two lectures, lately published, from the pen of Dr. Richards, of the Auburn Seminary. Since the publication of these lectures, Mr. Finney no doubt has another argument for proving that this venerable servant of Christ is not “such a man as is needed for training our young ministers in these days of excitement and action.” )) But here as elsewhere, he condemns without mercy all dissentients. Having spoken of a public examination at a theological seminary, in the course of which his peculiar opinions on this subject were controverted, he says, “Now, to teach such sentiments as these, is to trifle with the Word of God.” And he declares, that all persons who have not known by experience the truth of his enthusiastic views of this matter, “have great reason to doubt their piety,” and adds, “this is by no means uncharitable.”

Everything which has, at any time, or in any quarter of the land, been said or done that seems adapted to operate to the prejudice of his measures, is dragged into the pulpit, and made the occasion of denunciation against the transgressors. “Some young men in Princeton came out a few years ago with an essay on the evils of revivals.” We cannot see what necessity there was for Mr. Finney to tell the people of Chatham-Street Chapel, that the young men in Princeton, some years before, had published their opposition to the new measures. But he does tell them, and adds, “I should like to know how many of those

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young men have enjoyed revivals among their people, since they have been in the ministry; and if any have, I should like to know whether they have not repented of that piece about the evils of revivals?" We can inform Mr. Finney, that that "piece" affords "no place for repentance," though it should be sought "carefully with tears."

He tells his people again, that "one of the professors in a Presbyterian theological seminary felt it his duty to write a series of letters to Presbyterians [Ed. referring to Samuel Miller, D. D.], which were extensively circulated;" and in these letters the new measures were condemned. This incident is made the occasion of a tirade, in the course of which he breaks out with the exclamation, it is a "shame and a sin that theological professors, who preach but seldom, who are withdrawn from the active duties of the ministry, should sit in their studies, and write their letters, advisory or dictatorial, to ministers and churches who are in the field, and who are in circumstances to judge what needs to be done." And he says it is "dangerous and ridiculous yfor our theological professors, who are withdrawn from the field of combat, to be allowed to dictate in regard to the measures and movements of the church." We shall see whether his theological professorship will put a bridle on his tongue.

It will be seen that no venerableness of years or wisdom or Christian excellence can turn aside the fulminations of his displeasure. To disapprove of his measures, no matter with what otherwise excellent qualities this disapproval may be associated, is to give decisive evidence of wickedness, and not only to offend him, but to insult God. Nor is he ever startled by the number of his victims. All, whether a few individuals or a whole church, who will not fall down and worship the golden image which he has set up, are doomed to the fiery furnace.

The General Assembly, a few years since, issued a Pastoral Letter, in which the new measures were condemned. But neither Mr. Finney's modesty nor his tenderness is at all troubled by the array of the whole church against him. When he saw their pastoral letter he says, "My soul was sick, an unutterable feeling of distress came over my mind, and I felt that God would visit the Presbyterian Church for conduct like this." How to the very life is the fanaticism of this sentence,—this turning from general opposition to solace and strengthen himself in the singular prerogative which he enjoys of a back-door entrance into the court of Heaven, and of unquestioned access to its magazines of wrath.

In a like spirit he says of the "Act and Testimony warfare," that "the blood of millions who will go to hell before the church will get over the shock, will be found in the skirts of the men who have got up and carried on this dreadful contention." And of the General Assembly, that "No doubt there is a jubilee in hell every year about the time of meeting of the General Assembly." Of all ministers, be they few or many, "who will not turn out

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of their tracks to do anything new," he says, "they will grieve the Holy Spirit away, and God will visit them with his curse."

At the close of these extracts, for we must put a period to them from other causes than lack of materials to furnish more like them, we would ask, was there ever a fanatic who was more intelligible in his claim to a close relationship of his own with the Most High, or more indiscriminate and wholesale in his condemnation of those who refused submission to his peculiar dogmas? Was there ever a Dominic who was more exclusive or more fierce?

## IRREVERENCE AND PROFANENESS

There remains one more feature of Mr. Finney's spirit to be noticed, his irreverence and profaneness. This is a topic which we would gladly have avoided. It is painful to us to contemplate this trait of character, and we would not willingly shock the minds of others, as we have been shocked by some of the passages which we must quote under this head. But it is necessary to a correct understanding of the spirit of the new measures, that this feature should be exhibited. It has been seen all along that Mr. Finney's theology is not a barren vine, and we trust it has at the same time been seen, that its fruit is the grapes of Sodom and the clusters of Gomorrah. We will now show what are the practical results of his theory of the divine government; though for reasons just hinted, we shall give no more illustrations under this allegation than are necessary distinctly to sustain it.

In urging the necessity of new measures to the production of revivals, he says, "Perhaps it is not too much to say, that it is impossible for God himself to bring about reformations but by new measures." Here we might pause, for the man who is capable of uttering such a sentence as this, is capable of almost any degree of profaneness. But lest it might be urged that this may be a solitary instance of unpremeditated rashness, we must furnish a few more. He says of a certain class of people that "they seem determined to leave it to God alone to convert the world, and say, If he wants the world converted let him do it. They ought to know," he continues, "that this is impossible: so far as we know, neither God nor man can convert the world without the co-operation of the church."

Again, when speaking of the duties of church members "in regard to politics," he says, "God cannot sustain this free and blessed country, which we love and pray for, unless the church will take right ground." In rebuking those who do not "exhibit their light," he tells them, "God will not take the trouble to keep a light burning that is hid." To cast ridicule upon a certain kind of prayers, he says, that they who offer them pray in such a manner, that "everybody wishes them to stop, and God wishes so too, undoubtedly." And in reference to the subscribers to the New York Evangelist, who have neglected to

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pay in their dues, he says, "Why, it would be disgraceful to God to dwell and have communion with such persons."

We will close these extracts with two passages of a still more extraordinary character. Speaking of the Savior, he says, "He was afraid he should die in the garden before he came to the cross." And yet again, and more astounding still, he says "Jesus Christ when he was praying in the garden, was in such an agony that he sweat as it were great drops of blood, falling down to the ground;—I have never known a person sweat blood, but I have known a person pray till the blood started from the nose"!! Who that has ever dwelt in holy contemplation over the sacred mysteries of his Savior's sufferings, does not feel indignant at this unhallowed, vulgar profanation of them? And what extremes can appall the mind that could perpetrate this without shrinking?

Let it be noted that the spirit which we have here pictured, is not the spirit of Mr. Finney alone. Had it belonged to the man, we should not have troubled ourselves to exhibit it. But it is the spirit of the system, and therefore deserves our careful notice. And it is seen to be, as Dr. Beecher called it eight years ago, "a spirit of fanaticism, of spiritual pride, censoriousness, and insubordination to the order of the gospel." (( See Dr. Beecher's Letter in the pamphlet on New Measures, before referred to. )) It is prurient, bustling and revolutionary—harsh, intolerant and vindictive. Can the tree which produces such fruit be good? The system from which it springs is bad in all its parts, root, trunk, branches, and fruit. The speculative error of its theology and religion is concrete in its measures and spirit. Let it prevail through the church, and the very name revival will be a by-word and a hissing. Already has it produced, we fear, to some extent this deplorable result. Such have already been its effects, that there can be no doubt, if it should affect still larger masses, and be relieved from the opposing influences which have somewhat restrained its outbreakings, it will spread desolation and ruin, and ages yet to come will deplore the waste of God's heritage. To the firm opposition of the friends of truth, in reliance upon the Great Head of the Church, and prayer for His blessing, we look for protection from such disaster.

## CONCLUSION

We have spoken our minds plainly on this subject. We intended from the beginning not to be misunderstood. It is high time that all the friends of pure doctrine and of decent order, in the house of God, should speak plainly. Mr. Finney was kindly and tenderly expostulated with at the commencement of his career. Mr. Nettleton, than whom no one living was better qualified or entitled to give counsel on this subject, discharged fully his duty towards him. Others did the same. But their advice was spurned, their counsels were disregarded. To envy or blindness did he impute their doubts of the propriety of



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his course. He had a light of his own, and by it "he saw a hand they could not see." All the known means of kindness and exhortation have been tried to induce him to abandon his peculiarities, but without success. It is the clear duty of the Church now to meet him and his co-reformers with open and firm opposition. Let us not be deluded with the idea that opposition will exasperate and do harm. Under cover of the silence and inaction which this fear has already produced, this fanaticism has spread, until now twelve thousand copies of such a work as these Lectures on Revivals are called for by its cravings. And there is danger that this spirit will spread still more extensively. The elements of fanaticism exist in the breast of every community, and may be easily called into action by causes which we might be disposed to overlook as contemptible.

We conclude this article, as we did our former, by pointing out to Mr. Finney his duty to leave our church. It is an instructive illustration of the fact that fanaticism debilitates the conscience, that this man can doubt the piety of any one who uses coffee; and call him a cheat, who sends a letter to another on his own business, without paying the postage; while he remains, apparently without remorse, with the sin of broken vows upon him. In this position we leave him before the public. Nor will we withdraw our charges against him until he goes out from among us, for he is not of us.

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