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LETTERS

OF THE

REV. DR. ^{L. W. M. A.} BEECHER AND REV. MR. NETTLETON,

ON THE

“NEW MEASURES”

IN

CONDUCTING REVIVALS OF RELIGION.

WITH A

REVIEW OF A SERMON,

BY NOVANGLUS.

If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength : but wisdom is profitable to direct. Eccles. x. 10.

And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets ; for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. 1 Cor. xiv. 32, 33.

Let all things be done decently, and in order. 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

Also, that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good ; and he that hasteth with his feet sinneth. Prov. xix. 2.

The Lord was not in the earthquake. 1 Kings xix. 11.

Of some have compassion, making a difference ; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire : hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. Jude 22, 23.

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF SEVERAL GENTLEMEN OF THE
CITY OF NEW-YORK.

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Southern District of New-York, ss.

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the seventeenth day of January, A. D. 1828, in the fifty-second year of the Independence of the United States of America, G. & C. Carvill, of the said District, have deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof they claim as proprietors, in the words following, to wit :

Letters of the Rev. Dr. Beecher and Rev. Mr. Nettleton, on the "New Measures" in conducting Revivals of Religion. With a Review of a Sermon, by Novanglus.

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FRED. J. BETTS,
Clerk of the Southern District of New-York.

PREFACE.

THE importance of religion, in each and all of its multiform relations, surpasses the comprehension of mortals, as it can be fully resolved only by the intelligence of God. Other things are known by comparison; but religion is so transcendent, that all other things are less than nothing in the contrast, and worse than nothing in the rivalry of this! Phil. iii. 8. But this view of the matter evinces its importance *in relation merely to men*. It has also a relation to God, its author, patron, and avenger: since, with religion, and its advancement on his footstool, are connected the development of his glory, the honour of his worship, and the venerableness of his name! Precious in his sight are the ark of his covenant, the lustre of his mercy-seat, and the glory of his righteousness.

In this aspect of the subject, the *purity* of religion is as important as religion itself; and for this valid reason, *genuine religion is, strictly speaking, the only religion*. So thought the apostle, when he wrote on this topic to the *Galatian* church, in respect to the influence of certain innovators, who, on pretence of *improving* the religion of Christ, were really adulterating and destroying it.

Every departure from the truth and order of "the glorious gospel of the blessed God," is to be deprecated. It is either a corruption of the gospel, or a fearful *approximation* towards it. *Obsta principiis, resist the beginnings*, is the counsel of wisdom. God would not have given so much instruction on this identical point, as the bible contains, if much had not

been necessary. Many rays are emitted at his order from the natural sun, as the means of making our day; but who, that loves the light, will deem one of them superfluous?

The importance of truth in religion, as that which brightens our moral atmosphere and makes our day, is perhaps more frequently admitted than *the importance of order*. Truth and order are viewed as if so distinct, as to possess almost nothing in common. What is this, but to mistake them? They are near relations, and almost *inseparable* intimates! The value of truth is in subserviency to order; and subjective religion is that influence of truth which, "through the eternal Spirit," restores and establishes order in the mind. Hence a religious man is one who, through the truth, becomes "sober minded;" having his thoughts, *feelings*, motives, and conduct, all *subordinated* to his divine Superior, and *ordered* in all relations according to the will of God. Such a man, in proportion as he is religious and *experienced*, delights in universal order; loves it in individuals and communities, in things sacred and things secular, in the relations of life, domestic, social, civil, and ecclesiastical. To be the enemy of order, is to be the enemy of God: and to seek the advancement of religion by the measures of disorder, is to misunderstand its nature; to exercise zeal at the expense of godliness; and to frustrate the end by the means we adopt to promote it. Unless we would justify the policy of the Jesuit, and imitate the "pious frauds" of the Romish *propaganda*, and so forego our claim to the honour of *protestant* christianity, let us remember that the *end* cannot sanctify or change the moral nature of the *means*; and that all our measures in reli-

gion, are *first* to be sustained in the court of conscience, in regard to the purity of *the means and motives* which they involve, and *then* carried forth into performance to the glory of God. Otherwise, we shall sin in the pursuit of the best ends ; and what is worse to us, be blinded against the truth that would work our correction.

The recent collisions of sentiment, concerning *the proper method of conducting religious revivals*, have but revived a well known controversy. Not only in our own times, but in all ages of the world, have its latent principles been agitated in the visible church. Since the period of the reformation, they have been more frequent and obtrusive. In the time of Luther, the spirit of disorganizing appeared, to disparage the cause of truth, to vex its noble "helpers," and to aid the malice of the exterior foe. The civil agitations of the time of Cromwell, were but the counterpart, perhaps the consequence, of a worse radicalism in the church. The mounds of order were demolished, the friends of order were denounced ; and nothing was *spiritual* that did not disclaim *manhood in understanding*, and enlist in a furious crusade against truth and soberness. Nor have we wanted the experiment in our own country. The times of Edwards and Whitfield witnessed the currency of counterfeits, and were scourged with the principles, from which, as a general mint, the spurious coinage proceeded. Whoever reads with attention *the fourth part* of Edwards on *the revivals in New-England*, will be convinced that our present dissention is itself no novelty : perhaps he will believe also, that if "truth and soberness" be with the sentiments of Edwards on this subject, there is sober and just ground to suspect

the propriety of "means and measures," which, in some respects, are rightly termed "new;" for they have not, till of late, been extensively revived in our times. The concluding part of the life of Brainard inspires the same conviction. Recent events, for a few years seem to betoken *a struggle for principles* in this matter, to which we *may be* fast approaching, and the catastrophe of which we may be equally unable to avert or endure. In the mean time, however, it becomes all parties to be cautious: "Walking circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise." Let us hear to the counsel of apostles, and digest it *prayerfully*, before we act or speak in a cause, of which the right or the wrong may not be *exclusively* on either side. "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." 1 Cor. xi. 31.

Our reasons for the publication of these letters in their present form, are several: a persuasion of their excellence and prospective utility; a regard to the interests of the church in future ages, to whom these documents may be serviceable: their greater convenience in the pamphlet form for the perusal of general readers; a demand from many quarters, where the controversy is in some degree appreciated, or where an interest in its principles begins to be apparent; an anticipation of the *possibility* that there may be *special use* for these letters in their combined state, even before our age has passed away, either in the way of *prevention* or of *cure*; and, especially, a desire to give to all our contemporaries that admonitory counsel against the genius of religious extravagance, which perhaps *some of them* need, and which these letters are deemed *peculiarly* competent to afford: nor will we conceal, among the motives that induce this publica-

tion, a wish for the discrimination of *persons* as connected with *principles*; at least so far as to demonstrate, on the subject of religious revivals, what are, and *what are not*, the views of such excellent and accredited fathers in the church, as those whose names occur as the writers of these letters—names that will, we doubt not, remain when all *combustible* matter shall have passed away, and be held “in everlasting remembrance.” We wish to have *responsibility* understood in relation to its proper subjects; so that if these “means and measures” should still be maintained, and should finally succeed, we may know *whom* to praise, under God, for the wisdom that applied, and the patience that sustained, and the courage that defended them: and if they fail; if they induce desolation to the churches; if their pathway shall hereafter be traced by the burning of their progress; if their consequences *should* prove widely ruinous, and confessedly wrong in the end; if the worst anticipations of these letters should be at last realized, or, possibly, transcended,—*that it may be at least known*, though our heads should then be low in dust, and known by witnesses that we furnished, and that shall survive and faithfully interpret us, *that some were NOT their patrons; and especially that such names as NETTLETON, and BEECHER, and PORTER, to say nothing of others, were not responsible for their devastation!* This has been, especially with *Mr. Nettleton*, as we have understood and believed, one great motive in all the publications; as we know that his mind felt relief, and his conscience enjoyed the solace of peacefulness, when his letters were first published to the world, from the consideration that he had done an important duty,—not, as we believe, without self-de-

nial and real diffidence in other respects, more than would be appreciated, if declared, in the present world. We have no disposition to exalt the man, though we have yet to learn it if there be no difference between flattery and praise; or, if it be wrong to "receive him in the Lord with all gladness, and hold *such* in reputation, or even to esteem them *very highly in love* for their work's sake." Besides, his name is now associated with principles which are endeared to a large and enlightened circle of Christians.

For the sake of religion, we think it of great moment that these letters should be read from the autographs of their writers, or at least from printed copies which confess their names, and can be subjected to their scrutiny and sanction; and especially that *candidates for the ministry* should become *thoroughly* acquainted with them; lest, on the one hand, through ignorance or mistake, they become prejudiced against the very name of *revivals*; or, on the other, so wedded to incorrect principles, and that probably from profound ignorance of the true, that their future influence shall sweep us as with the spirit of the whirlwind, or the death-blast of the sirocco; till all that has been dreaded, as the legitimate result of erroneous principles, shall be visited upon the ruined churches of our land: an evil not to be borne by our children, and which ought to be foreseen, and, if possible, prevented, by the wisdom, the firmness, and the *prayerfulness* of their fathers.

Copy of a Letter to the Rev. Mr. Aikin, of Utica.

ALBANY, Jan. 13, 1827.

MY DEAR BROTHER—Would that I had time and strength to give you particulars on the state of religion in this region and elsewhere. In Albany it is interesting. But I have great fears that the disposition of some zealous Christians round about us, to proclaim it abroad, and to run before their own hearts and the real state of things, will run it out into noise. I have already felt the evil. I find that many are disposed to make ten times as much of the same state of things as I have been in the habit of doing, though they know but a small part of what I have seen in this place. I have met a number of circles of different kinds. Some are rejoicing in hope, and a number anxious for their souls. Various reports have gone out concerning a Revival in Albany, which have done us much mischief. If they would let us alone, I should expect a great work in this city. But among so much noise and bluster of Christians, it promises fair to end in smoke. But after all, the good people here are astonished at our stillness. My opinion is, that had they been ten times as still, they would already have witnessed ten times as much.

Seven years ago, about two thousand souls were hopefully born into the kingdom, in this vicinity, in our own denomination, with comparative stillness. But the times have altered. The kingdom of God now cometh with great observation. Opposition from the world is always to be expected. It is idle for any minister to expect a Revival without it. But when it enters the church of God, the friends of Zion, cannot but take the alarm.

There is doubtless a work of grace in Troy. Many sinners have hopefully been born into the kingdom; but it has been at an awful expense. Many of our first ministers have visited the place, to witness for themselves. Such men as Dr. Griffin, Dr. Porter of Catskill, Dr. Nott, Mr. Tucker, Mr. Cornelius, and many more. Some of them have heard a number of sermons. After giving credit for preaching much truth, they uniformly say, "I never heard the names of God used with such irreverence." Dr. Griffin gave me a number of specimens. I do not wish to retail them. The

church in Troy is greatly divided. Some have taken a dismission; others are consulting neighbouring ministers about the path of duty; and others are beginning to attend worship by themselves.

But the worst is not told. The spirit of denunciation which has grown out of the mode of conducting the revivals at the West, is truly alarming. We do not call in question the genuineness of that revival, or the purity of the motives of those who have been the most active in it. You, doubtless, are reaping and rejoicing in their happy fruits. But the evils to which I allude, are felt by the churches abroad; members of which have gone out to catch the spirit, and have returned, some grieved, others soured, and denouncing ministers, colleges, Theological Seminaries, and have set whole churches by the ears, and kept them in turmoil for months together. Some students in divinity have done more mischief in this way than they can ever repair. I could mention names, but for exposing them. Some ministers and professors of religion have been to Troy, from the surrounding region, on purpose to catch the flame, and have returned home, saying, "We do not want *such* a revival as they have in Troy."

I went down to H—— a short time since, and spent a Sabbath, and there met seven or eight ministers from various parts; and you would be perfectly astonished to hear them tell the troubles which have been introduced into their churches from the western revivals. The church in H—— has been in a complete turmoil all summer long, occasioned by a student in divinity, who had heard Mr. Finney.* He commenced operations to have a revival on the new plan. He found fault with every thing the settled minister was doing, and raised an angry dispute about females praying in promiscuous assemblies. He went about trying to raise a party to "break down the Pastor," as he called it. I cannot be particular—only, before he came to the place, there was some attention, and a few conversions. But a desperate attempt to introduce the practice of females praying with males, raised an angry dispute which lasted all summer. And they had a revival of anger in the church, but no more conversions. This account I had from the lips of the minister of the place, his wife, and session. That you may understand my meaning, I have given this only as a specimen.

* He had been in the western revivals and adopted the new measures. Some say that he had not then heard Mr. F. Of this circumstance I was not informed until *after this letter was written.*

The evil is running in all directions. A number of churches have experienced a revival of anger, wrath, malice, envy, and evil-speaking, without the knowledge of a single conversion,—merely in consequence of a desperate attempt to introduce these new measures. Those ministers and Christians who have heretofore been most and longest acquainted with revivals, are most alarmed at the spirit which has grown out of the revivals of the West. This spirit has, no doubt, greatly deteriorated by transportation. As we now have it, the great contest is among professors of religion—a civil war in Zion—a domestic broil in the household of faith. The friends of Brother Finney are certainly doing him and the cause of Christ great mischief. They seem more anxious to convert ministers and Christians to their peculiarities, than to convert souls to Christ.

It is just such a contest as I have sometimes seen, in its incipient stages, in New-England, between some young revival ministers on the one side, and whole associations of ministers on the other. The young revival ministers, wishing to extend the work into all the churches, in their zeal would enter the limits of settled Pastors and commence their operations, and plead my own example for all their movements; and so the war would begin. And all those ministers who would not yield the reins and sanction their imprudences, would be sure to be proclaimed as enemies to revivals. Being thus defeated, these young ministers would come to me to make their complaints, and to work on my mind the conviction that all those ministers were enemies to myself; whereas the whole evil lay in a violation of all the rules of ministerial order and Christian meekness, or in the inexperience, ignorance, and imprudence of these young ministers. I am sorry to speak thus of my best friends; but it is due to my brethren to say, that those very ministers, who had been thus slandered by my young brethren, have since come to me with tears, urging me to visit their flocks. There is not one of them but would bid me a welcome, and would rejoice in a revival; but they would not invite these young ministers to preach for them who had been so rash in their proceedings, and guilty of slandering them as stupid, and dead, and enemies of revivals. In this manner some of the most promising young revival ministers have run themselves out, and lost the confidence of settled Pastors and Christians in general.

The spirit of denunciation which has grown out of these Western revivals, seems to be owing to the implicit confidence which has been placed in the proceedings of just such young ministers as leaders. They dared not attempt to correct any of their irregularities, for fear of doing mischief, or

of being denounced as enemies to revivals. This I know to be the fact. Brother Finney himself has been scarcely three years in the ministry, and has had no time to look at consequences. He has gone, with all the zeal of a young convert, without a friend to check or guide him. And I have no doubt that he begins with astonishment to look at the evils which are running before him.

The account which his particular friends give of his proceedings, is, in substance, as follows: He has got ministers to agree with him only by "crushing," or "breaking them down."* The method by which he does it, is by creating a necessity, by getting a few individuals in a church to join him, and then all those who will not go all lengths with him are denounced as enemies to revivals; and rather than have such a bad name, one and another falls in to defend him: and then they proclaim what ministers, elders, and men of influence, have been "crushed" or "broken down." This moral influence being increased, others are denounced, in a similar manner, as standing out, and leading sinners to hell. And to get rid of the noise, and save himself, another will "break down." And so they wax hotter and hotter, until the church is fairly split in twain. And now, as for those elders and Christians, who have thus been converted to these measures; some of them are sending out private word to their Christian friends abroad, as follows: "I have been fairly *skinned* by the denunciations of these men, and have ceased to oppose them, to get rid of their noise. But I warn you not to introduce this spirit into your church and society." And so, Brother Finney's supposed friends, men of influence, are sending out word to warn others to beware of the evils which they have experienced. I heartily pity Brother Finney, for I believe him to be a good man, and wishing to do good. But nobody dares tell him that a train of causes is set in operation, and urged on by his own friends, which is likely to ruin his usefulness.

I have become acquainted with some of the young preachers who profess to have taken their stamp from Brother Finney. I do not believe that there is much in them of the original. I am sorry to say, that the spirit which they manifest, and unwittingly diffuse, appears to me to resemble any thing rather than the "wisdom which is from above," or the

* The phrases, "blistered," and "skinned," and "broken down," and "crushed" were coined and are current only among the friends of the new measures. This language I took from their own lips, and was careful to give credit by inverted commas. And yet when the above was read in the Oneida Presbytery, the language sounded so harsh when used by others, that one of these very men remarked that "the man who wrote it was *instigated* by the devil."

“fruits of the Spirit.” The minister who should exhort Christians in the following strain, “Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another,” I fear would be denounced as being far, “very far, behind the spirit of the times.” They do cultivate, and awaken in others, what very much resembles the passion of anger, wrath, malice, envy, and evil speaking. This is the inevitable consequence of their style of preaching. As Dr. Griffin observed, “It sounds like the accredited language of profanity,” or as a pious woman of colour in Troy expressed it, “I do wonder what has got into all the ministers to swear so in the pulpit.”

There is not a minister of my acquaintance, who has visited Troy, and heard a number of sermons, but is alarmed on this subject. I have noticed, that the most pious and devoted Christians, from the revivals where I have been, are the last to fellowship these men and their measures: and that those professors, whose piety has heretofore been considered the most superficial or doubtful, are the first to fall in with both.* I except a few pious persons, who have never witnessed a revival in any form, and are anxious for one. And the reason to my mind is perfectly obvious: it requires nothing but zeal without knowledge.

Whoever has made himself acquainted with the state of things in New-England, near the close of the revival in the days of Whitfield and Edwards, cannot but weep over its likeness to the present. It is affecting that the warm friends of Zion should unwittingly betray her best interests. But so was it then. The young itinerants, in their zeal to extend the work, began to denounce all those settled ministers who would not go all lengths with them. And then those members of churches who loved their pastors would assemble around to defend them; while those who favoured the itinerants assembled around them, and imbibing their spirit, of course lost all confidence in a settled ministry: And so the churches were split in twain. The spirit of God took its flight, and darkness and discord reigned for half a century. And those preachers who had taken the lead, having cultivated such a spirit, began to fall into awful darkness themselves, when they saw the ruin that followed their labours. Some of them made and published their recantations to the world, which are now extant. But it was too late. A retri-

* This fact, so novel and mysterious to many, is easily explained. It is a practical comment on the principle advocated in Mr. Finney's printed sermon.

bution followed. Some few of the young converts were called to order by David Brainard, who passed through Connecticut at that time. But after their recantations these leaders were generally denounced by their own followers. Could Whitfield, and Edwards, and Brainard, and Davenport, now arise from the dead, I have no doubt they would exclaim, "young men, beware! beware!"

In the remarks which I have made, you will understand me. I separate between the efficacy of the measures adopted in the Western revivals, and the evils which have grown out of those measures. Of the former, I have no doubt.* But the latter are certainly calamitous, beyond any thing I ever witnessed. Some of the subjects of these revivals, and others who have been present in them, are scattered over the country far from those scenes of operation. The tidings of the means used are told by those who have never witnessed a revival in any other form. Now, these means are very simple, and just such as every body can use, male and female. Who cannot call his minister stupid and dead, and pray for him by name as such? And if he gets mad, and all the church too, no matter for that; "the more opposition the better." This is certainly the way to have a revival; for it is Mr. Finney's method: And he has the sanction of such men as Mr. Lansing and Aikin, and others. They did not believe in such measures at first; but they have been broken down.

In this way some of our best ministers are slandered, the churches divided, and the efficacy of the regular services of the settled ministry destroyed. Overlooking the fact that the very means employed with wonderful success in the midst of a powerful revival are generally the very worst when carried out of the field of such an excitement. Some students in divinity, and others, in their attempts to imitate Brother Finney, have reminded us of the conduct and success of the seven sons of Sceva, who undertook to imitate Paul, in Acts xix.

The practice of females praying in promiscuous assemblies is considered as absolutely indispensable, so that nothing can possibly be done without it. I am sorry to say that some young men have been considered as acting "amorously foolish" on this subject. The practice itself is very taking with some real Christians, no doubt; but still more

* These revivals would doubtless have been equal, or even far greater, without the new measures. This I know to be the opinion of those ministers at the West, whose age and experience ought to qualify them to be the most competent judges. An attempt to introduce these measures in many places, has manifestly been followed with a blight.

so with the hypocritical and disorganizing part of society. Ministers have been told by such persons that they were too proud to permit females to pray before them; that they never could have a revival until they were willing to come down to that practice. Some of my brethren have been absolutely insulted by females on this subject. Thus many ministers and churches are tormented, and the spirit of a revival utterly destroyed in some places, and prevented in others. If our brethren at the West knew the evils that are felt by settled ministers abroad, I know they could not but weep over them. In the language of Dr. Griffin, "It is complete *radicalism*." The means which it is said have been so successful at the West, have been so caricatured by the *ignobile vulgus* in religion, running before Brother Finney into every city and town, far and near, that I am sure he must labour under prodigious disadvantage in all these places, without shifting the entire mode of his attack. The consciences of the wicked have become more callous than ever. Their language is, "I want no such religion." The hearts of our best ministers, and Christians generally, are grieved and exceedingly alarmed on this subject. It is owing entirely to the disorganizing spirit which has already been introduced into their churches, that ministers, in general, so far as I am acquainted, are afraid to invite Brother Finney, or any who adopt his peculiarities, to preach for them. Some of Brother Finney's younger brethren and friends may attempt to work on his mind the conviction that most of our ministers and churches are enemies to revivals, and unfriendly to himself. I feel it my duty to speak in their behalf. I know it to be a mistake. The best friends of revivals, as they have heretofore witnessed them, are certainly the most afraid to invite him into their churches, and are the most alarmed at the evils that are rising. And, I must say, that his friends are certainly labouring to introduce those very measures, which I have ever regarded as ultimately working ruin to our churches; and against which I have always guarded as ruinous to the character of revivals, as well as to my own usefulness.

For example: whoever introduces the practice of females praying in promiscuous assemblies, let the practice once become general, will ere long find, to his sorrow, that he has made an inlet to other denominations, and entailed an everlasting quarrel on those churches generally. If settled pastors choose to do it, on their own responsibility, so be it. For one, I dare not assume so great a responsibility. In this way churches were once laid waste. And it is by keeping out, and carefully avoiding every thing of this kind, that some

of them have again been built, others kept orderly, and the character of revivals, for *thirty* years past, has been guarded. If the evil be not soon prevented, a generation will arise inheriting all the obliquities of their leaders, not knowing that a revival ever did or can exist, without all those evils. And these evils are destined to be propagated from generation to generation, waxing worse and worse.

The friends of Brother Finney are afraid to interfere to correct any thing, lest they should do mischief, or be denounced as enemies of revivals. "Brother Nettleton, do come into this region and help us; for many things are becoming current among us which I cannot approve. And I can do nothing to correct them, but I am immediately shamed out of it, by being denounced as an enemy to revivals."— Thus my ministerial brethren from the West, whose views accord with my own, have been calling to me, in their letters during the summer past. "There is religion in it, and I dare not touch it. I see the evil, and tremble at the consequences; but what can I do?" This is the language of many of his warmest friends. And so the bad must all be defended with the good. This sentiment adopted, *will certainly ruin revivals*. It is the language of a novice: It is just as the devil would have it. If the friends of revivals dare not correct their own faults, who will do it for them? I know no such policy. I would no more dare defend in the gross, than condemn in the gross. And those who adopt the former practice, will soon be compelled by prevailing corruptions to take along with it the latter. The character of revivals is to be sustained on the same principles as that of churches, or individual Christians. *If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged*. It is not by *covering*, but by *confessing* and *forsaking*, that pure revivals are to prosper. In this manner their character has long been sustained. Things have not been left to run to such lengths in our day. A strong hand has been laid on young converts, old professors, and especially on zealous young ministers, as many of them now living can testify. I have been afraid to kindle fires where there was not some spiritual watchman near, to guard and watch against wildness, for which I might become responsible. Some students in divinity have caught and carried the flame into neighbouring towns and villages, and no doubt have been the means of the salvation of some souls. But I am sorry to say, that some of them have run before me into the most populous places, and have carried their measures so far, and have become so dictatorial and assuming, that, in the opinion of the most judicious and influential ministers of my acquaintance, they have done far more mis-

chief than good. They have pleaded my example for many measures, which, as to time and circumstances, I utterly condemn. Some of the means which I have never dared to employ except in the most interesting crisis of a powerful revival, they have caricatured in such a manner, and raised such prejudices against myself among strangers, that they have caused me much trouble. My plans have been laid to visit many towns and cities, and have been wholly defeated by these students in divinity thus running before me. I have been much grieved, and exceedingly perplexed on this subject. They assume an authority, unwittingly I allow, and adopt measures, which no ordained minister could do, without ruining his usefulness. Evils arising hence have uniformly been arrested in their progress, by my taking the part of settled Pastors among their flocks: at a great expense of feeling, on the part of my young friends, no doubt; but the cause of revivals evidently required it.*

I have been anxiously looking and waiting, all summer long, for such men as yourself and Mr. Lansing, and others most intimately acquainted with Brother Finney, to take hold, with a kind severity, and restore order; but in vain. It is not expected that a powerful revival can exist among imperfect beings without more or less irregularity and opposition; but it is expected that these things will generally subside, and leave the churches in a more peaceful, happy, and flourishing state than ever. This has uniformly been the case, where revivals have prevailed. But irregularities are prevailing so fast, and assuming such a character, in our churches, as infinitely to overbalance the good that is left. These evils, sooner or later, must be corrected. Somebody must speak, or silence will prove our ruin. Fire is an excellent thing in its place, and I am not afraid to see it blaze among briars and thorns; but when I see it kindling where it will ruin fences, and gardens, and houses, and burn up my friends, I cannot be silent.

Had the evil been checked in the commencement, it would

* There is a large class of ignorant well meaning people, who in a revival become officious, and sometimes exceedingly troublesome to settled Pastors. And no evangelist can shake them off without offending them. And if he does not shake them off, he will shake off ministers for a while—and then they will shake him off. These things were named, not as ground of complaint, but only as a clue to correct greater evils, such as owe their origin entirely to a desperate attempt to introduce the new measures. Some ministers at the West, however, instead of taking the hint to correct, have taken it only as a cover to their own incorrigible offspring, inasmuch that ours too are running to them for protection. It is certainly a good riddance to us.

have been an act of kindness to Brother Finney, and great gain to the cause of revivals. He would have found ministers every where bidding him welcome. His help is every where greatly needed. For a settled Pastor, the entire confidence of other ministers would not be so important. But, whoever undertakes to promote revivals, by running through the world, in this age of revivals, must have the entire confidence of settled ministers generally; otherwise he will unsettle ministers, and desolate churches, wherever he goes. Without their hearty co-operation, he will certainly labour at great disadvantage: as if a mariner, steering his ship in a storm at sea, in his zeal should quit the helm, and ply his strength at the mast.

The practice of praying for people by name, in the closet, and the social circle, has no doubt had a beneficial effect. But, as it now exists in many places, it has become, in the eye of the Christian community at large, an engine of public slander in its worst form. I should not dare, in this solemn manner, to arraign a fellow-sinner before a public assembly, without his own particular request, unless my expressions were of the most conciliatory kind. And no Christian minister, whatever his character may be, can adopt the practice without awakening the indignation of the world at large, and of Christians generally, against him. Much less can it be done by any body, and every body, who takes it into his head positively to decide the question, and to tell God and the world, that such and such persons are unconverted. I do not believe, whatever may be the effect upon the individual thus named, that God will regard such a prayer in any other light than as that of a proud, self-righteous Pharisee.

There is another interesting topic that lies near my heart; but the time would fail me to express my views and feelings on the subject. That holy, humble, meek, modest, retiring Form, sometimes called the Spirit of Prayer, and which I have ever regarded as the unfailing precursor of a revival of religion, has been dragged from her closet, and so rudely handled by some of her professed friends, that she has not only lost all her wonted loveliness, but is now stalking the streets in some places stark mad.

Some, in their zeal on the subject of the *prayer of faith*, are tormenting others with their peculiar sentiments, which, if correct, every body sees must equally condemn themselves; thus rendering themselves and their sentiments perfectly ridiculous.

I have given you but an imperfect sketch of my own and the views of our brethren abroad on this subject; but I assure you, as a whole, it is not overdrawn. How to correct

these growing evils, I cannot tell. Our brethren, far and near, some of Brother Finney's best friends at the West not excepted, by letter and otherwise, have long been urging me to lay the subject fully before him. The evils which have existed abroad have certainly been very much concealed from him and his friends. It is certainly right that he should know something of the evils which have run from under him; and the feelings of the friends of Zion at large. I have nothing to say to him in the style of crimination or controversy. I have been too long on the field of battle to be frightened about little things, or to make a man an offender for a word. For Zion's sake, I wish to save Brother Finney from a course which I am confident will greatly retard his usefulness before he knows it. It is no reflection on his talents or piety, that, in his zeal to save souls, he should adopt every measure which promises present success, regardless of consequences; nor, after a fair experiment in so noble a cause, to say, I have pushed some things beyond what they will bear. The most useful lessons are learned by experience.

I wish I had health and strength to show Brother Finney my whole heart on this subject. I have long been wishing to correct some of his peculiarities, that I might invite him into my own field and introduce him to my friends. Aside from feeble health, one consideration only has prevented me from making the attempt. Some of his particular friends are urging him on to the very things which I wish him to drop. I fear that their flattering representations will overrule all that I can say. And having dropped these peculiarities, his labours for a while might be less successful; and then he would resort again to the same experiment. But I can inform him, that the same measures which he has adopted, have been vigorously and obstinately pursued in New-England, against the repeated advice of settled Pastors, and that too, by one of the most powerful and successful ministers that I have ever known, until, confident of his own strength, he quit them all, with this expression, "We will see who will answer by fire"—a most unhappy expression, as he afterwards told me with tears. The result was, he lost his usefulness in our denomination. Some of his spiritual children, now excellent men in the ministry, have never dared to adopt his measures, but have uniformly opposed them. Others, some ministers and laymen, who followed him, became disorganizers; and the leader himself turned Baptist, and soon after died.

There is another method of conducting revivals, which may avoid these difficulties. Settled Pastors occupy nearly the whole field of operation. They have, and ought to have, the entire management in their own congregation. Each

one has a right to pursue his own measures, within his own limits; and no itinerant has any business to interfere or dictate. It will ever be regarded as intermeddling in other men's matters. If they do not choose to invite me into their field, my business is meekly and silently to retire. And I have no right to complain. But many young men are continually violating the rules of ministerial order and Christian propriety in these respects. Impatient to see the temple rise, they are now doing that, which, it appears to me, will tend ultimately, more than any thing else, to defeat the end which they wish to accomplish. They are now pulling down in many places, the very things which I have been helping ministers to build up; and for which I have often received their warmest thanks. It is a sentiment which I have had frequent occasion to repeat to my young brethren in the ministry, "Better forego the prospect of much present good, in your own opinion, than to lose the confidence of settled ministers, without which you cannot be long and extensively useful."

There is, certainly, another and a lawful point of attack on the kingdom of darkness, which, when you have taken, and it is seen, possesses wonderful advantages. It will give no offence to the church of God. It will be sure to rally around you every faithful soldier of the cross. Though it may seem too slow and silent in its operation, yet, being the lawful method of conducting this warfare, it will secure the confidence of ministers and Christians, the consciences of the wicked, and a crown of glory.

And now, Brother, I have ventured to lay before you the subject of my prayers and tears, and I may add, the subject which brought me back to a region which I never expected to visit again. If you discover any thing in this communication unchristian or unkind, you will pardon it. If, in your opinion, it can do no mischief, or will do any possible good, you are at full liberty to show it to Brother Finney, or any of the friends of Zion whom it may concern. We will lay the subject at the feet of our Divine Master, and there will we leave it.

Yours, in the best of bonds,

ASAH EL NETTLETON.

New-York, December 6, 1827. The above letter was written sometime last December, immediately after a second in-

terview with Mr. Finney. From personal conversation with himself, but more particularly with his friends, I learned that they had adopted and defended measures which I have ever regarded as exceedingly calamitous to the cause of revivals.

This letter was written originally as an expression of my own and the views of my brethren generally on this subject, without intending to send it to any one. As my opinion was repeatedly solicited on this subject by the friends of Mr. F. I thought it best to give it in writing. Accordingly this letter was read at different times to not less than twenty ministers, and to some who had adopted the measures in question. In this silent manner I laboured for a number of weeks, hoping to persuade the latter to drop them; but to my surprise, I found that my own name was continually employed to give them sanction; nor was it in my power to prevent this perversion, without publishing my views to the world.

It was concluded that the subject of these new measures, unless they were speedily corrected, must sooner or later come before the Christian public; and as all the ministers who had kindly attempted to interfere to correct them, as ruinous to revivals, had so long and so often had their motives impeached and misrepresented, and been denounced as cold, and stupid, and dead, that they had now ceased to do it; it was also concluded, that by this time, our Western brethren might possibly be ignorant of the views and feelings of the Christian community on this subject. Their long silence might be misconstrued into an acquiescence in those measures. It was well known, however, that New-England as a body, and also the Presbyterian Church as a body, as well as the friends of revivals in general, would not defend the measures in question, nor be responsible for any of the evils which they would certainly occasion.

As preparatory to publishing, and to cut off occasion for after complaints, it was thought best that I should delay no longer sending a communication to some one or more of our brethren in the Oneida Presbytery. The above "document" is one, and only a small part of what I have written to the members of that body. What I have done in laying the subject before them, was not done without the knowledge and approbation of the Watchmen of Israel—the long—the tried—the acknowledged friends of Zion.

The question has often been asked, "Why did not Mr. N. tell Mr. F. his views before he published them to the world?" I have done it in as gentle a manner on paper as I knew how to do it. And I leave it to all the friends of Zion whether I could have chosen a better method.

The report is in extensive circulation, that "Mr. F. had

long been wising to see Mr. N., and that he was willing to sit at his feet and learn.”—This honour, of which I am unworthy, I would have gladly declined, had it been in my power.

If, however, his “wishing to sit at my feet and learn,” was not an after-device to justify himself in correcting nothing, he will not say that I have not taken some care and pains to instruct him. One lesson which was given him is the above letter, which, having been sent to Utica, was duly received, and laid before him and a number of his friends. The pupil who should tell “how willing he was to learn,” and complain to his neighbours that his teacher would not instruct him, would excite little sympathy with the public, if it were known that he was at the same time carrying his lesson in his pocket.

After consultation, some advised to conceal it. But this could not be done. And now in January, for the first time, Mr. F. preached his Sermon in Utica, from these words, “How can two walk together except they be agreed?”

It was afterwards preached in Troy. Some who have talked and written so knowingly on the Sermon, as though Troy were its birth-place, need to be informed that they have travelled out of the “record.” I do not state this because I have adopted their opinion that the contents of a Sermon professedly on the subject of vital piety, cannot be well understood without a knowledge of its origin.

But some who were present and heard the Sermon in Utica, were simple enough to consider it as a personal attack upon the author of this letter. I was immediately informed by persons who were present and heard both the letter and the Sermon, that probably nothing would be corrected—and that arrangements would be made accordingly.

“Though Mr. F. “blazed” and “burned” in his Sermon, as I was informed, yet I did not feel at all “offended.”

But soon the mournful tidings reached my ears, “Mr. Nettleton has lost his mind”—“He is not the man he once was”—“His character has sunk wonderfully”—“The lies came from hell, and the smoke from the bottomless pit.” How these reports were set in circulation, I did not take the trouble to ask. I can still repeat the language of my letter, “I have been too long on the field of battle to be frightened with little things, or to make a man an offender for a word. For Zion’s sake I wish to save Brother F. from a course which I am confident will greatly retard his usefulness before he knows it.”

Had the friends of the new measures been kind enough to inform us of their determination not to renounce them, it might have saved their brethren much painful anxiety and

many fruitless exertions. But let them no longer use the names of their brethren to sanction measures which they have always utterly condemned. They have full liberty to introduce them in their own names and on their own responsibility.

For one I feel bound by all the solemnity attached to the ministerial office, to declare to the Watchmen of Israel my views of the danger of these measures, and in this public and decided manner to clear my conscience from lending my name to sanction their past, their present, or their future calamitous consequences. And the friends of these new measures are invited and earnestly solicited to come out with their names and their defence in this same public and decided manner.

I had long since a copy of this letter corrected for the press. But to cut off occasion for complaint, I publish it entire without those corrections. It has been publicly charged in the Western Recorder with containing false statements. As this is a little out of order, the public will excuse me for not replying to an unknown charge brought by an unknown "Traveller."

He complains, that "the public have been kept in darkness long enough." I think so too. There are a number of such "Travellers" for whose sake I send out this letter, hoping to shed some light on their path.

A. N.

Extract of a Letter from Oneida County, Sept. 6, 1827.

Mr. Finney's sermon, according to the best information I have, was preached at Utica last winter, soon after the reception of Mr. Nettleton's letter to Mr. Aikin. In that letter Mr. Nettleton had pointed out, in a very friendly manner, certain irregularities, which he described as running out from under Mr. Finney into various parts of the country, and which Mr. Nettleton and ministers generally, consider as calamitous in their tendency, and adapted to do great injury to the cause of revivals. The object of the letter did not appear to criminate Mr. Finney, of whom it speaks kindly, and for whom it apologises, but to point out to himself and his most influential friends, in order to their being corrected, such things as, if suffered to proceed, must greatly injure his usefulness. Many ministers and Christians in this region had

seen things of the same general nature as those mentioned in that letter, and had occasionally made them the subject of animadversion, in private conversation, but of no direct public discussion from the press, previous to the publication of the sermon. It was well understood, however, that there were many things accompanying the revivals in this region, of which ministers and Christians, as well as others, were disposed to complain; for which complaints, those ministers and Christians had been arraigned before the world in the *Western Recorder*, and severely censured, as for their coldness and opposition, and taking sides with the enemy. The sermon was afterwards preached in Troy, I am informed, while a complaint was before the Presbytery there, and yet undecided, which related to similar things which were matters of difficulty in that place. The preaching and printing of the sermon, under these circumstances, when taken in connexion with its contents, cannot leave a doubt, I think, on the mind of any impartial reader, that it was designed as a vindication of the things complained of, and such a vindication too, as, if judged sufficient, would and must condemn all those ministers and Christians who complained, as being like the impenitent in their moral feelings, "*walking with the ungodly, because they are agreed.*" It being considered that these circumstances were all well known to Mr. Nettleton when he wrote his remarks, and that the sermon pronounces so severe a condemnation upon the great body of revival ministers in our country, and gives such advice to their people to "shake off their sleepy ministers," as is adapted to encourage every disorganizing measure which any enthusiast might be disposed to adopt, it seems strange to me that any friend of pure revivals should be backward to acknowledge his obligations to Mr. Nettleton for those remarks, or to consider them as unduly severe. And I am especially surprised that any who know these circumstances should represent them as an unprovoked personal attack, or consider them in any other light than as the temperate and appropriate defence of a large majority of the ministers and Christians of our country against the unfounded and injurious charges contained in that sermon, by the lucid exposure of the false principle on which the whole of them are built, and by which they are attempted to be supported.

I think that those who are for stopping the discussion, are in a mistake respecting the true policy in the case. I think much of *Cotton Mather's* warning: "There was a town called Amyclæ, which was ruined by silence. The rulers, because there had been some false alarms, forbade all people, under pain of death, to speak of any enemies approaching

them: so, when the enemies came indeed, no man durst speak of it, and the town was lost. *Corruptions will grow upon the land, and they will gain by silence.* It will be so invidious to do it, no man will dare to speak of the corruptions; and the fate of Amyclæ will come upon the land."

Remarks of Mr. Nettleton on a Sermon by Rev. Mr. Finney.

The following remarks were communicated in a letter from Mr. Nettleton to the Rev. Dr. Spring, of New-York, and published in the Observer. They appear somewhat severe, but we have such confidence in the prudence and better judgment of the writer, that we have no doubt that he thought them necessary.

Durham, N. Y. May 4th, 1827.

My dear Brother—I have read Brother Finney's sermon from the words, "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" The principle on which it rests, is contained in the following sentences:

"If any thing, even upon the same subject, that is far above or below our tone of feeling, is presented; and if our affections remain the same, and refuse to be enlisted and brought to that point, we must feel uninterested, and perhaps grieved and offended. If the subject be exhibited in a light that is below our present tone of feelings, we cannot be interested until it come up to our feelings; if this does not take place, we necessarily remain uninterested. If the subject be presented in a manner that is far above our tone of feeling, and our affections grovel and refuse to rise, it does not fall in with and feed our affections: therefore we cannot be interested; it is enthusiasm to us, we are displeased with the warmth in which our affections refuse to participate; and the farther it is above our temperature, the more are we disgusted. These are truths to which the experience of every man will testify, as they hold good upon every subject, and under all circumstances, and are founded upon principles that are incorporated with the very nature of man."

Now all this, so far as Christians and *true* religion are concerned, I take to be false in theory, contrary to fact, and dangerous in its consequences. Present to the mind of the

Christian, whose *holiness* and flaming zeal shall equal that of Paul, the least degree of holiness in any saint, and he will not be offended, but interested. He would be greatly delighted with even "babes in Christ." And the higher the tone of his piety and holy feeling, the greater will be his delight even "upon the same subject." Now raise the tone of pious feeling up to that of the spirits of just men made perfect, and holy angels, and still they will not lose their interest, "even upon the same subject." They will rejoice even over one sinner that repenteth, far more than will those whose feelings fall to the level of the penitent himself.

Nor is it true that Christians are always better pleased with those, whose tone of feeling is on a level with their own. The least saint on earth loves holiness in others, and rejoices in their growth in grace. And he loves those most whose tone of holy feeling is raised farthest above him; and for the same reason he loves the Saviour more than all. Every child of God, who reads his bible, is far better pleased with the high-toned piety of Job and Daniel and David and Isaiah and Paul, than he is with that of other saints, whose piety falls below theirs, or to the level his own. What Christian can read the memoirs of Edwards and Brainard without deep interest? I know of no Christian that does not read them with far greater interest than he would have done had they exhibited far less of the spirit of Christianity. And though Christians feel condemned by their high-toned piety, yet for this very reason they are not "offended and grieved," but love them the more. Though Christians are not up to the tone of piety exhibited by David and Paul, Edwards and Brainard, yet they are highly delighted, and could walk together with them.

Again: take the example of our Saviour. No Christian on earth is better pleased with any other. Though many of his friends have died and gone to heaven whom he still loves, yet the Christian can say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." The tone of the Saviour's pious and holy feeling is certainly raised far above that of all his followers. Hence, according to the sentiment of the sermon, he could have had no followers while on earth, and can have none now. All his disciples must have been "*displeased* with his warmth." And the higher it rose "above their temperature, the more they must have been *disgusted*."

Present to the mind of the Christian the holy character of God. Is not this subject far above the tone of the feelings of any man? Now, according to the sentiment of the sermon, if our affections are not brought to that point, we must

feel “uninterested—grieved and offended.” According to the principle of his own sermon, Brother Finney and his friends cannot walk with God, for they are not agreed. It must be acknowledged that God has an infinitely higher tone and degree of holy feeling than Brother Finney. He is not “up to it.” Consequently, on his own principles, they cannot be agreed. God is displeased with him, and he with God. Brother Finney must “*necessarily*” be displeased with that high and holy zeal in his Maker, which so infinitely transcends his own:—and the “farther it is above his temperature, the more he will be *disgusted*.” “These are truths,” he observes, “to which the experience of every man will testify, as they hold good upon *every subject* and under all circumstances, and are founded upon principles that are incorporated with the very nature of man.”

Besides: it will follow from his own reasoning, that Brother Finney and those Christians whom he denounces as “cold, stupid, and dead,” actually agree better than himself and his Maker. For the tone of his own feelings is more on a level with that of these stupid Christians, than with the holiness of his Maker. Hence, as he more resembles, he must be better pleased with stupid Christians, than with the Holy Lord God. Hence, too, he must *love* them more than his Maker; that is, he must love the “creature more than the Creator, who is over all, God blessed for ever.”

On the principle of this sermon, it is impossible to love God *supremely*. The Christian will love those imperfect beings best, who most resemble himself; angels still less, and God the least of all. So much for the foundation of this sermon.

On the principles of the Gospel, the following is strictly true: It is an acknowledged fact that Christians love God supremely, the infinite disparity between the tone of their holy and pious feelings notwithstanding. Hence, secondly, Christians will love those Christians most, who have the most of holiness and true zeal: for, the more there are of these, the more they see and admire the image of God in them. Hence, thirdly, Christians will love those revivals best, which have the most of God and true Christian zeal in them; for *true* zeal can never rise higher than holy love, and a due proportion and exercise of all the Christian graces. Hence, fourthly, the more pure revivals are, the more they will unite the hearts of all the true disciples of Christ; for the more pure revivals are, the more lively will be the exercise, and the more just the proportion of the Christian graces; and consequently, the greater the fellowship among the saints. Hence, fifthly, Christians who are really awake to the worth of souls,

and whose graces are in lively exercise, will be extremely careful not to excite needless opposition among saints and sinners; lest they should divide the former, and drive the latter to a returnless distance from the Gospel. The wakeful preacher will be extremely solicitous to give to the work a pure and lovely character, to enstamp the image of Christ—

And make his lineaments divine
In *thought* and *word* and *action* shine.

He will not dash on, regardless of remote consequences; but his vigilance and extreme caution will resemble that of the painter when he said, "I am painting for eternity."

What gives this subject a peculiar interest in my mind is this consideration,—that the parties named in the inspired text on which the sermon is founded, are not saints and sinners, nor warm and cold hearted Christians. But the text itself means, primarily, God and man. How can a holy God and sinful man walk together except they be agreed? Though God is infinitely holy, and man a vile worm, yet they can so agree as to walk together on earth. This is commanded: "Walk before me, and be thou perfect"—"What doth the Lord require of thee, but to *walk* humbly with thy God?" Now this would be impossible for man or angels, on the principle of the sermon. "Enoch walked with God," and so does every saint and babe in Christ; but not on the principle that the tone of his holiness is up to that of his Maker. The Bible enjoins growth in grace, and recognises different degrees of holiness in the saints on earth. Now, on the principle of this sermon, they cannot walk together. Those who bear the most fruit must separate themselves from all others, because they are not up to their standard; and so they must all be divided, according to their standing. For how can two walk together except they come up to the same tone of feeling! On Brother Finney's principle, it is *impossible* to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. There is no union between Christ and his members, and no fellowship of the Spirit. But according to the Bible, true religion is the same in all. That "Wisdom which is from above, first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy," is justified of *all* her children. "But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not and lie not against the truth." "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish." "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." It does not require the same tone of holy feeling to produce harmony in the household of faith. There may be chords in

music, though some notes fall far below others. "And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

There is fellowship among Christians, and unity of the Spirit, while some are far more holy and humble than others. This is correct in theory, and accords with fact. Even the Son of God, with all his burning zeal, never preached or prayed in such a manner as to offend one of his little children. (Luke xvii. 1, 2.)

The standard which Brother Finney has erected by which to judge of the propriety of measures, is that saying of Edwards, to "do what he thought proper in his *best frames*." Before he can plead the example of Edwards, Brother Finney must make the same distinction which Edwards has done, between true and false zeal—true and false affections,—lest himself and his hearers should make a fatal mistake by selecting the *worst* frames of the Christian or hypocrite as their example. This mistake has often been made. It was made by Davenport and his followers, as he afterwards confessed. According to the Bible and Edwards, the Christian's "best frame," is when he has the most exalted views of God, and the lowest of himself; when he has the most of the graces of the Spirit in *harmonious* and lively exercise;—when he has the most of the "spirit, the meekness and gentleness of Christ;"—when he has the least of "God, I thank thee," and the most of "God, be merciful unto me a sinner." Again: the "best frame" of a *preacher*, according to the Bible and Edwards, is when he has the most of the *same graces* in lively exercise, and is most "vigilant," most "gentle unto all men," and most willing to "become all things to all men, if by all means he might save some,"—"in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves,"—"and when he combines most of the *wisdom* of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove."

"Ministers should be like lions to guilty consciences, but like lambs to men's persons. The amiable, Christ-like conversation of such ministers, in *itself* would terrify the consciences of men. If there had been constantly and universally observed such a behaviour as this in itinerant preachers, it would have terrified the consciences of sinners ten times as much as all the invectives and censorious talk there has been concerning particular persons for their opposition, hypocrisy, delusion, and Pharisaism." These, according to the Bible and Edwards, are the "best frames" of the preacher. But, on the principle that the tone of his holiness must equal that of his Maker, no man can *think* himself to be in a "good frame," without having very low thoughts of God, or very

exalted thoughts of himself, or both. This, according to the sermon, is the "best frame." According to his own sermon, Brother Finney must have very low thoughts of God's holiness, or very high thoughts of his own, or both; or he must think himself in a very "bad frame; for "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" Is this the scale on which Brother Finney is labouring to raise others to the tone of his own feelings?

Were not the subject too solemn, I would ask Brother Finney how high he has ascended, and how many he sees above, and how many below him, and at which company he feels the most "grieved and offended." This scale is no new thing. [See 2 Cor. x. 12.] From such a frightful measurement, Paul and his company stood aloof. On this principle, every real Christian must give up his hope, and none but hypocrites, or those much inflated with spiritual pride, would dare take the comfort of the sermon to themselves; and it can never be made to vindicate any thing but false zeal, false affections, and spurious conversions of every kind. Brother Finney's heart must be better than his head, or he is labouring under an awful delusion.

The sermon in question entirely overlooks the nature of true religion. It says not one word, by which we can distinguish between true and false zeal, true and false religion. Indeed it does not seem to hint that there can be any such thing as false zeal and false religion. If the tone of feeling can only be raised to a certain pitch, then all is well. The self-righteous, the hypocrite, and all who are inflated with pride, will certainly be flattered and pleased with such an exhibition; especially if they be very self-righteous and very proud. False affections often rise far higher than those that are genuine: and this every preacher, in seasons of revival, has had occasion to observe and correct. And the reason of their great height is obvious. There are no salutary checks of conscience—no holy, humble exercises, to counteract them in their flight. And they court observation. "A Pharisee's trumpet shall be heard to the town's end, when simplicity walks through the town unseen." If the preacher is not extremely careful to distinguish between true and false affections, the Devil will certainly come in and upset and bring the work into disgrace. False zeal and overgrown spiritual pride will rise up and take the management, and condemn *meekness* and *humility*, and trample upon all the Christian graces, because they are not "up to it."

Matters of fact which have passed under my own observation, might serve as illustration. I have often seen it; and

the preacher who has not been tried with this subject, and learned to correct it, has not got his first lesson.

Leaving out of the question the *nature of true religion*, as Brother Finney has done out of his sermon, there is a sense in which his theory perfectly accords with experience and matters of fact. So far as false zeal and false affections are concerned, the principle of the sermon is correct. A. and B. are very zealous, and extremely self-righteous; and being equally so, they can walk together, for they are agreed. Both having come up to the same tone of feeling with Brother Finney in his sermon,—now they are all agreed, and all pleased, having done all that the preacher required. Now the zeal of A. “strikes far above the tone of feeling” in his fellow, and both are “displeased, grieved, and offended.” B. does not come to the tone of A. and “therefore he cannot be interested; it is enthusiasm—he is displeased with the warmth in which his affections refuse to participate; and the farther it is above his temperature, the more he is disgusted.” The Christian and the hypocrite may come up to the *same tone of feeling*; and yet they cannot walk together, for *other* reasons. The character of their affections differs as widely as light and darkness. And the higher their affections rise, the wider the distance between them. And no tone or degree of feeling can possibly bring them together. Every effort of the preacher to unite them by raising the tone of feeling, will only increase [the difficulty. This, too, accords with experience and matters of fact. Hence, those who adopt the same creed, and belong to the same communion, can have no fellowship. Though they are up to the same tone of feeling, and feel *deeply*, yet they cannot walk together, for they do not feel *alike*. Feelings which are not founded on *correct* theology cannot be *right*. They must *necessarily* be spurious, or merely animal.

Without great care and close discrimination, the preacher will unwittingly justify all the quarrels and divisions in our churches. The church at Corinth valued themselves on their great spirituality, and high attainments in religion. Now on the principle of the sermon in question, their divisions and quarrels could be no evidence to the contrary, but much in their favour. Each one esteeming others worse than himself, would conclude that the whole difficulty lay in their not coming up to the tone of his own feelings. And this sermon would have confirmed them all in their good opinion of themselves. But *Paul* told them that the very contrary was true. “For whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are yet not carnal, and walk as men.” Without the same care, the preacher will condemn others for keeping the

unity of the spirit in the bond of peace; and for "being of one accord and of one mind." *That peace*, and harmony, and order, in which Paul so much rejoiced, will be disturbed and broken and trampled upon, by disorganizing spiritual pride, under a pretence that all are "cold, and carnal, and stupid, and dead, and not up to the spirit of the times." All who are thus inflated, will take the advantage of this sermon, and be sure to construe all opposition to their own disorganizing movements and measures, into an evidence of superior piety in themselves. And all false converts, and others inflated with spiritual pride, will join them if great care be not taken to discriminate between true and false zeal, and to give the distinguishing marks of both. Spiritual pride will often court opposition, and glory in it, and sometimes adopt the sentiment, "The more opposition the better."

A number of examples might be given as illustration. One man has been for some time past under process of discipline for the following offence: In his great zeal for a revival, at a public meeting, among other things, he called his excellent pastor the "head Achan," and said that "his character was as *black as hell*." Though he has nothing against his minister, yet he justifies himself entirely on the principle of the sermon in question; and says that "he did it to have a revival,"—not even suspecting that there can be any such thing as false zeal and overgrown spiritual pride, leading him to adopt measures which every humble Christian and all the true friends of revivals will certainly condemn. The result is an unanimous vote of excommunication.

In the course of the trial this fact has been clearly developed: that the *character* of the religious excitement which he wishes to promote, is just such as all the church and all the revival ministers of my acquaintance, would deplore as the greatest calamity.

All who are acquainted with the history of facts on the subject, know that it was on the principles of the sermon in question, that the revival was run out in the time of Edwards, and in Kentucky and Tennessee rising of twenty years since. And all those ministers who do not discriminate between true and false zeal, true and false affections, in their preaching and conversation, and make that difference and hold it up to the view of the world, if possible, clear as the sun, heartily approving of the one, and as heartily and publicly condemning the other, will turn out to be the greatest traitors to the cause of revivals. They become responsible not only for the sentiment in question, but also for all the corruptions which prevail in consequence of this neglect. The neglect of ministers to correct these evils for fear of do-

ing mischief, or of being denounced as carnal and cold-hearted, or as enemies to revivals, is extremely puerile and wicked. On the same principle they must not attempt to correct intemperance and profane swearing in church members, lest they should be ranked among the wicked as infidels and enemies to Christianity. The sentiment in question would, if carried out into all its consequences, defend every abomination in religion that could be named. It would soon come to this: that the only evidence that ministers are cold, and carnal, and stupid, and dead, is, that they cannot approve of every art, and trick, and abominable practice in laymen, women, and children, in their attempts to promote a revival. And their approbation of all these abominations, would be taken as a good sign and as an evidence that they are *awake*. Whereas none but carnal and cold-hearted ministers would be influenced by such mean motives. It is only a trick of the Devil, to frighten the watchman of Israel from his post, that he may get possession of it himself; or, what he would like still better, by such base motives to entoil and enlist him in his service, by compelling him to adopt his own measures. So did not Paul. His two epistles to the Corinthians contain little else than an humbling disclosure of abominable practices and quarrels about men and measures in promoting a revival. So did not Edwards. Though he was denounced at first, he could not be frightened; but frightened his denouncers, some of them at least, into a public recantation. A denouncing spirit is that with which *real* Christians have no fellowship, and are bound to shun.

Without regard to the admonition, "take heed to thyself," the preacher will be in danger of trampling upon the Divine direction, "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves."

"The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men." Be kindly affectioned, be pitiful, be courteous." He will be in great danger of condemning the "meekness and gentleness of Christ," under the names of "carnal policy" and "hypocritical suavity of manner." The preacher should be extremely cautious what he says against "wisdom and prudence," as a mark of "puffing up" in his brethren; lest he trample upon the authority of his Divine Master, in the precept given him upon the same point:—"Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore *wise* as serpents and *harmless* as doves." His precept is founded on the fact that wicked men may become more offended with what is *wrong* in manner, than with what is *right* in matter. Hence the preacher may lose their consciences, and the Devil has gained the victory. If the wick-

ed *will* oppose, it becomes us to be careful how we furnish them with successful weapons against us. If we regard the direction of Christ, even though they rage, we may still keep our hold upon their consciences; and so long as we can do this, we need not despair of the victory. But when the preacher has lost the wisdom of the serpent and the harmlessness of the dove, the contest will end in a sham-fight, and the sooner he quits the field the better.

Paul would allow none to be teachers but those of "full age, who by reason of use have their senses exercised to *discern* both good and evil." Hence he would not license young converts to preach. "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into condemnation, reproach, and the snare of the devil." So far as his *message* was concerned, the apostle himself went forth, "saluting no man by the way"—"not as pleasing men." Aside from the *simple truth* of that message, no man was ever more yielding and flexible in manner and measures. "Give no offence, neither to the Jews, neither to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God." "Even as *I please all men in all things*—that they may be saved." "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." Was this "carnal policy?" and was Paul "in a very *cold* state when he wrote that?"

The wisdom of the measures adopted and recommended by Paul, appear from the fact that sinners may be more offended with what is *wrong* in manner, than with what is *right* in matter. If the preacher does not hold a balance between conscience and depravity, he can do nothing. The very fact that the unrenewed heart is so opposed to God and the Gospel, has by some been assigned as a reason for stirring up all its opposition. Whereas, aside from the simple exhibition of divine *truth*, Paul adopted a method directly the opposite. If the vigilance of human depravity should exceed the vigilance of the preacher in his manner and measures, by this very means he will quiet the consciences of his hearers. Regardless of his manner, Paul would have lost his hold on the consciences of sinners, and needlessly and wickedly have sent his hearers to a returnless distance from the Gospel. This made him exceedingly careful "lest he should hinder the Gospel of Christ." Since mankind *will* oppose, we should be careful not to put weapons of successful defence into their hands. While they oppose, we should be careful to keep their consciences on our side.

A powerful religious excitement badly conducted, has ever been considered by the most experienced ministers and best friends of revivals, to be a great calamity. Without close discrimination, an attempt to raise the tone of religious feel-

ing will do infinite mischief. This was the manner of false teachers. "They zealously affect you, but not well." It will be like that of Paul before his conversion, and like that of the Jews who were never converted, "a zeal of God but not according to knowledge." The driving will become like the driving of Jehu, "Come see my zeal for the Lord." The storm, and earthquake, and fire, are dreadful: but God is not there.

The design of these remarks is to show the infinite importance of distinguishing between true and false zeal,—true and false affections.

On reading the sermon in question, I was reminded of the repeated complaints which for some time past I have heard from the most judicious, experienced, and best revival ministers in the West; the substance of which is as follows: "There are various errors in the mode of conducting revivals in this region, which ought to be distinctly pointed out. That on the prayer of faith. This talking to God as a man talks to his neighbour, is truly shocking—telling the Lord a long story about A. or B., and apparently with no other intent than to produce a kind of stage effect upon the individual in question, or upon the audience generally. This mouthing of words; those deep and hollow tones, all indicative that the person is speaking into the ears of man, and not to God. I say nothing of the nature of the petitions often presented; but *the awful irreverence of the manner!* How strange that good men should so far forget themselves, as evidently to play tricks in the presence of the great God."

"I have often been struck with this circumstance in the mode of preaching, that nothing was heard of the danger of a spurious conversion. For months together, the thought never seemed to be glanced at, that there was any such thing as a satanic influence in the form of religion, but only as openly waging war against all religion. Such a character as an enthusiastic hypocrite, or a self-deceived person, seemed never to be once dreamed of. The only danger in the way of salvation was *coldness, deadness, and rank opposition*. On no occasion did the eye ever seem to be turned to another quarter in the heavens."

The last paragraph contains the thought to which I allude. The sermon in question bears striking marks of the same character. It is an important part of a preacher's duty in a season of powerful revival, to discriminate between true and false conversion. Without this, every discerning Christian knows that the work will rapidly degenerate. The most flaming spiritual pride will be taken for the highest moral excellence, and will rise up and take the lead.

Preachers who have not guarded well this avenue in seasons of powerful excitement, have always done more to arrest, and disgrace, and run out revivals, than all the cold-hearted professors and open enemies of religion together. It was this neglect in some zealous preachers, that run out the revival in the days of Edwards, and which led him to write his *Treatise on the Religious Affections*.

Edwards observes, "It is by the mixture of counterfeit religion with true, not discerned and distinguished, that the Devil has had the greatest advantage against the kingdom of Christ. By this he prevailed against New-England to quench the love and spoil the joys of her espousals, about an hundred years ago. By this the Devil has prevailed against the late revival in New-England, so promising in its beginning.* By this he has foiled us, and the daughter of Zion now lies on the ground. I have seen the Devil prevail in the same way against two revivals in this country."

"After religion has revived in the church of God, and enemies appear, people that are engaged to defend its cause, are commonly most exposed where they are least sensible of danger. While they are wholly intent upon the opposition that appears openly before them, to make head against that, and neglect carefully to look all around them, the Devil comes behind them, and gives them a fatal stab unseen; and has an opportunity to give a more home stroke, and wound the deeper, because he strikes at his leisure, and according to his pleasure, being obstructed by no guard or resistance."

"And so it is likely ever to be in the church whenever religion revives remarkably, till *we have learned to distinguish between true and false religion*, between saving affections and experiences, and those manifold fair shows, and glistening appearances, by which they are counterfeited; the consequences of which, when they are not distinguished, are often *inexpressibly dreadful*. By this means, the Devil gratifies himself, by bringing it to pass, that that should be offered to God, by multitudes, under a notion of a pleasing, acceptable service to him, that is, indeed, above all things abominable to him. By this means he deceives great multitudes

* He means the revival in 1740, and one about 1637. It is worthy of remark, that ever since the time of Luther, there has been, once in about 80 or 100 years, a violent assault of this kind upon the church, which has proved successful to a considerable extent. That period is just about sufficient for those who have witnessed one such event to pass off the stage, with their children who have heard their fathers tell it, and a generation to arise ignorant of Satan's devices, against whom they may be again successfully put in practice.

about the state of their souls; making them think they are something, when they are nothing; and so eternally undoes them; and not only so, but establishes many in a strong confidence of their eminent holiness, who are in God's sight some of the vilest of hypocrites. By this means Satan brings it to pass, that men work wickedness under a notion of doing God service, and to sin without restraint, *yea, with earnest forwardness and zeal, and with all their might.* By this means he brings in even the friends of religion, *insensibly to themselves, to do the work of enemies,* by destroying religion in a far more effectual manner than open enemies can do, under a *notion of advancing it.* By this means the Devil scatters the flock of Christ, and sets them one against another, and that with great heat of spirit, under a notion of zeal for God; and religion by degrees degenerates into vain jangling. And in the midst of this confusion, the Devil has great opportunity to advance his own interest, and make it strong in ways innumerable, and get the government of all into his own hands, and work his own will." Thus much for Edwards.

If ever there was a call for close discrimination between true and false zeal, true and false conversion, the subject of the sermon in question demanded it. And without this discrimination, the preacher could not touch the spirit of his text, nor accomplish any important object. For, the least spark of grace, the lowest tone of right feeling or true love, is in unison with the feelings of all the saints on earth, in heaven, and with those of God himself. And possessing that love, they can all walk together. Whereas, whatever of eloquence or flaming zeal he might possess without it, Paul would pronounce himself "nothing;" and with it, the least saint on earth an heir of everlasting salvation.

It is of the highest importance that the preacher present to his hearers the distinguishing marks of true religion, the graces of the Spirit, in all their native loveliness; and at the same time, that he detect and expose every counterfeit. Having done this, he may labour with all his might to *bring them up to the highest possible tone.* He may exhort them to the exercise of "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; and to be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another. That they walk with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. That they let nothing be done through strife, or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves. Let all bitterness, and wrath,

and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Likewise ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility." He may exhort them to "put on, as the elect of God,—and be covered all over with these shining graces,—bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.—And above all things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." He may set their hearts all on fire with that heavenly Form—"so pure, so peaceable, so gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy:"—that is so "long-suffering, so kind, envieth not, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, and never faileth." These are the prevailing characteristics of a revival of religion. Their absence cannot be compensated by flaming zeal.

Nor is it sufficient that these and all other Christian graces be exhibited, and their counterfeit exposed in theory alone. For so hypocrites will claim them all as their own. Profession is not principle. "By their fruits ye shall know them." "Who is a wise man? Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom."

"Easy indeed it were to reach
A mansion in the courts above,
If watery floods and fluent speech,
Might serve instead of faith and love."

The most important part of the preacher's duty is, to exhibit the evidence of their existence in the heart, by corresponding actions in the life. And this, too, by being "ensamples to the flock;" and by carefully copying the example of his Divine Master, "beseeching them by the *meekness* and *gentleness* of Christ."

As the time would fail me to complete the subject, Edwards may, in part, supply this deficiency in Brother Finney's sermon. I would therefore take this opportunity to recommend to all young converts a careful perusal of his account of the revival in New-England, *fourth part*, and what he says on the marks of true humility and spiritual pride, of which the following is a brief abstract:

Spiritual pride disposes to speak much of the faults of

others, and with bitterness, or with levity and an air of contempt. Pure Christian humility rather disposes to be silent about them, or to speak of them with grief and pity. Spiritual pride is very apt to suspect others; an humble saint is most jealous of himself. The spiritually proud person is apt to find fault with others that are low in grace, and to be much in observing how cold and dead they be, and crying out of them and sharply reprovng them for it. The humble Christian has so much to do at home, with his own heart, that he is not apt to be very busy with the hearts of others, and is apt to esteem others better than himself, and to take most notice of what is good in them, while he takes most notice of what is wrong in himself. In his clearest discoveries of God's glory, and in his most rapturous frames, he is most overwhelmed with a sense of his own vileness, and feels the deepest self-abasement.

It is a mark of spiritual pride, when any are disposed to speak of what they see amiss in others, in the most harsh, severe, and terrible language; saying of their opinions, or conduct, or advice, of their coldness, their silence, their caution, their moderation, and their prudence, that they are from the *devil*, or from *hell*; that such a thing is devilish, or hellish, or cursed, and the like; so that the words *devil* and *hell* are almost continually in their mouths. And especially, when such language is used towards ministers of the gospel, and others whose age or station entitles them to particular respect. Humility leads the Christian to treat others that are in fault with meekness and gentleness, as Christ did his disciples, and particularly Peter, when he had shamefully denied him.

Spiritual pride disposes to affect singularity in manner and appearance, for the purpose of attracting observation. Humility disposes the Christian to avoid every thing which is likely to draw upon him the observation of others, and to be singular only where he cannot be otherwise without the neglect of a plain and positive duty. Spiritual pride commonly occasions a certain *stiffness* and inflexibility in persons, in their own judgment and their own ways. Humility inclines to a yielding, pliable disposition. The humble Christian is disposed to yield to others, and conform to them, and please them, in every thing but sin.

Spiritual pride disposes persons to stand at a distance from others, as better than they. The humble Christian is ready to look upon himself as more unworthy than others, yet he does not love the appearance of an open separation from visible Christians; and will carefully shun every thing that looks like distinguishing himself as more humble, or in any respect better than others.

The eminently humble Christian is clothed with lowliness, mildness, meekness, gentleness of spirit and behaviour, and with a soft, sweet, condescending, winning air and deportment. Humility has no such thing as roughness, or contempt, or fierceness, or bitterness, in its nature, which things are marks of spiritual pride; as are also invectives, and censorious talk concerning particular persons for their opposition, hypocrisy, delusion, pharisaism, and the like.

Spiritual pride takes great notice of opposition and injuries that are received, and is often speaking of them. Humility disposes a person rather to be, like his blessed Lord when reviled, dumb, not opening his mouth. The more clamorous and furious the world is against him, the more silent and still will he be.

Spiritual pride leads those who are reproached to be more bold and confident, and to go greater lengths in that for which they are blamed. Humility leads to improve the reproaches of enemies as an occasion of serious self-examination.

Spiritual pride leads to a certain unsuitable and self-confident boldness before God and man. Humility leads to the opposite.

Assuming is a mark of spiritual pride: putting on the airs of a master, to whom it belongs to dictate. Humility leads the Christian to take the place of a learner, to be "swift to hear, slow to speak." The eminently humble Christian thinks he wants help from every body, whereas he that is spiritually proud, thinks every body wants his help. Christian humility, under a sense of others' misery, entreats and beseeches; spiritual pride affects to command and warn with authority.

If young ministers had great humility, it would dispose them especially to treat aged ministers with respect and reverence, as their fathers, notwithstanding that a sovereign God may have given them greater success than they have had.

It is a mark of spiritual pride to refuse to enter into discourse or reasoning with such as are considered carnal men, when they make objections and inquiries. Humility would lead ministers to condescend to carnal men, as Christ has condescended to us, to bear with our unteachableness and stupidity, and still follow us with instructions, line upon line, precept upon precept, saying, "come let us *reason* together;" it would lead to a compliance with the precept, "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a *reason* of the hope that is in you with *meekness* and fear."

Such are some of the marks of spiritual pride and true

humility pointed out by President Edwards. The abstract is given as much as possible in his own words. The whole of what he says on the subject deserves the most serious consideration.

The friends of religion have been so much gratified with that beautiful hymn by Newton, that I shall venture to insert it in my letter :

TRUE AND FALSE ZEAL.

Zeal is that pure and heavenly flame
The fire of love supplies ;
While that which often bears the name,
Is self in a disguise.

True zeal is merciful and mild,
Can pity and forbear ;
The false is headstrong, fierce and wild,
And breathes revenge and war.

While zeal for truth the Christian warms,
He knows the worth of peace ;
But self contends for names and forms,
Its party to increase.

Zeal has attained its highest aim,
Its end is satisfied,
If sinners love the Saviour's name,
Nor seeks it aught beside.

But self, however well employed,
Has its own ends in view ;
And says, as boasting Jehu cried,
" Come, see what I can do."

Dear Lord, the idol self dethrone,
And from our hearts remove ;
And let no zeal by us be shown,
But that which springs from love.

Your affectionate brother,
ASAHEL NETTLETON.

Rev. Dr. Spring.

FROM THE NEW-YORK OBSERVER.

———, *June 19th, 1827.*

Messrs. Editors,—The following communication from the Rev. Dr. PORTER, of Catskill, is designed to correct some reports which have, of late, been in circulation in this region, as well as to express his sentiments in relation to certain measures which have been introduced into some of our western revivals. Dr. Porter consents to its publication, and others have advised to the measure.

Catskill, June 14, 1827.

Dear Sir,—In a communication recently received from the West, to my great surprise, I have derived the following intelligence; to all which I feel it a duty I owe to the *public* and to *myself*, to make a reply. You say, “I have received information that a great revolution has taken place in the East in favour of Mr. Finney. It is said that Mr. Benedict, of Chatham, has pledged himself to Mr. Finney to support him; that at an interview with myself, Mr. Benedict won me over to Mr. Finney’s side; and that Mr. Benedict is now gone to New-York to create a sentiment in Mr. Finney’s favour; and it is moreover added, that I have been to Durham to convince Mr. Williston that Mr. Finney is right.”

As to the great revolution at the East, I have nothing to answer; and as to Mr. Benedict he can best speak for himself. From the interview I had with you at Durham, and in the stage to Catskill, and at my house, you know my sentiments perfectly. Since that time I have not seen Mr. Benedict in Hudson, nor been at Durham, nor seen Mr. Williston, nor communicated to him a single syllable on any subject whatever. Besides, I have had no occasion to change my mind on the matters in question, since I saw you; and after re-perusing Mr. Finney’s sermon and Mr. Nettleton’s remarks, and what I have seen in the papers, my opinion is precisely the same as I expressed it to you, when we were together. Whatever might have been Mr. Finney’s design, it is perfectly clear to my understanding, that the principle laid down and advocated in his sermon, opens the door for the introduction of all those extravagances so often witnessed in religious conferences and prayer meetings; and that Mr. Nettleton’s remarks on said sermon are in point, and that they have no severity beyond the demands of sober truth. Mr. Nettleton has done what a faithful minister of the gospel, and a

friend to revivals of religion, and one who has had so much experience in them, was in duty bound to do.

When he wrote his remarks, as you very well know, being present, he was expecting to go, in a few days, before his Judge; yet his remarks speak for themselves, and to me they afford convincing proof, that his mind was never more clear, and acute, and vigorous, than when he indited to his amanuensis those remarks. I know the views of many of the ablest ministers on the stage, and who have had the longest experience in religious revivals, and that they, with unanimous voice, condemn the measures in question, and to which so many facts testify as deleterious, and a calamity to be deprecated, and to be guarded against as one of the sorest evils which can befall the church in this or any other age. Among all my acquaintance, whether personal or by reputation, I know not of a single minister of our denomination, whether Congregational or Presbyterian, in whom I have reposed confidence, and whose praise is and has been for a long time, say for thirty years, in all the churches, but is opposed to many of the measures which have prevailed in Oneida county, Troy, and some other places. And here I am willing to mention some names,—names which I venerate. Drs. Hyde, Shepard, Griffin and Richards, and younger men of eminence for piety, talents, and success in the ministry, as Drs. Beecher, Humphreys, Spring, McAuley; and of Troy Presbytery, Messrs. Tomb, Prime, Lyman, Rogers, and also Dr. Blatchford of that body,—are united in the same mind and in the same judgment, in disapproving and condemning *measures which have been adopted and pushed to an alarming extremity, as an assemblage of facts testify beyond all contradiction, having transpired before many witnesses.* In respect to Mr. Nettleton's remarks on Mr. Finney's sermon, "Dr. Griffin is willing it should be said and published, that he considers the remarks *just what they should be.*"

The subject has now been before me more than a year. These extravagances are not new. They made their appearance before, and in, and after, the days of Edwards. They were followed with the most baneful consequences. They well nigh ruined the character of religious revivals in the estimation of the best ministers and the best Christians. It took the church half a century to repair the loss she had sustained. I have long been alarmed and distressed at what has been in progress of extravagance, and scarcely opened my lips. I am now constrained to express my mind with *decision and without reserve.* And I believe it as certain as my existence, that if a stop is not put to the extravagances and anti-scriptural measures, such as females of all ages praying

in social meetings when there are males assembled, and for persons by name, and in a style irreverent and shocking to the humble and contrite spirit, and so contrary to all scriptural example recorded in the Bible, revivals of religion will lose their character. If these things are introduced into revivals of religion, piety will revolt; it does revolt. These things throw our Theological Seminaries and Colleges into the back-ground. I consider the remarks of Mr. Nettleton as the development of a principle, the practical illustration of which is now portrayed before the eyes of the public by matters of fact.

I have much more in mind than I have time to write. You can make such use of this letter as you please. It is written in great haste,—but I have no fear arising from its *publicity*. Yours, &c.

DAVID PORTER.

FROM THE ALBANY CHRISTIAN REGISTER.

Mr. Editor,—The Review which I herewith send you, was written immediately on the appearance of the sermon. Events, however, occurred about that time, which encouraged the hope that its publication would be unnecessary; and it would not now appear, had not a Review of Mr. Nettleton's Remarks, and some other kindred publications, recently evinced a disposition on the part of the friends of the new measures, to defend and sustain the sentiments of the sermon.

NOVANGLUS.

REVIEW.

A Sermon preached in the Presbyterian Church, Troy, March 4, 1827, by the Rev. Charles G. Finney, from Amos 3. 3. Can two walk together except they be agreed?

The revivals in Oneida county and the vicinity, during the past year, have attracted much attention. They have been hailed by many as the commencement of a new era in revivals; and the measures understood to have had the most prominent place in their promotion, have been denominated

the *new measures*, and been thought by many to be a wonderful improvement. Some have intimated that the measures which were successful in promoting revivals in the days of our fathers, had now lost their efficacy, and would no more be blessed to that end: and others have gone so far as to say, our fathers did not know how to promote revivals, they did not know how to pray, nor did they know how to preach. Others again, have thought that they saw nothing new in these measures, nothing but what they had seen among other denominations in their own times, and had read of frequently in the history of the church in past ages. They have recognised, or thought they recognised, in these new measures, all the leading features of those which were pursued by Davenport and others, during the revival in New-England, in the days of President Edwards, and which are pointed out, in his *Thoughts on Revivals*, as among the things which are to be avoided. The author of this sermon has been considered the most prominent agent in the introduction of these new measures, so that they are often called by his name; though it is known by many that they had begun to be used in that region, among Presbyterians, in some degree, before he entered the ministry. These measures have not, indeed, been adopted in every place in that vicinity, where there have been revivals during the 'past year. It has been understood that some ministers and churches have been opposed to them, and have endeavoured to keep them out, as far as possible; and that others have admitted them only in part. And this backwardness of ministers and Christians to admit them, has been the subject of much animadversion, both from the press and otherwise. It is well known that some of the old and tried friends of revivals in that region have been much blamed on this account, and have been represented as opposed to revivals, hindering the work of the Lord, and strengthening the hands of the enemies of religion. Yet it is believed that they have generally borne these reproaches in silence, and have been backward to proclaim their objections. Indeed, some of them have been so backward to make known their objections, that their friends abroad have not known that they felt any, and in some cases have been led to believe that they had adopted the new measures in full. The friends of revivals abroad have at length become alarmed at the evils which have begun to reach them from the West, and have begun to communicate their fears, and to state their objections in letters to their friends on the subject. But so persuaded are some that these new measures must be right, and that all the real friends of revivals must approve of them, that they are ready to conclude that those

who are the known friends of revivals abroad must have been misinformed, and grounded their objections on exaggerated reports which have been put in circulation by the enemy. And though those gentlemen expressly say that they have derived their information from the friends of the new measures themselves, and from what has come under their own personal observation, this does not free those in that region who have been known to disapprove, from the suspicion and the charge of being the source of that misinformation. From the best information I can obtain, I conclude that those ministers and Christians who have not approved of the new measures, have been the most silent on the subject of any class of people in the vicinity; and I fully believe, that, when the truth shall be known, it will be found, that the friends of the new measures have themselves done more to spread the knowledge of them abroad, than all other classes put together. Some that did not approve have been silent, lest they should be thought to speak against the work of God, and be proclaimed as enemies to revivals; and some have thought that the prejudices of many were so strong, and there was so little disposition to make distinctions, that if they should attempt to correct any evils, their intentions would be misunderstood, and they should only lessen their own usefulness, without the prospect of accomplishing any important good. But those who have not approved are beginning to condemn themselves for the silence they have maintained, and to acknowledge it as an error that when they have seen the evil, they have suffered any considerations to deter them from raising the warning voice. It is to be hoped that the publication of this sermon will relieve them from any remaining scruples they may feel, and lead the way to a full discussion of the subject. It is certainly creditable to the author, that he has thus publicly taken the field, and given so fair a challenge to those who object to his measures. No objection can henceforth be made by their friends, if they are made the subjects of the closest scrutiny; for the sermon is so open and direct an attack upon all those ministers and Christians who do not approve of the new measures, that it will be ascribed to *cowardice*, or to the consciousness of *guilt*, if they do not speak in their own defence.

The object of the sermon evidently is, to account for the opposition which is made to the new measures, by ministers and Christians, as well as others, in such a way as to make that opposition a proof that those measures are right, and that all who oppose them are wrong; and especially that those ministers and professed Christians who oppose them,

give evidence by their opposition that the state of their hearts is the same as that of the impenitent world.

The sum of the argument is this : Sinners must be most opposed to that which is nearest right : But they are more opposed to these new measures than they are to those which others use : therefore these measures must be nearest right. And,

If ministers and professed Christians oppose the same things that sinners do, and make the same objections to them, they must feel just as sinners do ; but ministers and professed Christians do oppose these new measures ; therefore the state of their hearts is the same as that of impenitent sinners, and they are either hypocrites, or *so* cold hearted and dead, that there is no present difference in moral character between them and the impenitent world, and they ought to be so considered, and treated accordingly.

This appears through the whole discourse, and will be seen in the following extracts : Page 6. " We see why lukewarm professors and impenitent sinners have the same difficulties with means in revivals of religion. We often hear them complain of the *manner* of preaching and praying. Their objections are the same, they find fault with the *same* things, and use the same arguments in support of their objections. The reason is, that at that time, their affections are nearly the same ; it is the fire and the spirit that disturbs their frosty hearts. For the time being, they walk together, for in *feeling* they are agreed." Page 7. " We see why ministers and Christians visiting revivals, often, at first, raise objections to the means used, and cavil, and sometimes take sides with the wicked." " While their *hearts remain wrong*, they will, of course, cavil ; and the nearer right any thing is, the more spiritual and holy, so much the more it *must* displease them, while their *affections grovel*." Page 12. " That excitement which does not call out the opposition of the wicked and wrong-hearted, is either not a revival of religion at all, or it is so conducted that sinners do not see the finger of God in it." " The more pure and holy the means are that are used to promote a revival of religion, so much the more, of *necessity*, will they excite the opposition of *all wrong hearts*." " If the matter of preaching is right, and the sinner is pleased, there is something defective in the *manner*." Page 13. " The more right and holy feeling there is, the more wrong and unholy feeling there will be, of course." Page 16. " If we walk with the lukewarm and ungodly, or they with *us*, it is because we are agreed ; for two cannot walk together except they *be agreed*." Page 9. " We see why ministers are sometimes unsettled by revivals." He supposes the minister may awake, while the church will not, or that the church

may awake, while the minister will not. Page 10. "In either of these cases, they may find themselves unable to walk together, because they are not agreed. In the former case, let the minister obey the command of Christ, and 'shake off the dust of his feet for a testimony against them.' In the latter, let the church *shake off their sleepy minister*; they are better without him, than with him."

These extracts I think clearly show, that the object of the discourse is as before stated, to prove that the new measures are nearest right, because they are most opposed; and that those ministers and Christians who oppose them, thereby give evidence that they are agreed in heart with the impenitent world, and should be treated accordingly.

The whole argument is highly sophistical, and the main conclusions of the discourse entirely unwarranted; yet the prejudices of many readers are no doubt so strongly enlisted in favour of the author's system, that they will think it a finished piece of sound reasoning, and the conclusions supported by irrefragable arguments. A few words might suffice to expose its sophistry to those whose minds are unbiassed; but a more extended examination is doubtless expedient, for the sake of such as are predisposed to embrace any thing the author may advance.

And perhaps it may tend to convince some that the reasoning is unsound, even though they should not be able to discover wherein, to let them see a few other conclusions which the same kind of reasoning would equally support.—Take the following:

Some impenitent sinners are greatly displeas'd with the new measures for promoting revivals; some professed Christians and ministers are greatly displeas'd with them also: therefore, it is concluded, they are walking together, because they are *agreed*, and are both equally wrong. This is the author's argument; but it will prove the contrary, just as well. For,

Some impenitent sinners are much taken with the new measures, and are very anxious to have them introduced; some professed Christians are also much taken with them, and are as anxious to have them introduced: therefore, they are walking together, because they are *agreed*, and are both equally wrong.

Again, some professed Christians are pleased to hear a man preach, who treats his subjects in a clear, argumentative manner, though he is not very forcible in his delivery; some impenitent sinners are also pleased to hear him: therefore, it is concluded, they are walking together, because they are *agreed*, and are both equally wrong. But,

Some professed Christians are displeased when they hear such a preacher, and complain of him as "a dull man;" some impenitent sinners are also displeased, and make the same complaint: therefore, they are walking together, because they are *agreed*, and are both equally wrong.

Again, some professed Christians wish to have the doctrines of the gospel fully and clearly preached, and are best pleased with such preaching; some impenitent sinners also wish the doctrines preached, and are best pleased with such preaching: therefore, it is concluded, they are walking together, because they are *agreed*, and are both equally wrong. But,

Some professed Christians are very unwilling to have the doctrines of the bible dwelt upon, and are always displeased with such preaching; some impenitent sinners are also unwilling to have those doctrines dwelt upon, and are always displeased with such preaching: therefore they are walking together, because they are *agreed*, and are both equally wrong.

These examples may suffice to show how the method of argumentation adopted in the sermon will support opposite conclusions equally well. A few other examples will show how the same method of reasoning will support some conclusions which would be as offensive to the friends of the new measures, as some of these which are drawn in the sermon are to others. Take the following:

Impenitent sinners always pray for their own salvation *without submission*; it is an essential ingredient in the prayers of some at this day, that they be made *without submission*: therefore they walk together, because they are *agreed*.

Some individuals now venture to predict certain future events, in consequence of impressions which they suppose have been made on their minds by the Holy Spirit; Stork, Munzer, and their associates, in the days of Luther, did the same; therefore they walk together, because they are *agreed*.

Stork, Munzer, and their associates, *denounced* Luther and Calvin as carnal, unconverted men, and strangers to the influences of the Spirit, because they opposed their wild and extravagant notions and practices; some, in these days, do the same, in respect to those ministers who are most like Luther and Calvin, in their sentiments and practice; therefore they walk together, because they are *agreed*.

Some fanatical sects have been in the habit of encouraging outward bodily expressions of feeling, and attaching great importance to them, such as groaning aloud in time of prayer, falling down, rolling about, and the like, and speaking of them as evidences of the special and powerful influences of

the Spirit; some in these days do the same: therefore they walk together, because they are *agreed*.

Some fanatical and disorderly persons in former times, have thought it highly meritorious, to crowd themselves into the parishes of settled ministers, and introduce such measures as were adapted to promote discord and strife; some in these days think the same; therefore they walk together, because they are *agreed*.

The Pharisees prayed long and loud, so as to attract the notice of men in the streets; some in these days do the same: therefore they walk together, because they are *agreed*.

The Pharisees compassed sea and land to make proselytes to their peculiarities; some in these days do the same: therefore they walk together, because they are *agreed*.

A person under the influence of an evil spirit followed Paul and his company, with the cry, "these men are the servants of the most high God;" some follow certain preachers now with the same cry: therefore they are under the influence of the same evil spirit, and walk together, because they are *agreed*.

Such deductions as these, are made after the method of reasoning pursued in the sermon; and they might be multiplied to an indefinite extent. If these examples should serve to convince any that the method of reasoning is unsound, and will equally support truth and falsehood, and equally prove both sides of a contradiction, my purpose will be answered. I am not weak enough to suppose that such argumentation will fasten any of these conclusions upon the friends of the new measures; my object is to show them the fallacy of the reasoning by which the conclusions of the sermon are attempted to be fastened upon others.

But the foundation of the author's argument must be examined. It is assumed that the reasons why ministers and Christians oppose the new measures, are the same as the reasons why the impenitent oppose them. He says, "their objections are the *same*, they find fault with the *same* things, and use the same arguments in support of their objections." "It is the fire and the spirit that disturbs their frosty hearts. For the time being, they walk together, for, in *feeling*, they are agreed."—So important a part of the argument as this, and one on which the conclusions so essentially depend, should not have been taken for granted, nor have been left to depend upon the naked assertion of any man. It should have been proved, beyond the possibility of doubt, that the objections of Christians and the objections of the impenitent are precisely the same; and are not only supported by the same arguments ostensibly, but must and do arise from the

same state of heart. Ministers and Christians should not have been thus classed with the openly irreligious, while there is any room to suppose they *may* have different reasons for their opposition; or while the impenitent *may* have any good reasons for theirs.

It should not be thought, that the single fact, if it were a fact, of their being opposed to the same things, is sufficient proof. Men are often opposed to the same things, for very different reasons. A man may be a candidate for the office of chief magistrate of our nation, and have great numbers of individuals opposed to him, for reasons widely different from each other. One may think he has injured him, and be opposed from personal resentment. Another may think he has personal advantages to expect from the elevation of his competitor. Another may think his competitor will pursue measures more for the interest of the particular section of the nation in which he resides. Another may think the candidate is incompetent in point of talent and experience. Another may be displeased with some vicious habits he believes him to indulge. And a Christian may be opposed because he thinks him a man void of religious principle, and not having the fear of God before his eyes. Many other reasons might be mentioned, by which those numerous individuals are influenced to unite in their opposition to the same candidate. The fact, then, that they agree in opposing the same candidate, is no proof of any likeness of character between themselves, unless they are opposed for the same reasons.

Are the impenitent, then, and many ministers and Christians, opposed to the new measures for promoting revivals, for the same reasons? This is asserted; and they have been abundantly classed together, by the friends of the new measures, on this very ground. It should not be concluded that the fact, if it were a fact, of their using "the same arguments in support of their objections," is a sufficient proof that the reasons why they are opposed are the same; nor, if some of them are the same, that they are *all* the same. They may have more reasons, in their own minds, than they think it necessary to give, on every occasion. For instance, an impenitent sinner may feel opposed in heart to the doctrine of total depravity. That doctrine may be exhibited to him in a *manner* that is peculiarly and unnecessarily offensive. He is displeased at the doctrine itself, and he is displeased also at the offensive *manner* in which it was presented. He may not choose to complain of the doctrine itself, but only of the manner. A Christian who heard it, though he cordially receives the doctrine, might think the *manner* highly improper, and make the same complaint. Does the fact, in this case,

of their making the same objection, prove a likeness of character between them? Such a conclusion would certainly be unfounded. It ought first to be proved that the manner was right, or that the Christian was as really offended with the doctrine itself, as the sinner was, before such a conclusion can be drawn. Suppose a sinner is conversed with, who assents to the truth of all the doctrines of the gospel, but acknowledges himself an impenitent sinner: and he is told, "he is as orthodox as the devil," but "his character is as black as hell," and "if he does not repent to-day he will be in hell to-morrow;" he will probably be displeased, and make objections to this treatment. And what objections will he state? He will probably object, that such language is harsh, unkind, not expressive of benevolent feeling, and savouring of profaneness; and that, in the prediction, the man is telling more than he knows. And if a Christian, who should hear it, should make the same objections, would it prove him to be of the same character as the impenitent sinner? If I should tell a child, "not to follow his ungodly parents, who were leading him to hell; not to listen to their instructions, which will destroy his soul; that his parents are so wicked, he had better leave them, and live with me, and I will take him with me to heaven;" the parents would probably be displeased, and make objections to such treatment. And what objections would they state? They would probably object, that it would be more proper to tell parents their own faults, than to tell them to their children; that such treatment is adapted to alienate the affections of children from their parents, break up families, and teach children to disregard the fifth commandment, which requires children to love and honour their parents. And if a Christian, who should hear all this, should make the same objections, would it prove him to be of the same character as the impenitent sinner? If an impenitent sinner should be prayed for by name, at a public meeting, and the occasion should be embraced to hold him up to public notice, as an uncommonly odious and abandoned character, and to tell God and the world all the bad things that have been known or thought about him, it would probably give offence to him and his friends. And what objections would they state? They would probably say, that such treatment was abusive and defamatory, and not adapted to do the individual any good. And if a Christian should happen to feel and express the same opinion of it, would that be a conclusive proof that he is of the same character with the impenitent? If a minister of the gospel should happen to be such an one as Paul requires all to be, having "a good report of them which are

without," and one that, by a long life of uniform piety, had commanded the respect and confidence even of the unconverted part of his congregation; and he should be publicly prayed for, by some stranger, as "an old grey-headed apostate, who was leading souls to hell," or as "the head Achan in the camp of the Lord;" it is probable some of the unconverted would be offended at it, as well as some of the church; and that both would complain that their aged pastor should be treated with such indignity; and if it should happen, that "their objections should be the same," and that they should "use the same arguments in support of them," would it certainly prove that they were all alike in their moral character? If a preacher should, in a public assembly, in the presence of ministers and others, exhort the females to lead in prayer, and represent them as grieving the Spirit by refusing; and not prevailing by arguments, should drop on his knees and tell the Lord how proud they were, because they would not comply, and then repeat his exhortations; and if the fear of resisting the Spirit, or of being thought proud, should prevail with some to comply, the whole transaction would probably be objected to by their impenitent friends. And what would they say? They would be likely to quote the apostolic prohibition, "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak." And if it should so happen that some Christians too should think the practice was forbidden, and should quote the same direction of the apostle, would it certainly prove that they were of the same moral character with those impenitent friends?

It is evident, then, that if ministers and Christians did "find fault with the same things, and use the same arguments in support of their objections" that the impenitent do, it would not be sufficient to prove a likeness of character between them, unless it were first proved that the things objected to are right, and that *all* the reasons why both classes objected were the same. Let it first be shown that the measures objected to are right, and that there can be none but sinful objections made against them; and then let it be shown that the objections which ministers and Christians make are the same in all respects, not only as those which the impenitent avow, but as those which they inwardly feel; and something will be done towards laying a foundation for the conclusion that there is some likeness of character between them.

But I am disposed to question the fact, that the objections which ministers and Christians make to the new measures are, in general, the same as those which the impenitent make. To many of them, I have no doubt they are, in part,

the same. For wherever the impenitent discover any thing in professors of religion which is really wrong, they can, if they please, bring solid objections against it, and support them by sound arguments both from reason and scripture. Some of the unconverted are men of good sense, and have sufficient acquaintance with the scriptures to form a pretty accurate judgment whether the conduct of Christians is consistent with their profession or not. And some of them are men of good breeding, and are disgusted with whatever violates the common rules of propriety, wherever they see it. If, therefore, in some things, their judgment should accord with that of ministers and Christians, it is no sufficient reason why reproaches should be cast upon either.

A brief statement of the most common objections which I have heard made, by both classes, against the new measures, will show how far they agree. Those out of the church have complained of harsh and uncivil treatment in conversation, being called by hard names, and provoking epithets, and addressed with coarseness and vulgarity, and in a manner which they deemed insolent, overbearing and insulting. They have complained of being spoken of to others in terms which they consider defamatory and abusive. They have complained that their children were unreasonably frightened, by being threatened with immediate and inevitable damnation, and told that there was no help for them. They have complained that their children should be told such things about their parents as were adapted to alienate their affections, and lead them to be disrespectful towards their parents. They have found fault with the personality of public preaching, by which the attention of the congregation was directed to particular individuals, as persons of an uncommonly odious character. They have complained of being prayed for by name in a manner which they considered slanderous and abusive. Some have taken offence at what they considered an irreverent use of the name of God, and a familiar use of the words *devil*, *hell*, *cursed*, *damned*, and the like, in a manner which they thought resembled the more vulgar sort of profane swearing. Some have been disgusted with what appeared to them an irreverent boldness and familiarity with God in prayer, which shocked their feelings. Some have objected that the subject of religion should be so much urged upon them. And some have complained that the doctrines of Calvinism should be so vehemently pressed, and especially that of total depravity; and that so little charity should be expressed for other denominations. The principal *reasons* they have given why they objected to these things, have been, that they felt themselves unreasonably crowded upon

and ill-treated, that their sense of propriety was outraged, and that they thought these things improper. And it has been said, "If this is religion, I want no such religion."

Now, is it certain that these complaints have been made by the unconverted solely from their dislike of the religion of the gospel? Has there been no other foundation for any of them? Have they been made solely because the holy, heavenly temper of the gospel has been so clearly exhibited before them, in all its native loveliness, as it appeared in the Lord Jesus Christ, breathing good will to man, and expressing all the meekness, and gentleness, and kindness, and forbearance towards them which is required in the sermon on the mount, and elsewhere? The fact that such objections are made by the impenitent against the new measures, more than against the measures previously in use, will not be allowed to be, of itself, a sufficient proof that the new measures are the nearest right.

But it is not my present purpose to show that these complaints are, or are not, made on good grounds. It is simply to show, that the complaints of the unconverted and those of Christians and ministers, have not been all the same, and made for the same reasons.

Ministers and Christians have, indeed, complained of some of the things above mentioned. They have complained of a harsh and overbearing treatment of the unconverted, not only because they thought it improper, but because they thought it adapted to harden them, and shut up the way of access to their consciences. They have not been unwilling to have children and youth conversed with on the subject of religion, and made to see their true state and character; but they have thought a great and sudden excitement of their fears not likely to lead them to such an attention to the state of their own hearts, as would be adapted to do any permanent good; and especially when it was produced by unwarrantable declarations of immediate and inevitable damnation, which a few days might suffice to show them were not true: and they feared that such things would lead them to treat the sober warnings of the scriptures with contempt. They have thought that it was wrong, under the colour of performing any other religious duty, to teach children to disregard the fifth commandment. They have been offended at an irreverent use of the Divine name, because they thought it a breach of the third commandment; and have been displeased with the familiar use of other common terms of profaneness, because they thought it must produce some of the same effect that profane swearing does. They have been disgusted with the appearance of irreverent boldness, and the affectation of

familiarity with God in prayer, because they thought it inconsistent with proper feelings of respect towards him, and that awe of the Divine Majesty which holy beings express. They have not been afraid that the subject of religion would be too much urged upon men, if it were only done with that kindness of feeling which would leave the door open for its being repeated. They have not complained that the doctrines of Calvinism were too much or too clearly preached, nor that too much importance was attached to them, nor that too little charity was expressed for such as understandingly and cordially reject them. On the contrary, it has been a serious objection with many, that those doctrines have not been preached so clearly and fully as they thought important. They have been grieved that those who did urge them plainly and fully, should be charged with hindering revivals by preaching them; and that *orthodoxy* should be made a term of reproach. They have objected, that people were not sufficiently instructed; that the distinction between true and false experience should be overlooked, or little thought of; and that the disposition to make a distinction between genuine and spurious revivals, should be frowned upon as a mark of being in a cold and stupid state. They have complained that the most uniform and consistent Christians should be pronounced cold, and stupid, and dead, because they did not alter as much as others; and that, too, in many cases, by those who had as yet had no opportunity from personal examination to know any thing of the state of their minds. They have been grieved that the best friends of revivals, as they have hitherto witnessed them, should be denounced as enemies because they did not fall in with the new measures, and that those whose age and experience had given them opportunity to be most and longest acquainted with revivals, should be put down, by the converts of a few days old, as totally ignorant on the subject. They have complained that aged ministers, of tried and approved piety, should be publicly prayed for, by young men and boys, as old hypocrites or apostates, who were "leading souls to hell." Some have objected to female prayer and exhortation in mixed assemblies, because they thought it forbidden in the scriptures, and adapted to destroy that silent, unobtrusive influence which it is so desirable that the female members of the church should exert, and which can be best exerted in the sphere in which God has placed them. Some have objected to the confidence which appeared to be placed in impulses and impressions, especially as connected with the supposed prayer of faith, because they thought it contrary to the scriptures, and adapted to open a wide door to the delusions of Satan.

Some have thought the young were put forward, to their own injury, and the older members of the church, whose age and experience qualified them to lead, were too manifestly put in the back ground; and that old people in general were often treated with great disrespect, in direct violation of the Divine command, "thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man." Some have complained of the disposition of those who adopted the new measures to crowd them into every place, regardless of the divisions and contentions to which they seemed likely to give rise; and of the disposition of some to intermeddle in the concerns of other churches to which they did not belong. Some have complained of the stress which was laid upon the *posture* in prayer, while so little regard appeared to be paid to the cultivation of that meek, humble, modest, retiring spirit, which is so essential to the right performance of that duty. Some have complained that secret prayer should be made so loud as to attract the notice of people in the streets, because they thought it too much like that praying in the streets which our Lord reproveth. Some have thought it wrong to pray that individuals might be converted or removed, and especially, that "God would seal the damnation of sinners this night." Some have objected to the principle that the feelings ought to control the judgment; and that because any measure contributed to produce very pleasant feelings in us, it was therefore right. Some have thought it wrong to consider success an evidence of Divine approbation, lest it should lead us to practise deception, as Jacob did, in order to secure a good object. Some have been disgusted with the ostentation, and boasting, and self-conceit, which they have witnessed, because they thought them utterly inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel. Some have complained, that when evils were pointed out, there was no regard paid to their warnings, but the same things were repeated, and carried to greater lengths than before. And some have been distressed at the appearance they saw of a disposition to have some men's "persons in admiration," as if they only were the instruments through which any good could be expected from Divine ordinances, and the only medium through which the Holy Spirit could be communicated; and the apparent determination to deny or justify every thing for which they were complained of, let it be what it might. But the principal complaint, and one which has embraced all the rest, has been, that the whole system of measures appeared to be adapted to promote false conversions, to strengthen and cherish false hopes, and propagate a false religion; and thus, besides destroying the souls of those who should be the subjects of it, these mea-

asures should tend ultimately to bring all true religion, and all pure revivals into contempt, and increase the number of errorists and scoffers on every side.

Such are some of the principal objections to the new measures which I have heard among ministers and Christians. And it is easy to see that they are very far from being precisely the same objections, and founded upon precisely the same reasons, as the objections of the impenitent. No; they are grounded on the love of the truth, or a regard for the honour of God, and the good of souls, and on a most anxious solicitude for the permanent good character and influence of revivals, and the advancement of the cause of Christ in the earth. And nothing can be more unjust and injurious, than because they make these objections, even if they are in a mistake in making them, to class them with the ungodly world, and represent them as walking together, *because they are agreed*.

Having made these remarks upon the general object of the sermon, and having shown the fallacy of the main point assumed, that the objections which ministers and Christians make to the new measures are the same as those of the impenitent, and grounded on the same reasons, and having thus exposed the unsoundness of the argument, and shown that the main point to be supported is without foundation, and that there is yet no proof of a likeness of character between the two classes of objectors to the new system, I proceed to a more particular examination of the several parts of the sermon.

That which may be styled the doctrinal part of the sermon is the author's illustration of the declaration of the text, that two cannot walk together except they be agreed. He thinks it is an agreement in feeling. And though the text means God and man, his purpose requires him to consider it as spoken of one man walking with another.—The following extracts will give his view of it :

Page 3—6. "All pleasure and pain—all happiness and misery, belong to the mind—all sin and holiness have their seat in, and belong to the *heart* or affections. All the satisfaction or dissatisfaction, pain or pleasure, that we feel in view of any truth or thing presented to our minds, depends entirely upon the actings of our affections at the time, and *consists in these actings*. If it fall in with, and excite, and feed, *pleasurable* affections, we are pleased *of course*; for in these pleasurable affections our pleasure or happiness consists. The higher, therefore, these affections are elevated by the presentation of any thing or truth to our minds, the greater our pleasure is. But if the thing or truth do not fall

in with our affections, it cannot please us ; if it be *aside* from our present state of feeling, and our affections *refuse to follow*, we shall either view it with indifference, our affections being otherwise engaged, or if it press upon us, we shall turn from and resist it." "If the subject be exhibited in a light that is below our present tone of feeling, we cannot be interested, until it *comes up to our feelings* ; if this does not take place, we *necessarily* remain uninterested ; and if the subject, in this cooling, and to us, degraded point of view, is held up before our mind, and our affections struggle to maintain their height, we feel displeased, because our affections are not fed, but opposed. If the subject be presented in a manner that strikes far above our tone of feeling, and our affections grovel, and *refuse to rise*, it does not fall in with and feed our affections, therefore we cannot be interested ; it is enthusiasm to us, we are displeased with the warmth in which our affections refuse to participate ; and the farther it is above our temperature, the more we are disgusted. These are truths to which the experience of every man will testify, as they hold good on every subject, and under all circumstances ; and are founded upon principles incorporated with the very nature of man." "A refined musician is listening almost in rapture to the skilful execution of a fine piece of harmony—throw in discords upon him, he is in pain in a moment. Increase and prolong the dissonance, and he leaves the room in disgust.—You are fond of music ; but you are at present melancholy—you are in great affliction—you are inclined to weep—the plaintive tones of an Æolian harp light softly upon your ear, and melt around your heart—your tears flow fast—but now the din of trumpets, drums, and cymbals, and the piercing fife, in mirthful quick-step, breaks upon your ear, and drowns the soft breathings of the harp—you feel distressed—you turn away and stop your ears. The harp touched and melted your weeping affections, it fell in with your *feelings* ; therefore you were gratified. The martial music *opposed* your state of feeling, you was too melancholy to have your affections elevated and enlivened by it : it therefore *necessarily distressed you*." "Your heart is glowing with religious feeling—you are not only averse to the introduction of any other subject at that time, but are uninterested with any thing upon the same subject that is far below the tone of your affections. Suppose you hear a dull man *preach* or *pray* : while he remains dull, and you are warm with feeling, you are not interested, you *cannot* be, for your affections are not fed and cherished, unless he comes up to your tone ; if this does not happen, you are distressed and perhaps disgusted with his coldness. This is a thing of

course." "Suppose you are lukewarm, and carnal, and earthly, in your affections: you hear one exhort, or pray, or preach, who is highly spiritual, and fervent, and affectionate; if your affections will not rise—if, through prejudice, or pride, or the earthly and sensual state of your affections, they refuse to enkindle, and to grasp the subject, although you believe every word he says, yet you are not *pleased*. He is above your temperature, you are annoyed with the *manner*, and fire, and spirit of the man. The higher he rises, if your affections grovel, the farther apart you are, and the more you are displeased. While your heart is *wrong*, the nearer *right* he is, the more he burns upon you, if your heart will not enkindle, the more you are disgusted."

Here, then, we have the theory of the sermon before us; and, as I think, also the theory of the whole system of the author's measures for promoting revivals. Some of his language would lead us to infer that he meant to embrace what is called the *exercise scheme*, that all sin and holiness consists in voluntary exercises; but from other expressions it appears he does not, unless, indeed, he supposes that all the sensations and emotions of the mind are voluntary exercises, which would be indeed an entire new theory of the mind. He says, "all the satisfaction or dissatisfaction, pain or pleasure, that we feel, depend entirely upon the actings of our affections at the time, and *consists in these actings*." According to him, then, all the pleasurable or painful emotions of the mind are affections, whether they are voluntary or involuntary. These constitute our feelings. And all sin and holiness consist in these also. And he uses *feeling* and *heart* as synonymous terms. Does he mean, then, that all the pleasurable and painful emotions we have are of a moral nature, and either sinful or holy? Does he mean that holiness is the same thing as happiness, and sin the same thing as misery? Does he mean that all warm, lively, and happy feelings are holy affections? If he does not mean so, this was the place to inform us, and to make the distinction. And it was incumbent upon him to make it clearly, and let us see the difference between those warm feelings that are holy, and those that are not. I can scarce think that he believes all warm and happy feelings are holy; but I have looked in vain for any information to the contrary.—"Your heart is glowing with religious feeling." What is religious feeling? It was all important that he should tell us, because all his conclusions were based upon it; and a mistake here would lead us entirely astray. Does he suppose it impossible to mistake, and that the man who thinks he is awake, and full of religious feeling, is of course right, in thinking so? How can a church

know when it is their duty to "shake off their sleepy minister," without being informed what it is to be awake, and what it is to be asleep? Or is it impossible to mistake? Is the consciousness of being *warm* in our feelings on the subject of religion, certain evidence that we are in a right state of mind? And if a minister does not so preach and pray, that "our affections are fed and cherished," is that certain evidence that he is "sleepy," and ought to be "shaken off?" Is religious feeling so much of the nature of the inspiration of the prophets, that those who have it know certainly that they are right exactly, without "trying the spirits" by any rule? Or is the grand rule by which every man is to be judged, and his spiritual state determined, the single question of his agreement or disagreement with the new measures? I conclude this will be the rule adopted in practice, and if this is the rule intended, it should have been more distinctly avowed. The whole drift of the discourse, however, is to establish this rule, though that object is not distinctly avowed.

But, is there nothing said in the discourse, to show that all kinds of feeling are not religious feeling? Yes. On page 10 the author rejects *animal feeling*, as forming no part of religious affection. What, then, does he mean by animal feeling? He gives us no definition; but from what he says of it, it would appear to be that tender sensibility which inclines us to weep, when it is skilfully touched. His language is, "adopt a strain of exhortation or preaching that is calculated to awaken mere sympathy and animal feeling, and you will soon see that there is a perfect community of feeling amongst cold and warm hearted Christians, and sinners; they will all weep and seem to melt, and no one will be offended; and, I may add, no one will be convicted or converted." I conclude, then, that by animal feeling he means emotions of the tender and weeping kind, such as the music of the Æolian harp is adapted to excite, and which the introduction of martial music would greatly disturb. Such feelings as these may be excited in view of religious objects, when presented in a particular attitude, and are, no doubt, often mistaken for religious affections. But they are the result of mere tragic painting, and ought to be carefully distinguished from holy affections. There is, however, another class of animal feelings, such as are excited by "the din of trumpets, drums, and cymbals, and the piercing fife, in mirthful quick-step, breaking upon the ear." This class is doubtless excited by religious subjects, as well as the other; and no reason appears why they should not be carefully distinguished from holy affections. Yet, no notice is taken by the author, in this discourse, of this class of feelings, as *animal*

feelings, which should not be mistaken for true religion. On the contrary, while he expressly excludes the other class, there is much in his language on the subject of religious feeling, which leads me to conclude that he considers this class of feeling, when excited by religious subjects, to be the very height of holy affection. And this I take to be the *key* to his whole discourse, and to his whole system of measures.

That there are these two classes of animal feeling, each of which consists in emotions of the mind which are involuntary, and are neither sinful nor holy, I think cannot be reasonably questioned. The existence of the class of tender sympathies, which lead us to weep at the sight of distress, is admitted. And is not the existence of the other class equally evident? What are those emotions which are excited by martial music? Why does the sight of a military pageant attract the attention of the multitude, and kindle, in so many minds, the thirst for military glory? Why does the sound of the fife and drum wake up all the energies of children; and why do we see them, in imitation, marching and counter-marching, with their paper caps, and their weapons of wood? call it enthusiasm, if you will, it is *feeling*; and feeling, too, of a lively and animated kind; it is a feeling that is full of fire, and spirit, and life, a feeling that blazes and burns upon you, till you sympathize in it, and burn and glow in like manner, or till you are greatly annoyed by it, and compelled to flee. This feeling sometimes strongly seizes the female mind; and wherever it does, it effects a wonderful transformation. Let a nation be invaded; let their energies be roused for defence; let the genuine war spirit be waked up, and all ages and sexes will participate, in a greater or less degree. Let our wives, and mothers, and daughters, be filled with this spirit, and they no longer appear like the same beings. The softness and delicacy so natural to the sex is exchanged for masculine boldness. Those fine sensibilities, that tenderness, and gentleness, and kindness, for which we so much admired them, is laid aside. Every nerve is braced; every movement is quick and violent; every look threatens; every eye flashes fire; every word breathes defiance. And some, when dangers press, and help is needed, disregarding that unfitness for rough and hardy enterprises which results from their delicate frame, will fly to arms, and rush upon the foe. And some will outrun their more tardy and phlegmatic husbands and brothers, and be foremost in the field of contest. Such things have been seen. And what is it? It is animal feeling, no doubt, of a peculiar kind; and when it gains possession, it drives out all the animal feelings of the tender class, all the soothing sensibilities and weeping sympathies of

our nature, and frowns upon them where they appear in others at such a time, as objects of ineffable scorn.

Now change the subject. Let religion be presented in such an attitude, and with such accompaniments, as are adapted to affect the nervous system in the same way. Will not the same class of feelings be excited? and will they not burn, and blaze, and glow, in like manner? and will they not produce the same effects upon those who are the subjects of them? Have we not examples in the past history of the church? and are there not present examples before our eyes? And why should it be thought there is any more holiness in this class of animal feelings, than in the tender class?

If the conclusion to which I have come is correct—that by the fire, and spirit, and warmth, which glow, and blaze, and burn upon us through this discourse, nothing more is meant than mere animal feeling, of the martial kind, applied to the subject of religion, the principle will doubtless apply to the leading positions taken in the sermon, and satisfactorily account for them.—Let us make the experiment.

Page 5. “Suppose you hear a *dull man* preach or pray; while he remains dull, and you are warm with feeling, you are not interested, you *cannot* be, for your affections are not fed and cherished, unless he comes up to your tone.” This is exactly so, if your feeling is mere animal feeling; but far from it, if it is that holy affection which consists in the love of the truth. If the truth is clearly presented, though it should be done by a dull man, who does not appear to feel it himself, still that truth would feed and cherish your holy affections. And the degree in which your affections would be fed, would depend upon the truth presented, and not upon the feeling of the speaker.—Satan might be the medium of announcing to the angels in heaven that another sinner has repented, and the tidings would fill them with holy joy, though Satan should appear to have no pleasure in the message himself. But in the sermon, it all depends upon the degree of feeling manifested by the preacher. If that is below your tone, “you are not interested, you *cannot* be.” The feeling in you is fed only by the feeling in him, and not by the truths he exhibits. And being so, it is animal feeling. For, nothing is plainer, than that the feeling in one which is fed by feeling in another, is mere sympathy, and animal feeling. It cannot be any thing else.

So also with the converse; in which I conclude he means to suppose one who is in the exercise of Christian feelings, though in a low degree. He applies some terms to him, which, as I should understand them, denote the opposite of

Christian feelings ; but as he probably means to make an exact contrast, I pass over these. Your affections are low—you hear the ardent man pray or preach—“ if your affections will not rise, if they refuse to enkindle ; although you believe every word he says, yet you are not *pleased*. He is above your temperature ; you are annoyed with the *manner*, and fire, and spirit of the man. The higher he rises, if your affections grovel, the farther apart you are, and the more you are displeased. While your heart is *wrong*, [that is, of low temperature,] the nearer *right* he is, [that is, the higher his temperature,] the more he burns upon you, if your heart will not enkindle, the more you are disgusted.” Exactly true again, if it is mere animal feeling, of the kind which has been described. The state of my nervous system is such, as to be pleasantly affected only with the soft tones of the harp ; but he pours upon me “ the din of trumpets, drums, and cymbals,” and I am pained and disgusted. But, very different is the case, if it is Christian feeling. Though my Christian feelings, which consist in the love of the truth, are in a low degree, yet if he makes a clear and vivid exhibition of that truth which I love, I am pleased. And with respect to the *manner* of the preacher, if it is the eloquence of holy love, and I am a Christian, I cannot fail of being delighted with it, though ever so much above the tone of my own feelings. Christians are not unfrequently in a state in which their holy affections are low ; but never, I believe, in that state in which the exhibition of that truth which they love does not please them. And while that truth which they love is exhibited, they are not displeased but delighted at the appearance of a high degree of love to it in the preacher. I have never known an instance of the contrary, in the circle of my Christian friends. And among the revival ministers of my acquaintance, I have never known one who was not pleased at the exhibition of a high degree of holy feeling in another, even though his own feelings should not come up to the same temperature. The remarks may hold good, as far as animal feelings are concerned ; but will not apply to Christian experience.

Again, page 6, he says, “ We may learn why persons differing in theory upon doctrinal points in religion, and belonging to different denominations, will often, for a time, walk together in great harmony and affection. It is because they *feel deeply*, and feel alike. Their differences are in a great measure lost or forgotten, while they fall in with each other’s state of *feeling*.” It has often been noticed that those, between whose professed doctrinal views there is the greatest difference, do sometimes thus harmonize. Some have won-

dered at it; but others have understood it well. The true reason is here given, if by *feeling* is understood animal feeling. But if their *feeling* consisted in the love of what they respectively consider as truth, there would be no such agreement; and the more of that kind of feeling each had, the farther asunder they would be. But, let two persons, thus differing from each other in their doctrinal views, be filled with the kind of animal feeling which has been mentioned, that is, the *martial* kind, and let their religion consist chiefly in this, and their differences are easily forgotten, for neither will attach much importance to them. They can meet together, and readily join in the same *manner* of expressing their feelings. They can sigh, and groan, and vociferate, in perfect harmony; they can think a noisy and tumultuous meeting a great excellence, and an evidence of the peculiar presence of the Holy Spirit; they can cry out, and fall down, and have "the power," and speak and pray, all at once, males and females, old and young, and find a perfect unison of *feeling* in it all. "It is because they *feel deeply*, and *feel alike*." And this accounts for what some have wondered at, that some nominal Calvinists have thought it a high commendation of the new measures, to say, they were so much like those practised by the Methodists; and that some Methodists have said the new converts made under these measures were really Methodists, and it was not fair to hurry them into Calvinistic churches, before they had time to discover their proper home.

Again, page 6. "We see why young converts love to associate with *each other*, and with those older saints who have most religious *feeling*; these walk together, because they *feel alike*." Young converts have been often spoken of, in these days, as being much nearer right than old Christians; and it is doubtless true, if to have the most of this kind of animal feeling is to be nearest right. Old Christians, who have grown in the knowledge of the scriptures and of themselves, know well, that when they were young converts, they had much more of that kind of animal feeling, and much less of that feeling which consists in the love of the truth. Their knowledge of the truth was then very small, and they could not love any more than they knew. With their increasing knowledge of the truth, that feeling which consists in the love of the truth, has increased, but their animal feeling has diminished. Young converts having much animal feeling, and but little else, of course harmonize most with each other, and with such old Christians as have not grown in knowledge nor in the love of the truth, but have always made their religion to consist chiefly in animal feeling.

The fact is correctly accounted for, if it is animal feeling that is meant.

Again, page 6. "We see why lukewarm professors and impenitent sinners have *the same* difficulties with *means*, in revivals of religion. We often hear them complain of the *manner* of preaching and praying. Their objections are *the same*: the reason is, that their affections are nearly the same. It is the fire and the spirit that disturb their frosty hearts." By lukewarm professors understand those whose feeling is not *up* to the required temperature, those who have not imbibed this martial spirit. By the *manner* of preaching and praying, of which they complain, understand that *manner* which is expressive of this kind of animal feeling, at its high temperature. It is the spirit of war. It attacks impenitent sinners, and those professors who do not come up to the required temperature, with the same abrupt, harsh, reproachful, and provoking language. Such professors, being cool, and not having their judgment biassed by passion, regard such treatment as improper, and inconsistent with the meek, and mild, and gentle, and benevolent temper of the gospel; and if they say any thing on the subject, they express this judgment. And those impenitent sinners who are displeased on this account, or on any other account, will be most likely to make the same objections. The fact that they make the same objections is very far from proving a likeness of moral character between them, as has been already shown. But the fact that they are alike "annoyed by the warmth and spirit" with which they are fiercely attacked, does prove, I am willing to admit, that they neither of them enter into this kind of feeling, and have not the same spirit enkindled within them. They are alike destitute, for the time, of this class of animal feeling. But, if the feeling spoken of, were the love of the truth, it would produce very different effects upon the impenitent, and upon those Christians whose affections are low. The impenitent would probably be displeased with the truth exhibited, if they felt it at all; and they might complain that it should be urged with so much warmth. But Christians would not be displeased with that truth which they love; nor would they be displeased to see others love it in a very high degree; nor would they complain that it was urged with too much warmth, provided it were done with decorum, and in the spirit of meekness.

Again, page 7. "We see why ministers visiting revivals, often, at first, raise objections to the means used, and cavil, and sometimes take sides with the wicked:* the praying,

* Mark this: "Ministers often *cavil*, and sometimes take sides with the wicked." Those who make any objections are denounced without ceremony.

preaching, and conversation are above their present temperature." It appears not to be the *truth* which is exhibited, that disturbs them, but the *temperature*. They often object to this, "at first," which implies, that they often afterwards fall in. Now, this is exactly descriptive of the effect of this kind of animal feeling. Animal feeling in one has a tendency to produce the same kind of animal feeling in another, by mere sympathy; and it often does. So that those who were not affected by it "at first," may come into it afterwards. At first they judged with coolness, and disapproved, because what they witnessed was not according to the law and the testimony. But afterwards, when they began to come under the influence of the same animal feeling, their passions overcame their judgment, and their scruples of conscience, and they were prepared to fall in. Many instances of this have no doubt occurred; and they are easily accounted for, if it is animal feeling. They objected, *at first*, because it was contrary to their settled judgment, deliberately formed from the study of the scriptures, and the experience of themselves and others, and their acquaintance with the history of revivals. But they fell in afterwards, because their animal feelings were moved by sympathy, till they were carried away. And the less spiritual they were, the more readily they were brought to fall in, because they had less holy affection, and less of the force of conscience to be overcome.

Again, page 7. "We see why ministers and private Christians differ about *prudential measures*." And "we see *the same person* having very different notions of *prudence*, and, consequently, practising very differently at different times." The idea seems to be, that the man whose feeling is at the high temperature, will judge differently as to what is prudent, from the man whose feeling is at the low temperature. And that the man who is at the low temperature, is not, and *cannot* be, qualified to judge what is right, in point of prudence, for the man to do, who is at the high temperature. It is doubtless true, that the man who suffers his animal feelings to control his judgment, will judge differently when most under the influence of his passions, from what he does when least under their influence. And while passion reigns, he will be very likely to think it right so to do; but when passion cools, and reason resumes her sway, and conscience and the bible are again suffered to speak, he will be convinced he was wrong in thinking so.

Again, page 8. "We may learn how to estimate the opinions of ministers and Christians, and *our own opinions*, when our affections are in a bad state." By *bad state*, understand the *low temperature*, when passion has the least influence, and

we have the meaning of the rule. The man who is under the influence of passion, approves of what his passions incline him to do; but the man who is least under the influence of passion, and judges by the known rules of the word of God, will condemn him for so doing. The meaning intended, doubtless, is, that the former is right; but every sober Christian, who means to follow his bible, must say, that the latter is right. The whole paragraph might be assented to, and the conclusion drawn be exactly the reverse of what the author evidently intended. So with the resolution of Edwards here quoted, "that he would always act as he saw to be most proper when he had the clearest views of the things of religion." All would assent to the resolution; but every considerate man would apply it directly to contradict the sentiments of the sermon. The clearest views, are not those which we have when our animal feelings are most excited, but when they are the least so, when the mind looks at divine things with the greatest calmness and deliberation.

Again, page 9. "We learn why churches are sometimes convulsed by revivals of religion." "As those who are awake become more engaged, more spiritual and active, the others, if they *will not awake*, will be jealous and offended, and feeling rebuked by the engagedness of others, will cavil, and find themselves the more displeased, as those that are more spiritual rise farther above them. The nearer to a right state of feeling the engaged ones arrive, the farther apart they are; and as they *ascend* on the scale of holy feeling, if *others will not ascend with them*, the almost certain consequence will be, that these will *descend*, until they really have no *community* of feeling, and can no longer walk together, because they are not agreed." He is speaking of real Christians, whom he supposes an eminently pure revival of religion thus to drive asunder, till there is nothing in *common* between them. Is it so? Do not real Christians feel complacency in the image of Christ wherever they see it? And does not their complacency increase, as more of that image becomes visible? If they see others have more of it than themselves, does it displease and offend them? The divisions and distractions of churches, which the new measures have so often occasioned in these days, as similar measures did in the days of Davenport, doubtless rendered it of great importance to endeavour to account for those divisions and convulsions, in a way that should prove that the new measures are right; and that those measures for promoting revivals are wrong, which have been so long and so successfully used in New-England, by the most distinguished promoter of revivals in our age, and which are so different from these, and have pro-

duced so different an effect upon the churches, leaving them generally united, and happy, and strengthened, instead of being divided, distracted, and wretched, and weak. The author accounts for it, perhaps, in the way which best meets his views. But it would have been better adapted to instruct others, if he had given us some rule by which to judge when people are awake, and when they are not. As he gives us none but the general one of the high and low temperature, the *degree* of feeling, and not the *kind*, and as it has been shown that the kind intended must be the animal feeling of the martial class, there is no difficulty in accounting for its producing such effects. Some Christians will imbibe it, and under its influence will “glow, and blaze, and burn,” on all around them; that is, they will, with true martial fire and spirit, fall upon those who do not come *up* to the same temperature, and greatly annoy them with their denunciations and reproaches, calling them cold, and stupid and dead, and it may be hypocrites and apostates, and perhaps publicly praying for them by name as such, till they are more and more disgusted, pained, and distressed, and the church is rent in pieces. Not so with a revival of true religion, which increases the spirit of the gospel, the spirit of meekness, and kindness, and gentleness, and brotherly affection. If a portion of the members of the church have an increase of this, and some others have not, it will lead those who have, to treat such as have not, in a manner that tends to win them, rather than to displease and enrage them. This is on the supposition that both classes are real Christians, who love the same truths, and differ only in their degree of holy feeling. Churches have sometimes been convulsed, through the opposition of some of their members to the truths of the gospel, which were more forcibly and plainly exhibited at such a time, and the view of which they could not bear, because they did not love them. But this is a case entirely different from the one exhibited in the sermon before us.

Again, page 9. “We see why ministers are sometimes unsettled by revivals.” He supposes that a minister may awake, and that many of his people will not; in which case he concludes the minister “will most assuredly press them with truth, and annoy them by his spirit, and pungency, and fire, until he offends them.” “Another case may occur, where the church and people may awake, while the shepherd sleeps, and will not awake. This will inevitably alienate their affections from him, and destroy their confidence in him.” “In the former case, let the minister obey the command of Christ, and ‘shake off the dust of his feet, for a testimony against them.’ In the latter, let the church *shake off*

their sleepy minister ; they are better without him than with him." Here, as in many other places, there is a semblance of truth in what is said ; and if it had been correctly explained, and carefully guarded, it might pass. But, with the interpretation which the general tenor of the discourse requires, and with the meaning which hearers and readers generally would understand, in its connexion, and under the circumstances in which it was preached,* it is a bold attempt to carry the new measures out into all their legitimate consequences. It has the semblance of truth : because a minister may give offence by the clear and faithful exhibition of the doctrines of the bible ; or he may displease the soundest members of his church by refusing to exhibit them. But it is not the preaching of the *doctrines* which is here intended. *Plain preaching*, and *preaching the truth*, in the vocabulary of those who adopt the new measures, do not mean preaching the *doctrines* clearly and abundantly ; with which offence I believe they ought not to be charged. It has reference to the *manner* in which people are addressed, "the spirit, and pungency, and fire," with which the preacher "glows, and blazes, and burns upon them." It has reference to that of which people complain as harsh and abusive treatment. Those who are the best friends of the plain exhibition of the doctrines of the gospel, and those who have been long known as the best friends of revivals, have complained of this ; and here is an attempt to assign the reason. It is because they "will not enter into the spirit of a revival ;" that is, they do not enter into the new measures, they do not give way to this class of animal feeling, nor suffer their judgment to be overborne by the violence of passion. And the minister who does, and cannot bring his people "*up to it*," must leave them. But if the church enter into this spirit, and the minister does not, "*let them shake off their sleepy minister*." This is certainly taking a bold stand ; and is going one step farther than Davenport and the old Separates. They only withdrew, and separated themselves from those they denounced as "cold and sleepy ministers" in their way. But, times have altered ; and it is much easier now to "shake off" a minister that is disliked, than it was then. So that this is the first thing to be attempted ; and if this attempt should not succeed, they may then separate themselves, as a last resort. If an individual *awakes*, that is, if he adopts these new mea-

* It was when the Presbytery were about attending to difficulties which had grown out of the introduction of the new measures, at the place where they were met, and where the discourse was preached.

tures, and gets full of that kind of animal feeling which they promote, he must try to bring his minister into the same spirit; and if he cannot succeed, he must go about and try to raise a party to "shake him off." I have heard of such advice being given privately to individuals, in particular cases, but this is the first time I have ever known it to be publicly preached and printed, as serious advice in all cases. And what is the rule by which individual church members may know when it is their duty to set about his work, and try to "shake off their sleepy minister?" No rule is given in this immediate connexion; but perhaps one is found on the 12th page: "If the *matter* of preaching is right, and the sinner is *pleased*, there is something defective in the *manner*." If the unconverted part of the congregation are generally satisfied with the minister, it is a certain indication that he is a "sleepy minister," and ought to be "shaken off." Individuals, then, have only to ask whether the congregation are generally in peace, and satisfied with their minister; and if they are, it is their duty to commence measures to drive him away. For advising less than this, in Boston, Davenport was indicted by the grand jury, as a disturber of the peace, and acquitted on his trial, solely on the ground of being insane at the time. And when he afterwards "came to himself," he made and published a confession of it; which, though it had a good appearance as it regarded his own piety, did not stop the progress of those evils which his disorderly measures had introduced, and the permanent effects of which remain to this day. And instances are not wanting, in our own times, of those who have acted upon the principles of this sermon.

Some have already arisen to "shake off their sleepy ministers," and have succeeded in their attempts. Others have endeavoured to do it, and have failed. One case has occurred in Durham, in the church under the care of the Rev. Seth Williston, whose character as an active and successful promoter of revivals has been long established, and is well known. The story is, in substance as follows: A young convert from the West made his appearance there, saying, that he "knew all about how to conduct revivals," and pointing to the meeting-house, told of the "abominations that were portrayed on those walls." He talked insolently to the minister, and then to the people against him. And after an evening lecture which Mr. W. preached, he dropped on his knees, and told the Lord a long story about Mr. W., and how he had talked to him, and what he had said in his sermon that was false, and so tried to convince the people and the Lord that Mr. W. was a liar, and going down to hell if he did not repent. Upon Mr. W's. trying to calm the people,

by putting the most charitable construction upon his conduct, that of his not being in his right mind, his brother, who was a member of the church, arose, and told the people that Mr. W. was "the head Achan in the camp," and that "his character was as black as hell," &c., upon which some went and tried to still them, while the minister and others retired. For his conduct that evening, this member was laboured with by the brethren, and justified himself on the principles of this sermon. He said he had nothing against Mr. W., but he "did it to have a revival." And so strongly was he persuaded that he was in the way of his duty, in thus endeavouring to wake up or "shake off his sleepy minister," that every effort to convince him of his fault was utterly fruitless, and the church felt compelled to proceed to excommunication. Had not this church been more understandingly and decidedly attached to the cause of pure revivals than is common, and had not their minister been a man of singular piety and prudence, it seems very probable that he would have been "shaken off" and dismissed in consequence of these things, as, it is believed, several have been in consequence of similar measures. One instance of the latter kind, is that which occurred in Stockholm, where the Rev. Moses Parmlee, a known and decided friend to revivals, was publicly denounced, both in direct declarations and in prayer, as "a hireling—an Achan—in the gall of bitterness—in such a state that the Lord could not convert sinners in his presence," &c. In this case, those who made the attempt succeeded in "shaking off their sleepy minister," as appears from the result of the council which dismissed him, published at Potsdam, April, 1827. It may be said, that these cases occurred before the publication of the sermon. This is true; but when those who were concerned in them shall read the sermon, I think they will not fail of feeling confirmed and strengthened in their proceedings, by the principles and advice it contains.

Again, page 10. "We may see that carnal professors and sinners have no difficulty with *animal feeling*." Page 11. "Adopt a strain of exhortation or preaching that is calculated to awaken mere sympathy and animal feeling, and you will soon see that there is a perfect community of feeling among cold and warm hearted Christians and sinners; they will all weep, and seem to melt, and no one will be offended." "But change your style, and become more spiritual and holy in your *matter*, and throw yourself out in an ardent and powerful *manner*, in direct appeal to the conscience and the heart—their tears will be dried, the carnal and cold hearted will soon become uneasy, and soon find themselves offended." I think this is not exactly so, even if explained

according to the *key* before mentioned. Let us paraphrase it. The class of animal feeling condemned, is the tender, weeping class. What is called spiritual and holy feeling, is the martial class. Mere tragic painting will excite the one class; "they will all weep, and seem to melt, and no one will be offended." But, different constitutions have this kind of sensibility in different degrees; and those who are full of the martial kind of animal feeling, have, for the time, very little of this, and are often displeased to see it. Let an assembly, however, be deeply affected with this disposition to weep; and then "change your style, and become more" *martial* "in your matter, and throw yourself out in an ardent and powerful *manner*, in direct appeal to" the other class of animal feeling, that is, the *martial* class, "their tears will soon be dried;" those who enter into this spirit will not weep, they will burn and blaze. Those who do not enter into it, "will become uneasy, and soon find themselves offended." But those who have the *war* spirit, will be offended at the tragic painting, which was addressed to the weeping sensibilities, and with which the other class are gratified, as much perhaps as those who have the tender kind of animal feeling are offended at the martial fire, in this case. And both on the principles illustrated by the effects of the two kinds of music mentioned on the 5th page of the sermon. In this place I see not how to reconcile the author with himself, any better than with facts.

Again, page 11. "We learn how to estimate *apparent revivals* where there is no opposition from the wicked."

Page 12. "*That excitement* which does not call out the opposition of the wicked and wrong hearted, is either not a revival of *religion* at all, or it is so conducted that sinners do not see the finger of God in it." And farther, "Those means and that preaching, both as to *matter* and *manner*, which call forth most of the native enmity of the heart, are nearest right." Here, again, is some appearance of truth, but so exhibited as to make a wrong impression. The clear exhibition of the *doctrines* of the bible is adapted to excite the enmity of the carnal heart, and often does, in a high degree. But it is not the clear exhibition of the *doctrines* of the gospel, that this discourse is designed to defend; it is something very different. The new measures have excited much opposition; and that opposition is to be accounted for, in such a way as to make it prove that the new measures are nearest right. And the impression is also to be made, that these revivals which are taking place without the new measures, are wrong, because they excite less open and violent opposition. The truth, doubtless, is, that in some places, the doctrines of

the gospel have been so long and so clearly preached, that the congregation in general have the conviction that they are true, and that they are the appointed means of the conviction and conversion of sinners. Their selfish desire of being happy hereafter leads them to wish to have those doctrines preached, by means of which alone they have any hope that they shall ever be saved. And when they are so far awakened, and have so much conviction of sin, as to fill them with deep distress, and make those doctrines painful to them, they yet wish to have them kept before their minds, on the same principle that a man wishes to have the surgeon apply his probe or his amputating knife to a diseased limb, as the means of saving his life. In such cases, where the right means are used with the greatest fidelity, but yet with the tenderness and kindness which the gospel requires, no open opposition is to be expected. And it is to me a pleasant circumstance, when I read an account of a revival in a place where I think the people have correct instruction, to find it stated that there is no open opposition. I infer, that the consciences of the impenitent are so kept on the side of truth, that they are disposed to give it a favourable hearing; and that there is consequently some reason to hope it will yet be made effectual to their conviction and conversion. Instead of concluding "it is not a revival of *religion* at all, or that it must be so conducted that sinners do not see the finger of God in it," as the author does, I draw the contrary conclusion, and am led to hope for its longer continuance, its better permanent effects, and its being followed by a less injurious reaction when it has passed by. As it is the great object of the sermon, however, to justify the new measures, and to turn the objections which are made against them into proof of their being right; all those measures for promoting revivals which are not thus opposed must be condemned as wrong; and all those revivals, which are now taking place without the new measures, and without the opposition they excite, and without "making a great deal of *noise* in the world," under such measures, as have been in use for the last thirty years, and sanctioned by the name of a man who is deservedly dear to all the friends of pure revivals, must be put down, as "no revivals of religion at all, or so conducted that sinners do not see the finger of God in them."

The remainder of the discourse is principally directed to this object, and especially what is said of the preaching of Christ and his apostles, and the opposition which it excited. A cursory reader, who did not carefully attend to his bible, would be led to suppose that the preaching of Christ and the apostles was *always* "opposed with great bitterness," and

that if any preachers now are not thus opposed, it proves that they are not like Christ and the apostles. And the comparison is not obscurely made between those "professors of religion," who were then "often leaders in the opposition, the religious teachers and learned doctors" of that day, and the professors of religion and ministers of this day who oppose the new measures. And the idea is plainly communicated, that the complaints against the advocates of the new measures, of being "*imprudent* ; their preaching too overbearing and severe," and there being "something *wrong* in their management of revivals," might have been as justly made against Christ and the apostles ; and are rather to be considered as evidence of a striking likeness between these men and Christ and the apostles. And there is a very offensive insinuation of "great spiritual pride," and the study of "carnal policy and management," and a "hypocritical suavity of manner," made against some of the most experienced promoters of revivals, at the present day, in consequence of what they have said about "the theory of revivals being better understood now" than in the days of Davenport, and the preference they have given to measures which are mild and gentle in their nature, and silent and still in their operation, over those which are ostentatious and noisy, and adapted to stir up opposition ; as if they pretended to be more prudent and wise than the apostles, instead of merely claiming, as they do, to understand the management of revivals better than Davenport and his insane followers. And the concluding sentences are, "let us not be puffed up, and imagine that we are *prudent* and *wise*, and have learned how to manage carnal professors and sinners, whose 'carnal mind is enmity against God,' so as not to call forth their opposition to truth and holiness, as Christ and his apostles did. But let us know, that if they have less difficulty with *us*, and with our *lives* and *preaching*, than they had with theirs, it is because we are less holy, less heavenly, less like God, than they were. If we walk with the lukewarm and ungodly, or they with *us*, it is because we are agreed : for two cannot walk together except they *be agreed*."

The principle upon which all this is founded, is, that an impenitent sinner *could not* be pleased with the preaching or conduct of the Lord Jesus Christ, nor with any preaching or conduct that is right. If a Christian lives as he ought, and if a minister preaches as he ought, it cannot fail, according to this theory, to give offence. The author says, "If the *matter* of preaching is right, and the sinner is pleased, there is something defective in the *manner*." And not only must right preaching give offence to some sinners, but it must give

offence to all sinners. And it must not only give offence to every sinner at some times, but it must give offence to every sinner at all times. For, whenever the sinner is pleased with any thing in the Christian, it proves that that thing is wrong. If any exception is admitted to this rule, it will destroy the whole discourse, and defeat its object entirely. A few examples will suffice to show its fallacy; and any child, who reads his bible, can find others in abundance.

“Herod heard John *gladly*” and was induced by what he said to “do many things.” What was the defect in John’s preaching? Was it wrong in *matter*, or wrong in *manner*, that Herod was pleased? Afterwards, when he was disposed to put John to death, to gratify a wicked woman, he feared the multitude, because they counted John as a prophet. John had gained so strong a hold on the affections of the multitude that Herod was afraid his putting him to death would excite an insurrection. Will it be said, the multitude were saints, or that John had been unfaithful? When Christ asked the chief priests and scribes about the baptism of John, they were afraid to say it was of men, and this was the reason, “If we say, of men, all the people will stone us.” According to the principle of this discourse, John must have been a very bad man, very unfaithful, to have excited such feeling in his favour among the mass of the people, that the chief priests and elders were afraid of being stoned, if they should say a word against him. To those very Jews who were seeking his life, Christ said of John, “He was a burning and a shining light; and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.” What was the fault of John, which they were pleased with, and *rejoiced in*? No fault at all; they rejoiced in *his light*. John was austere in his manners, and eminently faithful in the ministry; yet the expressions of being pleased with him and his preaching, which we find on record, are much more numerous than those of a contrary nature. The scribes and pharisees were displeased; but the common people, the great mass of the nation, though unconverted, were very much in his favour.

They were pleased also with the Lord Jesus Christ. Great multitudes followed him, and pressed upon him to hear him, so that he was frequently so thronged as not to find time to take food or rest. The scribes and pharisees were displeased, but “the common people heard him gladly.” He taught in the synagogues of Galilee, “being glorified of all.” According to our author, there must have been something wrong in his preaching. Which was it, “defective in *matter* or defective in *manner*?” When he passed over the sea to the country of the Gadarenes, the people of the other side wait-

ed for his return, and received him gladly. On one occasion, he was compelled to withdraw from the multitude, to prevent their taking him by force and making him a king. When he came openly to Jerusalem, for the last time, "much people that were come to the feast, took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried Hosannah; blessed is the king of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord." And when the Pharisees saw it, they said among themselves, "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him." We read, very often, that the chief priests and scribes sought how they might take him by subtlety, and put him to death; and were in great difficulty how to accomplish it, for fear of the people.

"But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people." So strongly were the great mass of the people, though a race of impenitent sinners, prepossessed in his favour, that his enemies were obliged to hire Judas to betray him in the night, in the absence of the multitude, and then to fasten upon him the charge of blasphemy, before the chief priests, and obtain the consent of the Roman governor to his death. How is all this to be accounted for? Had he been unfaithful in his dealing with the common people? Had he walked with them, or they with him, because they were *agreed* in their moral character? No. Yet the number of those that were pleased appears to have been much greater than the number of those that were displeased. And it was only by craft and subtlety, and false accusations, that his enemies could find how to accomplish their designs.

The same appears to be true of the apostles, and of their ministry. Read the Acts of the Apostles through, and you will find abundant evidence of this. In all cases of persecution against them, it was stirred up by the few; while the many, if they had been let alone, were inclined to favour them, or at least to treat them with respect. The revival on the day of Pentecost overcame all opposition, for a time; so that it is written of the disciples, "and they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and *having favour with all the people*. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." When on the occasion of the healing of the lame man, Peter and John were apprehended, and brought before the rulers, they did not dare to punish them, "because of the people." When they were apprehended again, the officers were afraid to offer any violence to them, lest they themselves should have been stoned by the multitude. There was no danger of their being stoned by those

who were converted, but by those who were unconverted, who were strongly inclined to favour and protect the apostles against their persecuting rulers. In several places where Paul and his companions suffered persecution, they were favourably received and well treated by the multitude, till certain designing individuals came from other places, and by their intrigues raised a persecution against them. Paul abode on the island of Melita three months, without the least appearance of opposition that we read of, but, on the contrary, was "honoured with many honours."

Do these things prove that John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, and the apostles, walked, in all these cases, with the ungodly, or the ungodly with them, because they were *agreed* in their moral character? No; it cannot be pretended.

Will the ungodly world, then, be generally pleased with the exhibition of Christianity in its purest form? and if so, what becomes of the doctrine that "the carnal mind is enmity against God?" The answer is not difficult. Men of sense, though unconverted, can and do see, that the Christian character, in its perfect form, is excellent and lovely; and it commands their respect and admiration, when viewed in its true light, and secures their consciences in its favour. And though the hearts of men are naturally selfish, and selfishness is the opposite of the Christian temper, yet men can see that it is for their advantage to have others live like Christians, and treat them as the gospel requires. Their own selfish feelings are gratified, in many instances, by having others do justly, love mercy, and walk circumspectly. It is only when the temper of the gospel is expressed in a way which crosses their path and thwarts their selfish wishes, that it rouses their opposition. And this is the reason why the clear exhibition of the doctrines of the gospel is so peculiarly offensive, particularly the divine sovereignty, in disposing of all creatures and all events as is for the greatest good, and the necessity of self-denial, in order to be Christ's disciples. These things will give offence, if they are felt at all, unless those on whom they are urged are so convinced of their truth and importance, that their selfish regard for their own safety silences their opposition, as has been observed. But the opposition which is made to the new measures is not on this ground. The advocates of them are complained of, for not preaching those doctrines which are considered so peculiarly offensive to the unrenewed heart, so much, so plainly, and so powerfully, as other revival ministers have done. The opposition is on far different grounds; and in view of what has been observed, is plainly no evidence at all in their favour. Nor is it safe to conclude, that the want of opposition to

other measures for promoting revivals is any evidence against them, without taking into view the circumstances of the case, and finding proof from them that it is the want of faithfulness in the exhibition of truth, or in the urging of duty. We must not adopt a rule of judging, in this matter, that would condemn the Lord Jesus and his inspired apostles, as well as those at this day whom we may wish to condemn.

Perhaps an apology is necessary for giving to this discourse a review of such a length. Neither the talents nor standing of the author, nor any thing in the discourse itself, if it had been published under ordinary circumstances, would have induced me to bestow so much attention upon it. But the system of measures with which it is connected, and of which it is a defence, is so calamitous in its tendency, and is urged on by its advocates with so much ardour and perseverance, the discourse, from the semblance of truth which it wears, and the different interpretations which may be given it, when objected to, is so well adapted to produce the impression intended on the minds of those who follow their feelings more than their judgment, and has been multiplied and circulated with so much zeal, that there appears to me to be great cause of alarm. Though professedly a discourse upon the subject of Christian experience and revivals of religion, it is so destitute of any correct distinctions, and so well adapted to justify false zeal, false affections, and spurious conversions, and so capable of being applied to sanction every species and degree of enthusiasm and fanaticism, and to condemn all sober revivals, and all those measures for promoting revivals which have stood the test of ages, that the importance of the subject appears to me to justify, and call for still more attention than has been paid to it. And if such a discourse shall be circulated by thousands in every direction, and be admired by many, and the watchmen of Israel should regard it with apathy, I should consider it as a most alarming indication that false religion and spurious revivals were about to have a far wider spread than our country has ever witnessed.

I cannot think, however, that the author of this discourse can obtain the countenance and support of ministers and Christians generally, and especially of the friends of revivals, till he shall publicly retract the erroneous sentiments it contains, and make a confession before the world for the injurious charges it labours to establish against all who disapprove of the new measures; and especially for giving such advice to "shake off their sleepy ministers," as all disorganizers will consider a full warrant for any disorderly measures they may be inclined to pursue to accomplish that end. And I believe the Christian public must and will hold responsible for

these errors any who shall continue to give the author their countenance and support, so long as he shall refuse to make such a retraction.

In conclusion, I cannot do justice to my own feelings without solemnly calling upon the author of this discourse to re-examine his own experience, and see whether there is any thing in it of a different nature from what he here urges upon others. When a man preaches and publishes a sermon upon a subject so highly experimental as this, it is to be expected, that, if he understands himself, he will disclose the nature of his own experience, and require that of others to be as good as his own. But if there is nothing in the experience of the author, better than what appears in this discourse, I cannot but have the most serious fears that he has deceived himself, and will find, at last, that he has made a fatal mistake, and that for eternity.

NOVANGLUS.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NEW-YORK OBSERVER.

Dr. Beecher's Letter to Mr. Beman.

Boston, Dec. 15, 1827.

Gentlemen,—The letter I now send you, has been often requested for publication. Until the present time I have never been entirely convinced that it was best to publish it. But recently circumstances to which I need not allude, have brought me to the conclusion that it is my duty to consent to its publication. Indeed from the principles contained in Mr. Finney's Sermon, and from what I know concerning revivals which have taken place under his immediate auspices, I am sure that the "new measures," as they are justly called, though not unattended with some good, do nevertheless introduce into revivals another spirit, of whose nature and general influence those who countenance these measures seem not to be aware.

It is a spirit of fanaticism, of spiritual pride, censoriousness, and insubordination to the order of the Gospel, which, if not met by the timely and decided disapprobation of ministers and churches, threatens to become one of the greatest evils which is likely to befall the cause of Christ.

In this opinion I am confirmed by all I have seen or heard from the commencement of these evils to the present day.

For many who differ from me I have cherished sentiments of high estimation and do still cherish them, with the exception of what appears to me a dangerous mistake in respect to the "new measures" for promoting Revivals of Religion.

Nor is it my wish to limit the usefulness of Mr. Finney. My constant desire is, that he may be more useful in time to come: and I have no doubt he may become more useful than ever, if he will cease from and disavow those peculiarities which have not been the cause of his usefulness, and by rendering good men justly afraid of him, have constantly thrown impediment in the way of his success.

I am respectfully yours,
 LYMAN BEECHER.

Boston, January, 1827.

Dear Brother,—It is some time since I have been rejoicing in the revivals of the West,—as I had hoped, the beginning of a new era in revivals, in respect to rapidity and universality. I had begun to anticipate as the result, such a power of moral sentiment in the West, as, in alliance with New-England and other parts of the church, might ere long raise a rampart around the sabbath, and check the burning tide of intemperance, and the progress of heresy and error.

It is not until recently that a rumor has floated on the breeze to excite solicitude. But first by a paragraph in the Christian Register, I was alarmed; and since, by unquestionable information from eye-witnesses and friends of the work, my fears have been greatly increased, that Satan, as usual, is plotting to dishonour a work which he cannot withstand. Far be it from me, at this distance, to write a letter of advice, much less of reproof. I can only pour out my thoughts, from my heart, into your bosom, upon such general topics as seem to be in the neighbourhood of danger, and ask your candid and prayerful attention to the subject; and I feel the more emboldened to hope that my motives will be duly appreciated and my suggestions regarded, from the consideration that I have not heretofore fallen under the imputation of a temporising policy, nor been suspected, I believe of cowardice.

Allow me then, with as little circumlocution as possible, to speak my thoughts upon several topics:—I have confidence in the piety and talents of brother Finney, and have no doubt that he brings the truth of God to bear upon the conscience with uncommon power, and in a manner highly calculated to arouse the public mind, and awaken, and con-

vince of sin. I am aware too, that ministers and churches in their ordinary state, compared with the spirit of a revival, are deplorably lukewarm, and often need strong measures, to bring them up to the point of even prudent zeal, and such as is indispensable to a powerful work of divine grace. I also fully believe, that means adequate to this end, though ever so prudently applied, must be such as sometimes will offend hypocrites and cold hearted professors, who are not reclaimed by them. I can perceive also, that ministers, from a variety of causes, are liable to perform their duty less faithfully towards men of wealth, honour, and high stations, than with reference to persons in a more humble condition; and I am aware that more directness and plainness may in most and probably all cases be employed, than is employed to affect that class of the community, whose influence would be so salutary to the cause of Christ.

I have no doubt that the promises of God, in respect to prayer, includes much more than has commonly been apprehended, and that a chief means of promoting those revivals which are to bring down the mountains, and exalt the valleys, and introduce the Millennium, is to be found in more comprehensive and correct views concerning the efficacy of prayer. Yet still I am satisfied, that there is no subject on which ardent minds are more liable to adopt hasty, and to some extent, false opinions, which may lead to pernicious effects. I am sure, that much has prevailed on the subject of the prayer of faith, as being *in accordance with my views*, which I should disavow and exceedingly disapprove. I am persuaded also, that the truths of the Gospel may be commended to the consciences of all men, both from the pulpit and in general addresses, with more directness and power than they are wont to be by ministers generally; and I am sure that during a revival they can be pressed with a closeness and pungency that would not be endured, and might be inexpedient, in any other circumstances. I am sensible also, that the truth cannot be brought to bear simultaneously upon the conscience of an extended community, without producing great emotion, and producing and justifying extraordinary efforts to obtain and to communicate religious instruction by meetings of increased frequency, and I am not afraid of poverty or famine from any efforts which men *will* make to save their souls.

I am persuaded too, from the close alliance between the moral and social movements of our nature, that some degree of imperfection and indiscretion may be as inseparable from a sudden and powerful revival of religion, as it is from every other sudden and powerful movement of human feeling; and

I am utterly fearless of any of the ordinary defects of a revival on which the enemy hang all their hopes of successful opposition. We might as well object to commerce or agriculture, until the entire business of a nation shall be by every man performed with perfect discretion, as to condemn revivals of religion, because imperfect and sinful beings, when strongly and justly excited, are not perfect in discretion.

No man appreciates more highly than I do, the importance of ardent, powerful, and fearless preaching, as a means of promoting revivals; or would deprecate more than I should, a cold-hearted, timid prudence, which would extinguish zeal and weaken the power of holy men when they are constrained by the love of Christ and the terrors of the Lord.

But the more important revivals of religion are, the more should we deprecate all needless repellences in the manner of conducting them; and the deeper the wave of public feeling which is rolled up by the breath of the Almighty, the greater is the danger, and the more injurious the effect of mismanagement. The ship pressed by mighty winds upon the mountain wave, needs a keen eye and a vigorous arm, as a slight movement of sail or helm may produce instantaneous shipwreck. Besides, revivals usually include but a small part of the entire community, and however well conducted, are destined to meet a re-action when they have passed away. The world will attempt to re-gain its lost dominion, and with a disposition to take ample vengeance for past annoyance and self-denial; with little injurious effect however, if the revival has not materially overstepped the bounds of real propriety, but with tremendous re-action if it has.

In the indiscretion of Davenport may be traced not only the suspension of the revival in this city 80 years ago, when he came here and began to denounce the ministers as unconverted men; but those indelible prejudices against revivals which made old Calvinists formal, Semi-calvinists Arminians, Arminians Unitarians, and Unitarians Universalists. The great Eastern defection was produced by the indiscretions of friends of the revivals, as much as by any one cause.

There are in this city and region now, orthodox churches in which there has not for 80 years been a common evening lecture, and cannot be, owing solely to the extravagance of revivals which took place almost a century ago.

The following are the subjects, upon which I would suggest a few thoughts:

I. The hasty recognition of persons as converted upon their own judgment, without interrogation or evidence. Revivals may become so great and rapid, as to make it proper

that those experiencing a change, in the course of a day, should meet in one place not to be recognised as converts, but to be examined, cautioned and instructed ; for the more powerful and rapid is the work of grace in a community, the more certain is the existence of sympathy and all the causes of self-deception ; and the more imperious the necessity of caution, unless we would replenish the church with hypocrites, to keep her agitated by discipline or covered with shame by the neglect of it.

II. Severe and repelling mode of preaching and conversing with stupid and awakened sinners, giving a predominance to the awful and terrific traits of the divine character and administration. It is a partial exhibition of the divine character and of the Gospel, and though it may be connected with success, it is because God in his mercy works by means of great relative imperfection, and not because it is the "more excellent way." It has a tendency to produce a defective and unlovely state of Christian feeling, a state of predominant severity instead of compassion and kindness. The human mind is *more* affected by kindness than by severity ; and though I have preached much the terrors of the Lord, it has been always with little effect, only as the justice of God, and his mercy, and the sinner's obduracy and ingratitude, have been exhibited in close alliance. I have not found naked terror to do much execution, either as the means of awakening men, or producing submission. It is the Law in the hands of a Mediator. It is the uplifted sword of justice, while Jesus invites and entreats and draws with the bands of love, which alarms, convinces of sin, and subdues the heart.

III. Assuming without sufficient evidence, that persons are unconverted. We may not possess any evidence that a person is pious, and it may be highly probable that he is not ; but probabilities do not render it expedient to assume the fact as certain. Because we enter on ground which we cannot maintain, and assume the appearance of censoriousness, calculated needlessly to awaken prejudice, and augment the phalanx of opposition. It is also wholly a superfluous evil. For why should we incur the responsibility of pronouncing a man unconverted, when a few questions, respectfully proposed, would obtain the data requisite for a close application, with deeper conviction, and less repellency.

IV. The application of harsh and provoking epithets, which, though they may be true in some theological sense, are, as they would naturally be understood, a violation of civilized decorum and of Christian courtesy. The application to men, of all the epithets which their character in the

sight of God might justify, would constitute a hell upon earth. It would be the action and re-action of provocation and insult ; it would prostrate all the valuable distinctions of society, and violate all the requisitions of the Gospel, of rendering honour to whom honour is due, and of being kindly affectionate, and gentle, and courteous. It would render the members of the same family, and the members of the same community, hateful and hating one another. Should pious parents address their unconverted offspring as serpents and a generation of vipers, or pious children assail the ears of their unconverted parents with the epithets of atheists, rebels, enemies of God, children of the devil ; any, but the sons of peace, might be expected to dwell in the family ; and should such provoking epithets be hurled at each other by members of the same community, it might qualify them sooner for Billingsgate than for the church of God. Should an unsettled minister of the Gospel, powerful in talents and zeal, and aided by success, carry himself sword in hand through the community in this overbearing style, we are not to suppose that settled ministers can with impunity do the same, or that any man, can do it permanently with impunity. For, emboldened by success, either he will be lifted up of pride and fall into the snare of the devil, or venturing on from one impropriety to another, the sensibilities of the community, goaded to desperation, will make a stand, and re-act, and sweep him away.

V. Another evil to be deprecated by such unusual treatment of mankind, is its tendency to produce imitators, who without the moral power, will offer the same provocation, and be treated by an indignant community as the seven sons of Sceva were treated by the unclean spirits.—“ Jesus we know, and Paul we know, but who are ye ?”

There is nothing in the example of our Saviour, or of the apostles, to authorize an address so calculated to exasperate. Did our Lord call the young ruler an atheist or a devil ? It was only when a course of open opposition to truth and evidence had indicated desperate wickedness, and produced reprobation, that our Lord assumed the language of severe rebuke, and terrific denunciation : and even in this, he acted as the Omniscient Judge, and not as a mere man. Generally his intercourse with sinful men is marked with compassionate dignity ; and even were his address direct and severe, it would not follow, that we might safely imitate. It was predicted of him, that he should not lift up his voice nor cry ; a bruised reed shall he not break, nor quench the smoking flax, until he shall bring forth judgment unto victory, i. e. he should deal so kindly and tenderly with awakened sinners, as

would neither discourage nor enrage them, but carry on the work to salvation. The example of Paul is fraught with instruction on this subject. For though the man never lived who possessed more moral courage, or struck home with more directness and power upon the conscience, yet no one ever manifested more dexterity or care to avoid the repellences of prejudice, or rousing up against himself the irritation of unsanctified feeling; and whenever it became indispensable to administer reproof, he forbears to smite, until by every possible preparation of kindness, he had insured its salutary influence and prevented injurious re-action. If he must smite, it is not until he had bound the culprit with cords of love, and even then the chastisement is applied with so much regret as is calculated rather to break the heart of the sufferer than to enrage it: and in this he consulted the dictates of a sound philosophy, as much as he did the dictates of his benevolent heart. It is certainly a new discovery, that prejudice and hatred and anger have become the salutary causes in pre-disposing the mind of a sinner for the reception of the truth; and if notwithstanding hard names and provoking buffetings, he is awakened and converted, how much more certainly might the same event have been looked for, had these repellences been allowed to sleep, while the same amount of merciful directness and earnestness had been applied to his conscience and his heart.

Nor are we to suppose that the sovereignty of God may be relied on alike in the neglect, as in the use of the most suitable means of interesting and affecting the human mind; for sovereignty consists in rescuing men without reference to legal or moral desert; but not in doing it without means, or in a way that supersedes the necessity of discretion, and does violence to all the laws of the human mind. He can save and does save by means of great relative imperfection: but it is by that which is good in them, and not by that which is defective, and affords no evidence that still greater good might not have been expected, had means been more wisely adapted and better applied.

The laws of the human mind are not to be outraged in preaching the Gospel, or the depravity of the heart needlessly roused and brought out into virulent action against man and God; and though those who themselves were exercised in this dreadful manner, are apt to imagine that all must feel just as they felt, and to preach with reference to the production of such horrid feelings, it is both needless and injurious to do it. There is impediment enough in man while the rage of his enmity sleeps, to forbid the exciting of its extreme violence, and enough to inspire compassion for the sinner,

without involving him in new disabilities by arraying against him the exasperated power of his depravity; and if some are saved notwithstanding, there is no reason to doubt that many are destroyed by such treatment, who might otherwise have been saved.

The following may serve as specimens of the Apostle's mode of preaching the Gospel and dealing with men. At Ephesus he served the Lord for three years with all humility of mind, and ceased not to warn every one night and day, with tears. At Athens, he reasoned with the philosophers on Mars' Hill, in a way that was neither harsh nor abrupt, but courteous and yet direct and powerful. To the Corinthian church, which had sinned greatly, he says, "I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. Wherefore, I beseech you, be ye followers of me." And in his second epistle, "Out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you, with many tears not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you, and though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent."

His care to allay and to avoid exciting prejudice, and to conciliate favour by a watchful accommodation of truth to the character, capacity, and condition of his hearers, is beautifully described in 1 Cor. iv. 9—21. Because the Gospel was true and all were sinners, he did not treat them all alike; "Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself the servant of all, that I might gain the more." The same treatment would not answer for all: "To the Jews I became as a Jew, to them without law as without law, to the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some; and this I do for the Gospel's sake." To the Galatians, endangered by false teachers, he says, "My little children of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you." The directions to Timothy, who was a young man, are, "Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father, and the younger men as brethren, the elder women as mothers, the younger as sisters with all purity." He had no notion that a young man, even as eminent as Timothy, should undertake to break down ministers. "And the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing them that oppose themselves, &c." The epistle of Paul to Philemon displays a consummate knowledge of the human heart, and is an unrivalled specimen of the most dexterous, delicate, and touching application of moral power; and illustrates perfectly the precept, "be ye as wise as serpents and harmless as doves." When the Apos-

tle used pointed and severe expressions, it was only in desperate cases. As inspired men, they were authorised by God to inflict disease and death, and to utter the most awful imprecations of divine vengeance, but they recognise themselves always as the mere agents of the Holy Ghost, and not as speaking themselves, or expressing their own feelings. Thus Ananias was struck dead for having lied unto the Holy Ghost. The Apostles being the medium through whom the Holy Ghost spake, and Paul "being filled with the Holy Ghost," denounced Elymas the sorcerer, and inflicted blindness upon him. When other men are filled in like manner with the Holy Ghost, and can work miracles in attestation of it, they may address, when God directs, individuals in the same manner. The martyr Stephen in the early part of his address was kind and conciliating. It was not until their incorrigibility was manifest, and "he filled with the Holy Ghost," that he uttered the fearful denunciations with which his speech closes. The same may be said of the bold address of Peter and John to the Jewish Sanhedrim, Acts iv. 10, 11, "Being filled with the Holy Ghost, Peter said," &c. i. e. spoke as directed by heaven. Paul also in his imprecation of destruction upon Alexander the coppersmith, is to be understood as denouncing the just judgment of God upon him, under the special guidance of the Spirit, and not as expressing his own vindictive feelings; and the same may be said of the imprecations recorded in the Psalms, and in the Prophets. In common cases, these men were kind and gentle, and more given to expostulation and tears, than to denunciation; and when they speak in this manner, are only the organs employed by heaven to denounce judgments upon the reprobate. God surely has a right to denounce judgments upon the wicked, and to select his own instruments, as he had to exterminate the Canaanites: and sometimes the holy men who pronounce these imprecations expressly say that they are authorised by God to do his "strange work," and yet they do it in "bitterness of spirit," and only because "the hand of the Lord was strong upon them." They therefore executed only a specific commission, in given circumstances; and their conduct furnishes no authority to un-inspired ministers to apply to their unconverted hearers generally, the same fearful language which was by heaven directed to be pronounced upon reprobates.

Long have infidels and scoffers triumphed in these imprecations, as the supposed ebullition of unhallowed feeling in good men: and if they were recorded as an example to be adopted by ministers in addressing unrenewed men generally, they do breathe any thing rather than peace on earth and

good will to men, and would give to the infidel the entire and unanswerable force of his objection.

The general principle then is this :—men who hate and reject the truth, and conduct as those did whom God denounced, have reason to fear that the judgments of reprobation will come upon them, and the ministers of Christ may warn and entreat men to take heed. But until certified by a revelation, that an individual or a class of men are reprobates, he has no authority to apply to them, merely as ordinary sinners, the language of denunciation which is peculiar to reprobates; and whoever observes will perceive, that so far from doing this, where there is a serious mind, and an anxious desire, and earnest seeking, they are addressed in the language of compassion, exhortation, warning, and entreaty.* If I might refer to a living instrument of good to men in the conversion of souls, of all modern men most successful, and who if the humility of any man was equal to the temptation of being called a reformer, might be called such, having done more to reduce to a science the mode of applying truth to the human mind, and conducting revivals, than all who preceded him, I should refer to one, who of all men watched with most critical carefulness to avoid needless provocation, and availed himself most carefully of every circumstance which might remove hindrances, and give to truth the most unobstructed efficacy, and who, at the same time, approached the conscience with great directness and power.

V. Female prayer in promiscuous assemblies.—First, it is no where commanded. Secondly, it is no where authorized, either by precept or example. There is no instance in the patriarchal age, of a woman offering sacrifice as an act of worship, and a symbol of prayer; and none in the tabernacle or temple service. On the contrary, when on account of great judgments, it was enjoined on females to pray, it was the wife apart, and the husband apart. Thirdly, female pray-

* The position that all men, because sinners, are therefore to be treated alike by the ministers of the gospel, without respect to age, office, or station in society, is as much a violation of common sense, as it is of the plain directions of the apostle, which exact reverence for age, and honour to whom honour is due; especially for those who rule over men: and if in monarchical governments the recognition of such distinctions was a Christian duty, where the arm of power could punish delinquents, how much more in republican governments, where public opinion is the only law, and a levelling of all distinctions of society would be the sure presage of anarchy and absolute destruction. Such as in France existed for a time, when the sun, moon, and stars were cast to the ground, and fish-women and courtezans formed the mob, and directed the overwhelming tempest of wrath.

er in promiscuous assemblies for worship is expressly forbidden. "I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man; but to be in silence." The apostle is speaking concerning the order of public assemblies of Christians, and concerning prayer. "I will, therefore, that men pray every where." It is concerning the dress of women in public assemblies that he speaks in the same connexion, that they be clothed in modest apparel, and with delicacy and sobriety. He then twice enjoins silence, and positively prohibits speaking. Again, 1 Cor. xiv. 34, "Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak: and if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home, for it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church." I know that these texts have been explained away; but so have the proof texts which teach the divinity of Christ, the depravity of man, the reality of the atonement, and the necessity of regeneration. Any thing can be explained away by those who are determined to obey their own will instead of the bible. With respect to 1 Cor. xi. 3—16, which may be thought to imply that women did pray in Christian assemblies, I answer,

1. It is not so plain that they did, as it is in the fore cited passages, that they are forbidden; and the plain is to control the obscure, and not the obscure the plain.

2. If they did pray, it must be supposed therefore that it was under the special guidance of the Spirit; a preternatural impulse, which amounted to inspiration; for none but the Lawgiver himself can make exceptions to his own laws; and this considered, the example, if allowed, no more proves that women, undirected by such influence, should speak, than the example of Balaam proves that all unrenewed men should set up for prophets of the Lord. If women did pray, it was a case exempted from the general prohibition, by divine and not by human direction.

3. And if the reasoning were even less conclusive, it would suffice to render the lawfulness of female prayers doubtful, and of course to exclude them under the rule, that if we are doubtful whether a thing is lawful, it is sinful in that state of uncertainty to do it. As he that doubted the lawfulness of eating meats, was condemned if in that state of mind he presumed to eat. But if no command had been given on this subject, I am of opinion that nature itself, as the apostle says, is decisive on the subject. There is generally, and *should be* always, in the female character, a softness and delicacy of feeling which shrinks from the notoriety of a public performance. It is the guard of female virtue, and invaluable in its soothing, civilizing influence on man; and a great-

er evil, next to the loss of conscience and chastity, could not befall the female sex, or the community at large, than to disrobe the female mind of those ornaments of sensibility, and clothe it with the rough texture of masculine fibre. But no well educated female can put herself up, or be put up, to the point of public prayer, without the loss of some portion at least of that female delicacy, which is above all price; and whoever has had an opportunity to observe the effect of female exhortation and prayer in public, will be compelled to remark the exchange of softness and delicacy for masculine courage, so desirable in man, so unlovely in woman; and if we need farther testimony, the general character of actresses is a standing memorial of the influence of female elocution before public assemblies.

VII. Bold, or imprudent expressions in the ardour of preaching, or under the provocation of opposition, or in the delirious exultation of spiritual pride.—The pre-eminent importance of religion and the soul, may tempt a man to pour contempt on all carefulness about style and well selected epithets; but if negligence in this respect may destroy souls as well as save them, then the more important the soul, the more important it is that in none of these respects we offend and destroy those for whom Christ died.

VIII. Language of unbecoming familiarity with God in prayer.—Such a thing is possible in good men, but it is piety degenerated and mingled commonly with carnal affection or spiritual pride. A just sense of ourselves and of God, will produce any thing rather than irreverent familiarity. If in heaven pure spirits veil their faces and adore, shall not mortal man, whose eye by faith seeth God, abhor himself? The difference between humble and presumptuous boldness is immense; and no frequency of real spiritual access and communion with God, can possibly breed irreverent familiarity. For a man, then, to talk to his Maker about men and things in the dialect more familiar and divested of reverence, than a well-educated child would adopt in addressing an earthly parent, is utterly inadmissible.

IX. Coarse, blunt, and vulgar expressions.—These, if indulged by good men, indicate, or infallibly produce, the want of that delicacy of feeling, which, next to conscience and piety, is our greatest safeguard against impropriety; and when coupled with religion, adorns the doctrines of God our Saviour; and though some ears may not be offended, there are always, in every assembly, some that will be; and though some souls may not be injured by it, why should it be indulged, when these might be as much benefited by other language, while many may be offended and perhaps destroyed

by it? Say not it is their own fault: for though it may be that they ought not to have been so offended as to have rejected the truth, yet if we, knowing the liability of men to be thus offended and injured, proceed wilfully to create the offence, the wo may belong to them by whom the offence cometh, as really as to those who are criminally offended. My own observation has taught me, that there is a critical state of the mind in the experience of almost every sinner, when small causes may turn the scale the wrong way; and if a minister, careless of his language or conduct in dealing with men, shall save many, the day of judgment may disclose the appalling fact, that he was the means of destroying more souls than he saved. And besides all this, human nature needs elevation and refinement; it is of itself prone enough to sink down to coarseness and indelicacy; and the evil must be immense, of sending religion, the great purifier of man, through the nation in a style which will be calculated to increase the obtuseness of feeling, and the roughness of civilized intercourse. Let grossness characterise the church, and refinement the world, and you throw a large portion of mankind into hopeless opposition to the gospel.

X. A harsh and severe mode of addressing sinners.—Whatever language a man uses, it tends to beget in him the style of feeling of which it is characteristic. If an awakened sinner, to conceal his impression, shall affect lightness of language and manner, he will soon become what he affects to be, a careless sinner. On this principle it is, in my judgment, no minister can adopt a severe, harsh, and censorious manner with sinners, and not become, to some extent in spirit, what he seems to be in language. We must, at times, use the language of severity and terror; but if this becomes the unvarying or common mode, it will be unhappy: nor can the language of denunciation and threatening, such as ‘cursed,’ ‘hell,’ ‘damnation,’ and the like, be made frequent and familiar in the pulpit, without bringing up the association of similar language, from profane lips, in far different places; or without producing, if not as much, yet some degree of the bad influence of profane swearing. In the time of Davenport, they used to address men from the pulpit as “cursed sinners,” and talk about their being “damned to hell;” which made some people wonder what had got into ministers to swear so.

XI. New era in revivals—reformers—reformation always opposed, even by good men, &c.—Such ideas, cherished, bring to the naughty and deceitful heart of man no small danger, and have ruined many; for though multitudes have thought they were raised up to be reformers in the church,

but a small number of men have been in reality such ; and as to opposition from good men, the facts generally have been the other way. The opponents of Luther and Calvin were not pious men, but the legions of Antichrist ; and so long as enemies only lifted the lance against them, the reformation advanced ; but from the time the reformers began to lift it one against the other, it stopped. The chief opponents of Whitfield in England were the hierarchy ; and in this country, the cold-hearted Arminians and formal Calvinists. But the ministers who held the doctrines and maintained the views of revivals, which now pervade New-England and the West, were his most ardent friends : And there is no instance upon record, of a great evangelical reformation which was opposed strenuously by the best of men, and carried sword in hand by denouncing and breaking down the most active, experienced, and successful ministers of Christ and members of his church. Whitfield and the Tennants strengthened the hands of good ministers, and were terrible only to the Arminian and lukewarm ; and while their counsels prevailed, the revivals went on. It was reserved for Davenport and his followers to stop it, by setting up a new mode of preaching and conduct, which good men could not adopt ; for this they were denounced, and separations encouraged, whose deleterious effects a whole century will not obliterate.

XII. A self-sufficient and daring state of mind, which is reckless of consequences, and incorrigible to argument or advice. It may be the result of confidence inspired by success ; of the magnifying effect of intense interest on one subject, which throws every thing else out of the circumference of vision, and into relative insignificance ; of nervous excitement which quickens all the sensibilities of the soul, and magnifies objects of interest ; and, at last, of a settled state of perverted feeling, the product of the preceding causes, which, in the estimation of the subject, becomes absolute knowledge, and pours contempt on argument or advice, and can no more be stopped in its career, than the foaming cataract, or the resistless whirlwind. For why should a good man stop, who knows certainly that he is right exactly, and that all men are wrong in proportion as they differ from him ? This unquestionably was the state of mind to which Davenport and his followers came. He and they, upon the subject of promoting revivals, were undoubtedly the subjects of a religious nervous insanity. They mistook the feeling of certainty and confidence produced by nervous excitement, and perverted sensation, for absolute knowledge, if not for inspiration ; and drove the whirlwind of their insane piety through

the churches with a fury which could not be resisted, and with a desolating influence which in many places has made its track visible to the present day. It was this "know-certain-feeling," which emboldened Davenport to chastise aged and eminent ministers, and to pray for them, and denounce them as unconverted, and to attempt to break them down by promoting separations from all who would not conform implicitly to his views,—by setting on fire around them the wood, hay, and stubble, which exist in most communities, and may easily be set on fire, at any time, by rashness and misguided zeal; and so far as my observation extends, the man who confides exclusively in himself, and is inaccessible to advice and influence from without, has passed the bounds of sound reason, and is upon the confines of destruction.

XIII. Whatever the code of public opinion has adopted which is sinful, must be rejected; but there are a multitude of things which belong to man as an intellectual and social being, which cannot be disregarded, without destroying alike civilization and Christianity. There are some things which adorn, and some which disgrace religion, and should we therefore in our zeal strip religion of the mildness, and kindness, and courtesy of civilized decorum, and exhibit her in alliance with all the repellences and roughnesses of uncultivated humanity, as well might the bodies in the valley of vision have been animated and sent forth in all their unsightly nakedness before the skin came upon them. True religion makes men courteous, and produces those salutary rules of civilized intercourse which distinguish Christian from savage nations. Nor with all these restraints, and grace beside, is there any danger that men, in the interchange of social intercourse, will treat each other with more respect and courtesy, than would naturally result from each man's loving his neighbour as himself.

XIV. Success an evidence that all which is done in revivals is right. No mode of reasoning is so safe as matter-of-fact reasoning, if properly conducted; and none perhaps is so liable to be perverted to purposes of sophistry. The grounds of deception are two: 1. Drawing general conclusions from particular premises; inferring that because some preacher's mode of address or action has been useful in some circumstances, it is applicable to all circumstances. As if a physician, on discovering a remedy for some disease, should make it his standing and universal prescription in all cases; as if the shipmaster, who had once been driven out to sea before boisterous winds, without anchor, or compass, or chart, or rudder, and who reached by miracle his port in safety, should return to denounce henceforth these means of safe-

ty, and insist that nothing was needed to conduct auspiciously the commerce of the whole world but a direct course, and mountain waves, and all sails standing, and a hurricane for a breeze. 2. Judging from limited views and immediate effects, without regarding general and permanent results. The world, both material and intellectual, is governed by general laws, and though the violation of them may produce a temporary good, the certain result, on the great scale, will be more than a balance of general evil. Now the importance of the soul and of eternity is such, as that good men in a revival are apt to feel no matter what is said or done, provided sinners are awakened and saved. But it ought to be remembered, that though the immediate result of some courses of conduct may be the salvation of some souls, the general and more abiding result may be the ruin of a thousand souls, destroyed by this conduct, to one saved by it; and destroyed by it as instrumentally in the direct and proper sense of the term, as any are saved by it. The sovereignty of God is not to be relied on in violation of the great laws of the moral world, but in accordance with them. When the thousands were to be sealed, the four angels were commanded to hold the winds, and keep back the judgments which they should afterwards execute, because war and distress would impede his work of mercy. Hence our Saviour introduced the gospel dispensation gradually, as the mind of man could bear it; not putting new wine into old bottles: and hence, too, Davenport, disregarding the general consequences of his conduct, and intent only on its immediate result, though he saved a few, doubtless entailed moral desolation, and darkness, and death, upon thousands of unborn generations. In a single hour, in this city, he said and did what had the effect to interrupt in the midst an auspicious revival, and commenced a captivity which has continued for more than seventy years. Insomuch, that were not the compassion of God, through Christ, infinite, and repentance available, good had it been for that man, and for New-England, if he had never been born. Beside, the limited success of a given course, whose general result is injurious, is no evidence of divine approbation; for God, as a sovereign, works by means of great relative imperfection; and that there may not be evil only, makes the truth effectual which is preached, even though the manner may be in some respects so reprehensible, as to deserve the dereliction of the Holy Ghost. Success in this case only proves that men are not so outrageously imprudent, as to make it seem necessary to heaven, to withhold the influence of the Spirit from the truth. No evidence then is furnished by success, to show that things which good

men regard as exceptionable, produce this success; or that characteristic excellencies, without these peculiarities, would not render the same men still more, eminently successful. If revivals could be achieved in but one way, and that attended by much reaction of evil, such is the vanity of time and the worth of the soul, that the sacrifice should be made; but, when revivals, great, and frequent, and glorious, can be conducted in a manner which strengthens the hands of pastors, and unites the churches, and disarms the world of prejudice, and brings increasing power of truth on the public conscience, and raises up the foundations of many generations, and repairs the wastes of the revivals of other ages, there can be no excuse for conducting them in a manner which shall reverse this order, and let out a civil war in the church, arousing ministers against ministers, and dividing and distracting the churches by wrath, and strife, and endless divisions. The revivals in the West do not, in my judgment, owe their existence to a single arm, and it is too much to be taken for granted, that both their immediate and ultimate results would not have been much better, if they had been attended by fewer novelties and peculiarities. For though such revivals as I have described, promoted by itinerant ministers only, would be dreadful, the same kind of preaching and conduct adopted by settled ministers would unquestionably displace three-fourths of the settled ministers in the United States, and instead of building up the desolations that now exist, would multiply them a thousand fold.

To some of the consequences of a revival, conducted under such auspices as I have described, I beg leave now to call your attention.

It will become more and more exceptionable. Urged by circumstances, men will do things, which, if in the beginning they had been predicted, they would have said, "Are thy servants dogs, that we should do these things?" By degrees, however, all landmarks will be removed, and what was once regarded as important will be set at nought, and what would once have produced horror will be done fearlessly. There is nothing to which the minds of good men, when once passed the bounds of sound discretion, and launched on the ocean of feeling and experiment, may not come too. But the evil, which may flow from those who commence these aberrations, is but a drop of the bucket in the ocean of disorder and misrule to which they may open the door. There is nothing so terrible and unmanageable as the fire and whirlwind of human passion, when once kindled by misguided zeal, and sanctioned by conscience, and the idea of being reviled and persecuted for doing God service. Like the cave

of Æolus, or the gate of Pandemonium, a single arm may suffice to let out the storm. But when once the atmosphere is put in motion, no human power can stop it, until it has exhausted its fury in works of moral desolation. They who did the deed may repent of it early, and stretch out impotent hands to stay the evil; and weep over the desolation without being able to repair it. The restoration of Davenport to sanity, and his subsequent confession, did not repair the moral desolation which his conduct and principles had made.

Another of the evils to be apprehended, is opposition on the part of good men, and the consequent disunion of the churches by a civil war. The peculiarities of the system I have recognised, cannot go through the churches without opposition. Splendid by its early power, many have yielded to it who disapproved for fear they might quench the Spirit: and many have been silent, because they feared that they might speak against a work of God. But when the work shall have given out its distinct character, and put off the natures of love and gentleness, &c. and put on those of wrath and strife: when other reformers shall hasten on to new discoveries, and surpass their predecessors as much as these surpassed others: and denounce them as they denounced those who could not go with them; when stripling imitators of pious men, having nothing in common with them but their imprudence, without their age and moral power, shall go out to outrage humanity and caricature revivals of religion, then will these irregularities be met, and then the collision will be keen and dreadful. For, in every church, there is wood, hay, and stubble, which will be sure to take fire on the wrong side. All your periodical Christians, who sleep from one revival to another, will be sure to blaze out now; while judicious ministers and the more judicious part of the church, will be destined to stand, like the bush, in the midst of the flames; while these periodical Christians will make up, by present zeal for their past stupidity, and chide as cold-hearted formalists, those, whose even, luminous course sheds reproof on their past coldness and stupidity. The converts too will catch the same spirit; and go forth to catechise aged Christians; and wonder why old saints don't sing, and make the heavenly arches ring, as they do;—and that shall come to pass, which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, as the destruction of human society and the consummation of divine wrath upon man, when children shall be princes in the church, and babes shall rule over her, and the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable.

Another evil to be feared is, that it will unavoidably array a large portion of the unrenewed part of the community against revivals and religion; and produce infidels, scoffers, Unitarians, and Universalists, on every side—increasing the resistance seven fold to evangelical doctrine; withdrawing in proportion, the voluntary support of the Gospel; and consigning the precious cause of Christ, which ought and might govern public opinion, to the hands of a feeble, despised, dispirited few, who watch the holy fire upon the deserted altar of God. All forms of error will grow rank from the aliment of such violence done to the laws of humanity and to the laws of God. The extravagances of the pious in the time of Cromwell threw back the cause of vital piety in England for two centuries, to a state of imbecility and scorn, and has furnished topics to grace the pages of infidel historians, poets, and orators, through every succeeding generation.

Another effect to be deprecated is, that it will prevent the great evangelical assimilation, which is forming in the United States, and paralyze general efforts as much as private churches. The rumour of extravagance would soon begin to press hard upon the friends of revivals in New-England; who could not and would not take the responsibility of justifying what they disapproved, and would be compelled in self-defence, publicly to clear themselves, as having no part nor lot in such matters. There is also a large portion of the church out of New-England, which is evangelical, but which is acquainted with revivals more by the hearing of the ear, than by eyesight and experience; and who, between doubt and fear, are approaching the happy day, when the breath of the Lord may breathe upon them. Upon all these, a revival of extravagance and disorder would exert a deadly influence, and for one generation, at least, protract the form without the power of religion. While all the enemies of evangelical doctrines and of revivals, would keep a jubilee, that these days of hated light had gone by, and given place to the reign of reason and formality.

Another thing to be feared is, that meeting in their career with the most determined opposition from educated ministers, and Colleges, and Seminaries, all these in succession would be denounced, and held up as objects of popular odium, and a host of ardent, inexperienced, impudent young men be poured out, as from the hives of the North, to obliterate civilization, and roll back the wheels of time to semi-barbarism; until New-England of the West shall be burnt over, and religion disgraced and trodden down as in some parts of New-England it was done 80 years ago: when lay-

men and women, indians and negroes, male and female, preached and prayed and exhorted, until confusion itself became confounded.—There is nothing so powerful as the many waters of human passion, and nothing so terrible as the overflowing of such a scourge: and a dispensation so calamitous would be more intolerable, as it is so utterly needless, and would come so unexpectedly in the very dawning of a bright day. The nature of the Gospel, and of the human mind, and the mode of exhibiting truth and conducting revivals, have been developed, and practised with such success, that in New-England, and to a great extent through the nation, the conviction is established, that they are the work of God, and most benign in their moral influence upon the present as well as the future life. Extensively opposition is silenced, and the public mind is fast preparing to come under the influence of faithful preaching, and the Holy Ghost. In New-England revivals are becoming more frequent in the same places, and more general in their extent. There seems to be a joyful and rapid spread of the work of God: but one overflowing of a violent, ungoverned revival would snatch the victory from truth, and throw revivals back at least fifty years. It would be the greatest calamity that could befall this young empire. The perversion of the popular taste, and the extinction of the popular prejudice against learning, and a learned ministry, where an enlightened public sentiment, coupled with enlightened piety, is our all, would be to us, nearly, what the incursions of the northern barbarians were to the Roman Empire. It would stop all our improvements, and throw us back in civilization, science, and religion, at least a whole century. It would constitute an era of calamity never to be forgotten, and be referred to by future historians as the dark age of our republic. There are parts of our nation, to which I might refer you, which were burnt over by such a revival some 20 years ago, where the abiding evils may still be seen in the state of society which has followed. And there too, with all their extravagances of falling, and groaning, and laughing, and jumping, and dancing, were regarded by many, and by some very good men, as a new dispensation of the Spirit,—a new mode of conducting revivals with power; and those, who rode on the foremost waves, thought themselves to be, and were thought to be, raised up to be reformers in their day, oh, my brother! if a victorious army should overflow and lay us waste, or if a fire should pass over and lay every dwelling in our land in ashes, it would be a blessing to be coveted with thanksgiving, in comparison to the moral desolation of one ungoverned

revival of religion ; for physical evils can be speedily repaired, but the desolation of moral causes is deep and abiding.

I have only to add, that the evil may, with perfect ease, be avoided, without diminishing the true spirit and power of a revival ; but in every respect shall increase it. There is no need of praying as if God and man were deaf, or of wallowing on the floor, and frothing at the mouth, as if filled with hydrophobia, instead of the Spirit of God ; nor any harm in kindness and gentleness ; nor any benefit in harsh and severe epithets. The state of man may be explained to him so that he shall believe and feel, better than by calling him a devil, a viper, or a serpent. There may be as great directness as is needed, or as is possible, without indecorum ; and the gospel may be preached faithfully, and attended with the power of God, without groaning in prayer, and crying "Amen," and without female prayers and exhortations, and without that spiritual pride, which never fails to attend pressing the mass of the community out of their place, and shaking together in one chaldron of effervescence, all the passions of all the classes in human society. I would not, brethren, on any account, deter you from the propagation of revivals ; and I believe if brother F. will take counsel, he may be an invaluable blessing. The thing which I have wished to accomplish is, to enable you so to perceive the defects and dangers of your mode of conducting revivals, as that you shall be induced to part with its unseemly warts and excrescences, without diminishing at all the energy and warmth of the healthful pulsation of their hearts, or abating the moral courage or humble boldness with which you pray and preach, or the directness and power with which you address the consciences of men. In short, that revivals, conducted under your auspices, may be so conducted, as that, surpassing in power any you have seen, all good men may hail their approach, and give you their undivided countenance, and none but wicked men and hypocrites fear and tremble.

Dear brethren in Christ ; you must not, for a moment, suppose that I do not fervently love you : or that I ascribe to you, *in extenso*, all the defects to which I have alluded ; but that I have drawn the outlines of a moral chart, which such a disastrous revival, as your present course could not fail to lead to, would amply fill up, I have not a doubt. That you will appreciate my motives, and not be offended, I cannot but believe ; and I have equal confidence that you will appreciate the considerations which I have suggested, and will, as fast and as far as possible, supersede our fears, by a course that all good men will approve and rejoice in.

The happiness and strength of New-England consists in

the fact, that, with few exceptions, none of us ride hobby-horses, or set up for reformers upon our own simple stock of wisdom or moral power, but with great harmony and love, consult, and give and take advice. This makes the church terrible as an army with banners to her foes.

I cannot ask you to reply particularly to so long a letter, but it is my earnest request that you will reply to it early, and let me know how it strikes you; whether it is plain, and direct, and strong enough,—so as to be up to the mark: and if in any respect you would like discussion, that you will give me opportunity of retracting, if I am wrong; or of convincing you, if I am right.

I beseech you, brethren, to consult good men around you, and especially brother Nettleton, whose judgment and long experience in revivals, and knowledge of human nature, cannot be safely disregarded.

But, if at length you should be verging to the conclusion that you must go on as you have done, I must beseech and entreat, you will halt and pray, until there can be time for a meeting of a few Christian brethren with you, in which, *viva voce*, we may kindly, but thoroughly and prayerfully, talk over the entire subject; and see if we cannot bring matters to a state in which we can all act as one.

I am, affectionately, your brother,

LYMAN BEECHER.

Rev. Nathan S. S. Beman.

FROM THE NEW-YORK OBSERVER.

Boston, Nov. 8, 1827.

It having been represented to some of the subscribers, that we disapproved of the proceedings of the Rev. Mr. Nettleton, in reviewing a sermon preached at Troy, March 4, 1827, and in opposing the sentiments and practices which it seemed intended to vindicate and extend, we regard ourselves as called upon by a sense of duty to say, that the proceedings of Mr. Nettleton appear to us to have been characterised by uncommon intellectual vigour, correct and comprehensive views of the interests of the church, and by distinguished wisdom, fidelity, firmness, and benevolence, well adapted to promote the interests of pure religion throughout the land.

Signed,

Lyman Beecher,
A. S. Norton,
Wm. R. Weeks,
H. R. Weed,

Justin Edwards,
Heman Humphrey,
C. J. Tenney,
J. Hawes.

Catskill, July 12, 1827.

Some of the reasons which the Rev. Mr. Nettleton assigned to his brethren in New-England, for not attending the convention. He was afterwards prevailed on to attend, from the consideration that great advantage would undoubtedly be taken of his absence, and for the sake of reading his correspondence, to show them what had been done:—

1. Feeble health, &c.

2. I have been compelled by ministers to talk and exhaust all my strength, and to spend nearly all my time, for about eight months, on this subject. I have done all that I can; and have been greatly blamed by many for what I have done. I have resigned the subject entirely to the management of settled pastors, whose business alone it is to determine the question, what measures shall be introduced into their churches.

3. Every thing I have said or done has been so perverted, and my motives so impeached, that I choose henceforth to be silent.

4. I know not *who* have been invited, or whether they expect to attend.

5. It has been reported at the West, that the convention was originated by myself; in Troy, and elsewhere, that I am opposed to it; so that, whatever the result may be, I have discovered a determination to throw the consequences of the meeting on myself.

6. No ministers will be bound by the decisions of such a convention.

7. Those who convoke the convention are making too much noise, without any prospect of lessening the evils, and, consequently, will give the subject a new importance. I should greatly prefer a silent convention, on some public occasion like that of a commencement, where the views of brethren who differ may be privately discussed; and in case they should come to any important results, they might be published to the world; otherwise the public mind need not be disturbed.

8. The convention may now be considered as having taken the same business into their own hands, and as having made public, what I have long been wishing to settle as silently as possible: hence I ought to be excused.

9. I have never desired a convention on any other ground, than to give directions and support to the proceedings of the presbytery of Troy, or of some regularly organized body.

10. Every attempt which has hitherto been made to correct any irregular practice, has been construed into coldness, deadness, and called persecution.

11. I never yet, to my recollection, have fallen out with settled pastors, and I fear I cannot act my own judgment and conscience without crossing theirs.

12. I have no controversy with any man on the subject, and I fear, if I attend, it will be construed into a personal controversy, and that it will be impossible to avoid it.

13. I fear that settled ministers at the East and South have not yet *felt* enough of the evils, to appreciate what has already been done; and that these ministers will be obliged to experience more of these evils, before they will take a decisive stand; and the sooner I withdraw, and leave the whole responsibility on them, the better.

14. Every body wishes to take neutral ground as long as he possibly can: it was so with myself.

15. The plea of Mr. Finney, that he wished to sit at my feet and learn, I believe was an after-device to justify himself in not correcting any thing. No complaint was ever hinted at the time. Indeed, after my last interview with Mr. Finney, the friends of the new measures continued to report that N. and F. are one; and this report continued in circulation until my letter to Aikin could be concealed no longer.

16. The judgment, and counsel, and consciences of so many ministers and Christians have been trampled upon, that I fear there has been great sin.

17. I fear to have any fellowship with such a spirit. I fear a retribution. From my long and intimate acquaintance with many ministers who have been denounced, and from my slight acquaintance with their denouncers, I greatly prefer to rank myself with the former.

18. I have reasons in my own mind, which prudence forbids me to name to the world, and yet am willing to give them to some of the eastern brethren, should they attend.

19. Finally. To prevent misunderstanding, I am willing that my friends should attend, and do all in their power to prevent the evils feared. But I have no evidence that the principles on which these men acted are in the least altered. On the contrary, I shall be disappointed if they do not attempt to vindicate them, and justify all they have done.

