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ART. I.—*Revivals: or the Appropriate Means of Promoting True Religion. A Sermon preached in the South Congregational Church in Bridgeport, Conn., on the Lord's day morning, June 20, 1841. By John Woodbridge, D.D. Published by request.*

WHATEVER diversity of sentiment may prevail in regard to the subject handled in this discourse, there can be but one opinion respecting its vast importance. All who believe in the reality of true religion must be agreed, that it is of the highest moment to understand what are the true and legitimate means of reviving its power and furthering its progress. The views advanced by Dr. Woodbridge in this discourse are judicious, scriptural and timely. Although it was not prepared for the press, the fact that a congregation not his own, on hearing it, requested its publication, because they thought it adapted to subserve the cause of Christ, is an encouraging symptom of a good state of opinion in Christian communities.

Dr. Woodbridge shows first what are not, and secondly what are "the appropriate means of promoting true religion." Among the first class he places "a bitter and censorious spirit in opposing wickedness; a neglect or superficial notice of the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel; en-

couraging innovations in the form of sound words, or the introduction of doctrines unknown to men of former generations ; the introduction of a new philosophy into religion, or connecting an old erroneous theory of the divine government and human liberty with Christian doctrines ; joining with those who would merge all denominational differences in the general name of Christian ; giving special countenance to those who are accounted peculiarly revival preachers, whose business it is not to labour as missionaries in waste places, or among the heathen ; nor to take the pastoral oversight of churches at home, but to aid settled ministers in preaching, visiting and other means of awakening and saving their people ; the introduction of new measures not inculcated in the scriptures ; encouraging young converts to great forwardness in religious meetings, and in public efforts to alarm the careless ; projects of reform calculated to divide rather than unite those who sincerely love the truth as it is in Jesus, and which imply no change in the principles and morals of those with whom we are immediately associated."

These points are enforced by our author by cogent arguments. Whenever it is requisite he interposes sufficient guards and qualifications, to avoid those rash and indiscriminate assertions which would expose him to the assaults of antagonists. Among the appropriate means of promoting religion he mentions "the faithful and frequent preaching of the gospel ; the faithful instruction and government of families ; the maintenance of kindred faithful discipline in the church ; a knowledge of the truth, and unflinching zeal in its defence and propagation ; corresponding spiritual affections, as ardent love to God, penitence, humility, faith in the Redeemer, and disinterested, active benevolence towards men ; earnest attention to the duties of the closet ; a suitable religious demeanor and conversation in the family ; a strict attendance on the public ordinances of religion, and frequent meetings for exhortation and prayer ; abstinence from every known sin, and the performance of every known duty ; a consistent example ; *lastly*, direct personal efforts by the devotement of time and property, by counsel, warning, and entreaty, to promote the conversion and salvation of men."

We presume that these views will meet the concurrence of the great mass of intelligent and spiritual Christians. And the more numerous the experiments made in the way

of attempting to promote religion by the unsound and unscriptural methods reprobated in this discourse, the more unsatisfactory are the results in the judgment of the pious and discerning.

Having presented this brief outline of the sermon under consideration, without further canvassing its merits, we shall avail ourselves of the opportunity afforded by it, to exhibit our own views on some of the topics of which it treats. We propose to inquire particularly into the fitness and validity of those means which have been most largely plied to produce a considerable proportion of the religious excitements in this country, for the last fifteen years, till in many quarters they have become identified with the very idea of a revival, and whoever discards them is judged destitute of a proper zeal for the salvation of souls.

The only common and distinctive attribute by which all classes have agreed to characterize these means, is novelty. They have been known over the land, assailed by foes and vindicated by friends, under the name of *New School, New Divinity, New Measures*. It is well known that under the vigorous appliance of these means, sometimes the new doctrines, sometimes the new measures, but more commonly both in conjunction, inasmuch as the latter are the legitimate offspring of the former, numerous extensive religious excitements have occurred, which have resulted in large accessions of members to the visible church. They have been set out and emblazoned in high-sounding reports, often streaked with some tints of the marvellous, and thus arrayed, have been trumpeted abroad on the wings of the wind.

It should be understood, however, that these means are not new in the most absolute sense. Those who introduced them among us, are not entitled to the credit of originating them. As to the substance of them, they had long been in use among other sects, and were the habitual and familiar weapons of their warfare. In the use of them they gloried, and on them they founded their claims to popular favour, as against Calvinistic churches, whose doctrines and usages they delighted to hold up in horrid caricature, and in awful contrast to their own more liberal and encouraging views. The novelty in the case is their introduction to Calvinistic communions, by men professedly attached to Calvinistic doctrine and that type of religious experience which results from it. But although whatever is peculiar to the authors and abettors of new divinity and new mea-

tures is evidently borrowed from heresiarchs of former days, or surrounding Arminian sects, still no small ingenuity was required to solve the problem, how men could adopt the usages and principles of the adversaries of Calvinism, even making free use of their odious caricatures of it, and every other mode of blackening it in the eyes of mankind, and still remain sound and hearty Calvinists. The effort to solve this problem has wonderfully sharpened the wits of a considerable number of moral philosophers, and given rise to some curious and original processes in the art of casuistry. If any thing in these matters is strictly entitled to the praise of novelty, it is the new light thus shed upon the science of ethics and Christian morality. It is likewise notorious that the religious excitements which have been chiefly promoted by the use of the means under consideration, have been regarded with more or less distrust by a large proportion of the most orthodox, intelligent, and pious Christians and ministers in Calvinistic communions, who have long been known as most devoted friends of true revivals and experimental piety. This distrust is usually in the ratio of their attachment to orthodox doctrines, to the very doctrines which Edwards and Whitefield and Dickinson and Witherspoon constantly pressed upon their hearers, as the chief and indispensable means of nourishing a genuine revival of religion. What class of men, we ask, have been most conspicuous as rallying points of unflinching opposition to all the peculiarities in question? Are they crude and aspiring novices in the church, young and inexperienced fault-finders, dealing out wholesale slanders from sheer ignorance or malice, speaking evil of the things they understand not? Or are they men of dubious reputation for discernment, orthodoxy, zeal and piety? If we inquire who have most distinguished themselves by strenuously resisting, and rallying others to resist this order of things, do they not form a constellation of stars of the first magnitude in our American Zion? And is not the number exceedingly small of those who a few years since were leaders of the sacramental hosts, that have been pleased with the irruption of that order of things, known by the all-comprehensive appellation of new school? Have not such men in one form or another, as they have had opportunity, been sounding the notes of alarm and warning to the churches, as if they were exposed to the secret inroads of error and delusion? Are the fears of such men, and of the sound, intel-

ligent Christians who sympathize with them, at all abated by the information that great religious excitements are generated by these inventions and expedients? Or do they not rather apprehend that this poison eats like a canker into these excitements themselves, thus bringing this erroneous system to a most dreadful consummation? The more they see of this sort of excitements, is not their distrust of them increased? Have not many felt impelled, like Dr. Woodbridge, to mark the difference between such agitations and a genuine outpouring of the Holy Ghost, the means respectively adapted to promote the one and the other, and to urge upon the people not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits whether they be of God.

Now it is hardly credible that these men should all have concurred simultaneously in detecting an insidious poison in that which was only the salubrious medicine of the great Physician, the milk and meat of divine truth. It would seem that there must be something wrong, some element essentially unsound and anti-evangelical at the bottom of these movements. What that is, deserves careful inquiry. It is due to the cause of truth, as well as to all parties concerned, to subject the means used to promote the excitements in question to a strict examination. This we shall now aim to do, dealing only with points of divinity so far as they form a material part of the machinery commonly relied on to produce such scenes.

But inasmuch as the measures which men employ for the promotion of religion will be chiefly determined by their conceptions of its nature, particularly of the natural state of man, and the state into which he must pass in order to become a child of God, and of that power and agency by which alone this change can be effected; it will facilitate our progress, to obtain a clear conception of those views of the nature of holiness, moral obligation, human depravity, regeneration, and repentance, which have formed the ground-work of these excitements. This new and facile method of making christians, was first promulgated in form, and defended in a series of elaborate articles on "The means of regeneration," first published in the *Christian Spectator*, for 1829, and then re-published in a separate pamphlet, of which Dr. Taylor was the undisputed author.

The following passage embodies the cardinal principles, in accordance with which he constructs a new theory of

regeneration, and recommends a new model of preaching that shall multiply converts with unexampled rapidity.

“This self-love or desire of happiness is the primary cause or reason of all acts of preference or choice which fix supremely on any object. In every moral being who forms a moral character, there must be a first moral act of preference or choice. This must respect some one object, God or mammon, as the chief good, or as an object of supreme affection. Now whence comes such a choice or preference? Not from a previous choice or preference of the same object, for we speak of the first choice or preference. The answer which human consciousness gives, is, that the being constituted with a capacity for happiness desires to be happy; and knowing that he is capable of deriving happiness from different objects, considers from which the greatest happiness may be derived; and as in this respect he judges or estimates their relative value, so he chooses or prefers one or the other as his chief good. While this must be the process by which a moral being forms his first moral preference, substantially the same process is indispensable to a change of this preference.” *Chris. Spec.* 1829, p. 21.

In this passage several things are either directly stated or implied.

1. That the only inward affection which prompts the choices or preferences of moral beings, God, angels, saints, sinners and devils, is the love of self, otherwise called the desire of happiness.

2. That the ultimate end of all choice, or reason why any object is chosen by rational beings, is the happiness which it is expected to impart to the person choosing. Or, as it is elsewhere affirmed: “Of all specific voluntary action the happiness of the agent in some form is the ultimate end.”

3. As the choices of the wicked and the righteous are not distinguished from each other, either in the principle from which they flow, or the end they seek, they are distinguished solely by the difference in the objects they respectively select as means of gratifying the same ruling desire, and attaining the same ultimate end.

4. Any thing like a sinful nature, or innate sinful affection is of course discarded. Because previous to, and aside from this choice of mammon in preference to God, which occurs after “judging or estimating their relative value,” there is no principle or affection which does no

exist in the breast of the glorified saint. No wonder then that in the same volume, p. 367, the following interrogatory is put with an air of triumph: "Why then is it so necessary to suppose some distinct evil propensity—some fountain of iniquity in the breast of the child previous to moral action?"

5. A saving change involves nothing more than a choice of new means to gratify the same reigning principle or affection which prompted a life of sin. God is chosen and the world renounced, simply because the man "judges or estimates" this course most conducive to happiness. Hence it involves no renovation of the heart, or implantation of holy principles and affections, or change of nature by the Holy Ghost, as prior to and causative of holy exercises. Thus regeneration, as the scriptures teach and divines have ever understood it, is done away. If man has no sinful nature by the first birth, there is no occasion for a new birth to produce a holy nature.

6. The only conceivable room which this scheme leaves for the work of the Spirit, is in producing a change of judgment as to the "relative value" of God and the world as sources of happiness. For the law of moral action laid down is, that, "as in this respect he judges or estimates their relative value, so he chooses one or the other as his chief good." If therefore a correct understanding or conviction on this point, be effected, the great work is accomplished. But such a result is not beyond the reach of human argument and persuasion. No new affection or principle needs to be implanted. But principles already existing, are to be excited to a new choice, by gaining a knowledge of the true means of gratifying them, of which they were previously ignorant. If the Spirit's work in regeneration then, be any thing more than that of the preacher—the merest moral suasion—it is, at the utmost, nothing beyond the lowest degree of those operations which are common alike to sinners and saints, and consist in solely quickening old principles, not in imparting new ones. For who does not know that the first and faintest glimmerings of seriousness in the impenitent, from which few entirely escape, arise from the conviction, that they are forfeiting their true welfare and happiness? What is this but self-love somewhat quickened and enlightened? Thus the lowest degree of common grace is all that is requisite to regeneration, and special grace, as to its essence, is filtrated away, as a part of the dregs of an obsolete system. Strongly as

the charge has been resented, it is no caricature of this system, to say, that, "according to it, sin is a mistake, and regeneration is a correction of that mistake."

7. By this scheme regeneration being made the act of the sinner, is of course confounded, or made identical with conversion, which is appropriately the exercise of a soul renewed by the power of God.

8. Religious experience consists in forsaking the world and choosing God as a source of happiness.

These points all seem to us, either to be fully enunciated, or clearly implied in the passage we have cited. When the religion of the Bible is dwarfed and enervated to such a standard, few can wonder at the increased facility of making converts to it. That we have done no injustice, by unfair inferences, or by imputing to the author of a theory extreme practical conclusions, from which he would shrink, will be sufficiently shown by a few passages from other parts of this essay, in which he carries out the principles of the quotation already made, to their legitimate practical results. And for the better understanding of some of them, it should be remembered that the principles in question are held in company with that radical element of Pelagian theology and metaphysics—the power of contrary choice, or as the Christian Spectator styles it, "the power to act in despite of all opposing power."

Regeneration is made the sinner's own act, in the following passage :

"When we speak of the means of regeneration we shall use the word *regeneration*, in a more limited import, than its ordinary popular import; and shall confine it chiefly, for the sake of convenient phraseology, to the act of the will or heart, in distinction from other mental acts connected with it: or to that act of the will or heart which consists in a preference of God to every other object; or to that disposition of the heart, or governing affection or purpose of the man, which consecrates him to the service and glory of God."—pp. 18, 19.

That this act of the sinner is prompted by the same inward desires which first lead men to sin, is taught in the following terms :

"Divine truth does not become a means to this end, until the selfish principle so long cherished in the soul is superseded; and the mind is left to the control of that constitutional desire of happiness which is an original principle of

our nature. Then it is, we apprehend, that God and the world are contemplated by the mind as objects of choice, substantially as they would be by a being who had first entered on existence, and who was called on for the first time to select one or the other as his supreme good." p. 210.

That these views of regeneration are no mere theory which its authors shrink from carrying into consistent practice, is manifest from the following passage:

"We have already said that the sinner is the subject of that constitutional desire of happiness, called self-love, to which no moral quality pertains. Let the sinner then, as a being who loves happiness and desires the highest degree of it, under the influence of such a desire, take into solemn consideration the question whether the highest happiness is to be found in God or the world; let him pursue this inquiry, if need be, till it results in the conviction that such happiness is to be found in God only; and let him follow up this conviction with that intent and engrossing contemplation of the realities which truth discloses, and with that stirring up of his sensibilities in view of them, which invest the world when considered as his only portion with an aspect of insignificance, of gloom, and even of terror, and which shall chill and suspend his present active love of it; and let the contemplation be persevered in, till it shall discover a reality and excellence in the objects of holy affection, which shall put him upon direct and desperate efforts to fix his heart upon them; and let this process of thought, of effort and of action be entered upon as one that is never to be abandoned, until the end proposed by it is accomplished—until the only living and true God is loved and chosen as his God forever; and we say that in this way the work of regeneration through grace *may be accomplished.*" pp. 32, 33.

"Nor do we intend that a *direct* tendency to a change of heart pertains to the first act of the process, but that when self-love prompts the first act of sober consideration, there is in this act a tendency to augmented feeling, and that this feeling tends to fix contemplation, and this again to deepen feeling; and that thus, by the mutual action and re-action of thought and feeling, the process, were there no effectual counteracting influence, would go on until it terminated in a change of heart." p. 222.

We think few intelligent Christians can dissent from the following judgment pronounced upon it by Prof. Stuart, in

a letter written to Dr. Porter, immediately after the publication of Dr. Tyler's strictures upon it. "Dr. Tyler has published his pamphlet, and a noble one too, which has made an end of the matter as to brother Taylor's regeneration by self-love, a full end; there is no redemption. All the fog is blown away, and we have at last a clear and sheer regeneration of the natural man by himself, stimulated by self-love, made out to be the scheme of brother Taylor; there is no getting aside of it." *Memoirs of Dr. Porter*, p. 222.

We believe that Prof. Stuart has not prided himself on being a *heresy hunter*. And we think that the abettors of this scheme must be somewhat in straits for a defence, if they can find no other cause of the extensive and unyielding opposition to views which such a man so unequivocally condemned, than ignorance, prejudice or malice.

The following paragraphs from the *Christian Spectator* would seem to import that the heart of the sinner is hindered by no inability, whether natural or moral, from a compliance with the commands of the gospel.

"What is that heart with which God in his law requires sinners to love him? Surely not a heart which is holy before they love him. Still less with a sinful heart; and yet he requires them to love him with some heart, even *their* heart. Is this no heart at all? We think, on the contrary, it is a *real* heart, a heart with which sinners can love God, even without the grace of the Spirit, and, certainly, with it." *Christian Spectator*, 1830, pp. 149, 150.

Surely one whose heart is not "sinful," and who can love God "even without the grace of the Spirit," is free from all inability, whether natural or moral.

The lowest form of moral inability is certainly repudiated in the following passage, or it is utterly unmeaning.

"Common sense decides that if it is a known or revealed truth, that the sinner under a present call to duty, will not act, unless God do more than he is now doing, then let the sinner wait till God does more." *Christian Spectator*, 1829, p. 704.

View, in connexion with this, the following passages, which are unmeaning, if they do not import that it is improbable, nay impossible, that God should renew the heart until the sinner first yields submission.

"And what is this but assuming that God *may*, and *desiring* that he would, so depart from the immutable principle of his government, as to interpose to save him, while in heart a rebel and still resolved to be so." *Ch. Spec.* p. 30.

“The case, therefore, now stated, shows that the only supposable acts of the sinner with which his regeneration can be connected, involve the suspended influence of the selfish principle; and how impossible it is that without such a suspension the heart should be changed.” *Ib.* p. 38.

“Were there no other access to the inner man, except through this principle of the heart; were there nothing to which the motives of the gospel could be addressed, but the hardihood of this fell spirit—no way to overcome this ‘strong man,’ except by direct assault, then for aught we can see, the moral transformation of the soul were hopeless even to Omnipotence.” *Ib.* p. 39.

We see not what language could more strongly deny that the work of the Spirit in renewing the soul is direct, sovereign, and irresistible. Let it be viewed in connexion with the following extracts from Dr. Fitch’s review of Dr. Fisk on election and fore-ordination.

“We earnestly object to that antinomian scheme which makes grace terminate solely on dispensing with free-agency, by an act of mere omnipotence creating a new heart; thus leaving none of the elements which constitute the moral certainty of a conversion in the agent himself.” *Ib.* 1831, p. 633.

“Whatever is the degree of influence which he uses with them, it is not in its nature irresistible; but men as free agents still keep to their guilty choice in resistance to it, or through its operation, freely give up their idols, and place their hearts on God.” *Ib.* p. 632.

Here we see the doctrine that God creates the new heart by his almighty power, stigmatized as antinomian; a denial that his grace is irresistible; in company with the assertion that it is for those on whom it operates, to determine whether or not it shall be efficacious, and of course that they have within themselves some of the “elements which constitute the moral certainty of conversion.” What Arminianism ever went greater lengths in exalting human power, and invalidating divine grace in regeneration?

In this connexion let the following passage be considered.

“We know of no other hold which this divine agent can have on the sinner whom he would turn from the error of his ways, but that which consists in so bringing the truths of the Bible in contact with his understanding and moral sensibilities, that he shall voluntarily shun the threatened evil and choose the proffered good.” *Ib.* 1833, p. 356.

Again, p. 357, "There is no more difficulty in accounting for the fact that the yielding sinner supremely loves God from the impulse of a regard to his own happiness, than there is in explaining the opposite fact of his having formerly, under the influence of the same principle, when perverted, loved his idols."

This surely narrows down the work of the Spirit to the mere presentation of truth to the mind and heart of the sinner, so that his self-love will be excited to shun eternal woe and choose everlasting happiness; in other words, to mere moral suasion. The carnal mind could scarcely demand any further concessions. After such an explanation of the nature of religion, it was scarcely necessary to add that "under the call to present duty, the sinner is authorized to believe in the practicability of present duty." Religion is made easy only by debasing its quality. While human nature is what it is, there can be no way of exalting human power in the affair of conversion to God, except by degrading religion itself into conformity to the tastes of the unrenewed heart.

The sound and scriptural doctrine on this subject is altogether plain and indisputable. It teaches that the moral nature of man is totally depraved, alienated from God, averse to holiness, to the law and gospel of God, and all that is peculiar to the Christian life. It teaches that there is no affection, susceptibility or capacity in the unrenewed heart, which can be so affected or wrought upon by the truths of the gospel, as to yield obedience, love and conformity to them. The carnal mind is enmity against God, is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. It teaches that no act of spiritual and acceptable obedience to the gospel, will be rendered by any heart which is not created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works; that the word of God is powerless on all who are not made willing to obey it in the day of his power; and that the most skillful and earnest preachers, can make converts no faster than God makes their hearers willing and obedient, drawing them by his Spirit. If Paul plants, and Apollos waters, still it is God that gives the increase.

Now the attempt to multiply conversions, by getting over or around this barrier of man's total depravity and absolute dependence on divine grace for a new heart and a right spirit, and substituting in lieu of it some principle of the natu-

ral man which will respond to the truths and motives of the gospel if brought into proper contact with it, has resulted in an elaborate effort, to resolve all religious affections and exercises into the mere workings and products of self-love, as their common root; religious experience into a mere governing purpose to serve the Lord as a more fertile source of happiness than the world; a denial of the sinfulness of human nature; of sovereign and efficacious grace; of the creation of a new heart by divine omnipotence; of any election not conditioned on a foresight of obedience; in short, of every distinctive feature of Calvinistic doctrine and experience.

It has been constantly held up as a shield of those doctrinal innovations that have so deeply agitated the church in recent years, that they respect solely the more minute and attenuated philosophical explanations of Christian doctrine, while they do not touch in the slightest degree the doctrines themselves, and much less Christian experience and practice, as taking its character from the doctrines which nourish them. But whether the scheme above unfolded does not strike at the roots of both doctrine and practice, and radically revolutionize them; whether it does not at least sink them as low as the loosest Arminianism; whether it does not lay the foundation for substituting in place of the transforming work of the Holy Ghost on the soul those fictitious excitements of merely human passions which characterize some Arminian sects, and have crept from them into Calvinistic communions, we leave to our readers to judge.

We ask, what provision does the class of exercises prescribed to, or at least supposed in the case of, a sinner passing into the kingdom, by the foregoing scheme, make for his being slain by the law, and made alive by Christ? How does it provide for the work and office of the Mediator as the great and fundamental requisite in our reconciliation to God? How does it make it the conspicuous and characteristic feature of his experience that he feels himself wicked, guilty, blind and helpless under the power, and doomed to the curse of sin, and flees for refuge to his almighty Saviour, as his wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption? Might he not go through with all the exercises prescribed for "accomplishing the work of regeneration" without once thinking of Christ? And is this Christian experience?

Moreover, does not the whole scope of this scheme go to

fritter down the agency of the Spirit in regeneration and sanctification? Is not this carried so far as to convey the distinct intimation that it is dangerous for the sinner to know that "God must do more for him than he is now doing," in order to his conversion? Does not the idea of regeneration by the influence of self-love tend to the same result? But it is needless to add to our previous remarks in confirmation of this point.

It is withal worthy of remark, that with the decay of a sense of dependance, all the Christian graces must proportionably languish. This is a direct and obvious result as regards prayer, humility, reverence, gratitude, submission, faith, confidence and love towards God, pity, compassion and forbearance towards men. It is moreover a sound principle, that it cannot be consistently maintained that man of himself, without the renewing work of the Spirit, is sufficient for producing within himself spiritual religion, without contracting that religion to the measure of his natural sufficiency. It is idle therefore to say that this is a mere doctrine having no relation to practice. The very doctrine itself respects practice, and goes to its vitals.

It deserves consideration how far such a scheme is likely to beget in those converted in accordance with it a sense of the wickedness of their own hearts; a humbling and mournful sense of their own corruptions; and the earnest conflict between nature and grace which distinguishes the Christian life. What room is left for the continuance of a principle of sin in antagonism to a reigning principle of holiness, when nothing is admitted to be sinful or holy in man but acts, when the same principle of self-love prompts the acts of the regenerate as well as of the unregenerate, and when man is as able by means of self-love perfectly to keep the law as to break it? Is it wonderful, under the prevalence of such views, that such multitudes are strangers to the Christian conflict, or that Perfectionism grows apace?

We would inquire whether, on this scheme, the longings and aspirations of the Christian will not be in the line of becoming happy, or obtaining a hope of salvation, rather than of being conformed and assimilated to God and his law? If all moral goodness consists merely in seeking the greatest amount of happiness, then the prime object must be to obtain that which will minister the largest gratification to our desires whatever they may be, instead of so purifying our desires that they can be gratified with pure and holy objects.

For by this scheme, holiness is made a mere subordinate to, and instrument of, happiness, instead of subordinating happiness to itself as the "ultimate end" and supreme regulator? We see not, if it be true, what exception can be taken to the holiness of the Mohammedan, who is pursuing with might and main the sensualities of his fancied heaven.

This suggests the great and comprehensive objection to the practical bearings of this scheme, which is fundamental and fatal. It makes Christian holiness consist in a love of divine things not on account of their intrinsic moral excellence, beauty and loveliness, but solely on account of some conceived relation, or instrumentality which they hold in the furtherance of our own happiness. Now no principle is more self-evident than that no affection towards another deserves the name of love, which does not delight in his intrinsic qualities for their own sake, aside from all consideration of his becoming a source of profit or happiness to us. We may value a person whose qualities we hate, as an instrument of profit or happiness to us, but we do not love him. The most profligate man on earth, loves his neighbour Christian who ministers to his advantage or comfort, considered as thus profitable to him, just as much as he loves his own interest. Does he therefore exercise that love of the brethren which the gospel requires, and makes an infallible sign of saving grace? Obviously, this Christian love consists in a complacency of heart in the spiritual graces of the Christian, the love of which evinces a love of that God of whose moral attributes they are the image. Suppose then an individual conceives himself to love God, because he expects that he shall obtain eternal salvation from him, while he has no delight in his holiness, justice, faithfulness, and veracity: is this such a love as is pleasing to God, or accompanies salvation? Christian charity "seeketh not her own." "If ye love them that love you what thanks have ye? For sinners love those that love them." In accordance with these views, all standard writers on religious experience have made this their grand criterion of genuine and gracious religious affections, in distinction from those which are common and spurious: that "their object is the excellence of divine things," and not any conceived relation which they bear to self-interest: while the hypocrite's affections arise from no higher source than self-love. President Edwards, in his *Treatise on Religious Affections*, occupies two chapters at the very threshold with establishing this principle, as his great guid-

ing light in discriminating genuine from spurious religious experience. He says,* "There is a kind of love or affection towards persons or things, which does properly arise from self-love. A preconceived relation to himself, or some respect already manifested by another to him, or some benefit already received or depended on is truly the first foundation of his love: what precedes any relish of, or delight in, the nature and qualities inherent in the being beloved, as beautiful and amiable. That kind of affection to God or Jesus Christ, which thus properly arises from self-love, cannot be a truly gracious and spiritual love, as appears from what has been said already. For self-love is a principle entirely natural, and as much in the hearts of devils as angels; and therefore surely nothing that is the mere result of it, can be supernatural and divine in the manner before described."† We might go on quoting passages equally explicit and decisive, but if besides showing his doctrine, we were to exhibit his proofs and application of it, we should be obliged to reprint the whole two chapters to which we have alluded. Our next authority shall be John Owen. In his *Treatise on the Holy Spirit*,‡ speaking of the preparatory work of the Spirit, which is common to the regenerate and unregenerate, as distinguished from that which is special and saving, he says, "The effects of this work on the mind, proceed not so far as to give delight and satisfaction in the lively spiritual nature and excellency of the things revealed to it. True saving illumination gives the mind such a direct intuitive insight into spiritual things, as that in their own nature they suit, please, and satisfy it: so that it is cast into the mould of them, and rests in them, Rom. vi. 17; xii. 2; 1 Cor. ii. 13, 14; 2 Cor. iii. 18; iv. 6. But the work we have spoken of reaches not so far; the light it communicates may cause a man to like the gospel for its beneficial effects, as a way of mercy and salvation; but it will not give him such a spiritual insight into the mystery of God's grace by Christ Jesus, as that the soul in its first direct view of it should, for what it is in itself, admire it, delight in it, approve it, and find spiritual solace and refreshment in it."

In accordance with this is the general testimony of ortho-

* Works, vol. v. p. 130. New-York edition.

† "There is a natural love to Christ as to one that doeth thee good, and for thine own ends: and spiritual, for himself, whereby the Lord only is exalted."—*Shepard's Par. of the Ten Virgins*, P. I, p. 25.

‡ Page 142. Edition of the Presbyterian Board of Publication.

dox divines, as we might readily show if we had the space. Unless, then, such divines as Owen, Shepard, and Edwards, were utterly mistaken as to the fundamental distinction between true religion and hypocrisy, there can be no doubt where to rank that sort of piety which accords with the principles we have been examining.

We pass now to the consideration of certain measures which have been much employed for the purpose of promoting religious excitements, and are in perfect correspondence with the views of Christian doctrine and experience which have been under review. Although some of them have been occasionally adopted by men of sound views, yet they always seem unnatural and awkward in their hands. Sound doctrine is uncongenial to them, and encumbers them with so many fetters, that they cannot be plied with much tact, vigour, or celerity. Indeed the two are so essentially contrary and repellant to each other, that they seldom keep company long before one overmasters and extirpates the other. An orthodox man using these measures, seems like one who has thrown aside his spiritual weapons of celestial edge and temper, to try the clumsy and untempered armour of man's fashioning; and if he is thus tempted to go down to Egypt for help in any crisis, he usually repents it bitterly enough, to prevent a repetition of the experiment. These measures have usually flourished in connexion with those erroneous doctrines of which they are the offspring.

It ought however to be borne in mind, that many who have been foremost in plying these means for the production of revivals, have never gone into those refined and astute metaphysical processes, which are interwoven with the scheme of divinity we have been considering. Many of them are too crude and uncultured to master any subtleties in logic or metaphysics. Many of them have never penetrated into the subject so far as to see that self-regeneration by the natural man is impossible, except on the supposition that all the exercises of piety are prompted by self-love. But without minding the chasms which intervene, they leap headlong to the great conclusion, which is the basis of all these operations; viz. that unrenewed men are endowed with every quality requisite for complying with the gospel, even without a transforming work of the Holy Ghost in the soul. Without always waiting to inquire whether it be self-love or something else, they hold that there is some taste or pre-disposition in the natural man, which, if brought into

proper contact with the truths of the gospel, will be won and charmed to love and obey them. They repudiate and abjure in the most fierce and intemperate strain, as fatal to their operations, every mode of belief which does not imply in man a perfect capacity and aptitude to be savingly affected with the truths of the gospel, whether regenerated by the Spirit or not; if he will only resolve to be a Christian. On this point, we suppose that no man is a more standard authority with all this class, or a more correct representative of their opinions, than was Mr. Finney before he got mired in the abyss of Perfectionism, on the verge of which, judging from the following and many other passages, he must have been for a long time treading with fearful presumption and temerity. We quote from his Lectures on Revivals, which must of course be taken as a formal and authentic exposition of his sentiments on this subject. He says, p. 351, "And I am persuaded there never would have been such multitudes of tedious convictions, and often ending in nothing after all, if it had not been for those theological perversions that have filled the world with *cannot-ism*. In Bible days, they told sinners to repent, and they did it then. *Cannot-ism* had not been broached in that day. It is this speculation about the inability of sinners to obey God, that lays the foundation for all the protracted anguish and distress, and perhaps ruin, through which so many are led." It is enough to say of this wild raving, that it can reach none for whom it was intended, without first dashing against Paul and Christ as their shield. Says Paul, Rom. viii. 7, 8, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, NEITHER indeed CAN be. So then they that are in the flesh CANNOT please God." Says Christ, John vi. 44, "No MAN CAN come unto me except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him." Now we submit whether the above extract be any thing better than a railing accusation against the word of the Lord. We beg our readers also to observe how the preparatory law-work of conviction of sin is scouted as not only needless but pernicious, and likewise how evident it is that Mr. Finney gets rid of this by dint of his doctrine that there is nothing in spiritual religion which man cannot at once bring to pass by the might of his own will. Again he says, p. 352, "Afraid of sudden conversions! Some of the best Christians of my acquaintance were convicted and converted in the space of a few minutes. In one quarter of the time that

I have been speaking, many of them were awakened, and came right out on the Lord's side, and have been shining lights in the church ever since, and have generally manifested the same decision of character in religion, that they did when they first came out and took a stand on the Lord's side."

While all things are possible with God, and the suddenness of a conversion is not *per se* proof that it is spurious, yet it may safely be declared to be God's ordinary method of dispensing grace, to occupy a longer or shorter time with the preparatory work of the law in the soul, to the end that the sinner slain thereby, may come to Christ and have life. And it may be added that most true penitents spend a considerable season in considering their ways, before they have comfortable evidence that they have turned their feet to God's testimonies. But what deserves special notice in the preceding passage is, that conversion is spoken of, not as a coming to Christ, or to God by Christ, not as a loathing and renunciation of sin, and walking in the divine commandments; but it is held up solely in the attitude of "taking a stand, or coming right out on the Lord's side"—an aspect most favourable to the idea of sinking it into a mere resolution to serve the Lord, such as the natural man can put forth, in the utter neglect of those spiritual affections and graces, that inward renovation of the heart, which lie at the root of all evangelical piety. This, it is well known, is a grand point with all modern revivalists to explain away religious experience into a mere purpose, resolution, or determination to live and act religiously. The idea of continuing any time in a state of conviction, or of supposing that in order to the acceptable performance of religious duties, there must be a prior change of the heart or affections or feelings wrought by the Holy Ghost, is thrust at by these men on the right hand and the left, as a fatal stumbling block to all their operations.* Indeed as it is fundamental to the success of these movements, that every conception of religion, or of the power and manner of producing it, should be dissipated, except that which makes it the sinner's own act or resolve, like any civil or moral act, Mr. Finney utterly abjures the very phrase "religious experience" as fitted to do mischief. He says, p. 355, "I do not like this term, 'experienced religion,' and I use it only because it is a phrase in

* Finney's Lectures *passim*.

common use. It is an absurdity in itself. What is religion? Obedience to God. Suppose you should hear a good citizen say he had experienced obedience to the government and country. You see it is nonsense."

Now with these views of regeneration and conversion, let us suppose a minister, or, what is more common, one of those expert and practiced itinerant tacticians, who claim to be revival-preachers *eminenter*, to undertake the kindling of a religious excitement in a congregation or community—what course will he naturally pursue? All experience shows that the following become integral and inseparable parts of the "moral machinery" put in requisition to achieve the desired result.

First, a peculiar strain and style of preaching. One main object of the preaching will be to foster in the minds of the hearers a practical unbelief of all those doctrines of grace which imply that true religion cannot exist in the soul, unless produced by a direct operation of the Holy Ghost. This, as we have already seen, accords with Mr. Finney's prescription for promoting revivals. For this purpose the doctrines of election, inability, regeneration, are sometimes kept utterly out of view; sometimes explained away; sometimes obscured and mystified; sometimes coarsely misrepresented, caricatured and maligned; sometimes openly and directly denied. Having cleared away all obstacles to "immediate action," by making religion a mere act or resolution of the creature, a second great object is so to operate upon "self-love," that it shall prompt to an immediate and decisive resolution. To this end the everlasting woes of the wicked, and joys of the righteous, are vividly and abundantly portrayed, and this is a part of the counsel of God which revival-preachers can no way be accused of shunning faithfully to declare. In connexion with this, invention is tortured for arguments, and memory for anecdotes, to inspire the belief, that if any do not escape hell during the present excitement, or perhaps the present day or hour, they never will. For the purpose of compassing these objects more effectually, every effort is made to spice the preaching with anecdotes and illustrations, often of the most strange, crude, motley description. We recollect once to have heard a sermon by a "revival-preacher," which consisted wholly of three anecdotes. By this means they present a powerful inducement to all that class of persons who are seeking pastime and recreation to come to their meetings, since there are few who are not

fascinated with a good story well told; and hence it is said, that this sort of preaching competes with the theatre in its attractions for a numerous class. Besides, there is something peculiarly grateful and bewitching to the more coarse and profligate sort of wicked men, in seeing the pulpit, which in their minds has ever been associated with a purity, sanctity and solemnity that they cannot endure, degraded into a stage for reciting droll and vulgar stories and grotesque images and comparisons. And especially if these are plied for the abuse, ridicule, or disparagement of those ministers and Christians who do not bow the knee to the revivalist, or of the ordinary teachers and professors of religion, whom these persons have ever hated, they enjoy a still richer "feast of reason and flow of soul." This is not the only advantage. Such anecdotes and illustrations serve the double purpose of giving plausibility to any notion, however absurd, which the preacher may wish to inculcate, and of lowering all that is spiritual and supernatural in religion to the standard of things purely natural, civil or moral, i. e. to the capacity and tastes of the carnal and worldly mind, which is void of the renewing and illumination of the Holy Ghost. Thus Mr. Finney, in a paragraph already quoted, explains away religious experience, by likening obedience to God to obedience to civil government. We have heard the wonderful skill of a noted revivalist illustrated by one of his admirers thus: He was vindicating the necessity of protracted meetings, and for this purpose employed the following illustration: "If we kindle a single fire under a kettle it will warm the water somewhat, but will not raise it to a boiling heat. And if we wait till the water becomes cold before we again put fire under it, we may repeat the experiment endlessly without making it boil. The fire must therefore be kept a-going without interruption till the result sought is attained. So with preaching. If it occur only on the Sabbath, the effect dies away during the week. It must be therefore repeated without cessation, in order to accomplish any thing." This supposes that religion is a mere working up of the natural susceptibilities by the efficacy of persuasion, instead of a product of the divine power attending the preaching of the word. Otherwise it is unmeaning. Yet it is plausible with unreflecting minds. These are fair specimens of the anecdotes and illustrations used by this class of preachers. And although there is a legitimate use of anecdotes and illustrations, when conscientiously and judi-

ciously employed by experimental and spiritually enlightened preachers, yet we insist that the free use of such as are commonly employed by the class of preachers under review, is obnoxious to all the charges we have laid against them.

An itinerant revivalist makes his first *entree* into a place, with the advantage of a certain sort of celebrity, as a preacher of prodigious power and unparalleled interest, and a worker of wonders in the way of producing revivals. He is often sent for, under the idea that his advent will certainly bring with it a revival, and his fame is trumpeted before him on the wings of the wind. By means of this, and the free application of the style of preaching we have described, day after day, and night after night, a crowd is soon gathered to witness this strange thing, and see whereunto it will come. Unless these means have already become stale, and bereft of the charm of novelty and freshness by frequent repetition, unless they have thus exhausted the excitability and curiosity of the people, or unless their true nature and tendency have come to be generally understood, or there are other unpropitious circumstances, they will rally all sorts of people to witness the spectacle, whether they approve or disapprove it. And now the preacher is pretty sure to announce that a "shaking" is about to occur under his labours, such as passes all former example, and points to the sensation already made, the crowds of people rushing to hear him, as premonitory symptoms of what will be witnessed by those who shall be on the ground a few weeks hence. Moreover he teaches the praying people, that if they will offer the "prayer of faith," they can procure whatever conversions, and as much of a revival, as they ask. Thus the indications of a revival are made at once to appear. And now the great labour is to accumulate all excitements from heaven, earth, and hell, that urge an immediate taking of the great resolve, which is deemed equivalent to passing from death unto life, and here is tested whatever virtue there is in efforts descriptive and histrionic, to make the auditory see themselves in the grasp of death, or standing before the judgment seat of Christ, or hear the sentence of the judge, or inhale the sulphureous fumes of the pit, or the balmy fragrance of the paradise above, to hear the frantic shrieks of the damned, or catch the transporting melodies of heaven, and thus to make the present seem the last moment in which the lake of fire can be exchanged for

immortal bliss, and in this way to impel to that resolution to serve the Lord, which is made one with spiritual regeneration. That the truths thus brought to view are most necessary to be enforced powerfully and felt vividly, especially in a religious revival, we know full well. But then they must be unfolded in their proper places and proportions, according to the analogy of faith. And unless properly accompanied with other evangelical truths, they become incentives to spurious conversions and false hopes, instead of that faith which works by love and purifies the heart. But this process alone is found ordinarily not to be sufficiently stimulating; hence, in order to hasten and develop the work still more palpably, certain *measures*, as they have been styled, are usually introduced at a favourable crisis. They have reference to that well understood principle of human nature which is ashamed to renounce any course to which it is publicly committed, and on this they chiefly depend for the efficacy.

One measure commonly resorted to at an early stage of these proceedings is, a call upon all persons in the assembly who are determined or disposed to come out on the Lord's side, or to flee from destruction, or seek heaven, to indicate it by rising, and all who are of a contrary mind, to indicate it by keeping their seats. In this case, if those who are really determined to serve the Lord respond to the call, it is quite certain that most of those who are not will join them. When men of the world are unexpectedly surprised into a dilemma, one horn of which is to go along with a bewildered and excited concourse of people, and the other to be set down in the black list, as sinners of extraordinary hardness and desperation, very few have nerve and courage enough to choose the latter. We consider this procedure no better than a trap to ensnare men into insincere, or, in the best view, inconsiderate professions. We know it has been resorted to for the promotion of many worthy objects, in a manner, however, which involves less of the nature and sanctity of a vow to the Lord than in this case, with the design of extorting professions and pledges in their behalf, from persons who never expected to make them. But in the end this trick, like all other tricks, cannot fail to react disastrously upon any good cause which adopts it. In the case of thus publicly calling on men to disclose their religious character, their pride is appealed to virtually, first to induce them to profess themselves religious, and then to

induce them to preserve at least an outward and seeming conformity to the professions to which they have thus been ensnared to commit themselves. Indeed we have heard an enthusiastic defender of a celebrated revivalist who is now in the full tide of successful experiment, allege the influence of pride in holding men to professions already made, as the great reason and justification of all his manifold artifices to get men publicly committed to become pious. Moreover, in most cases, the preacher will largely expatiate upon the importance and necessity of taking a stand before men, by means of this and certain other measures which we shall presently notice, as being the grand and decisive step on which their conversion depends. When this is done, no matter how many salvos the preacher throws in to clear himself from the charge of teaching the obvious delusion that such a step is scriptural regeneration, the anxious hearer, ready to catch at a straw, infallibly understands that this step is either identical with, or evidential of, or certainly antecedent to, true conversion; and that if taken with a desire of getting religion, it is one of the things which accompany salvation. And when a large concourse have thus publicly committed themselves to be religious, the news spreads far and wide, that a great religious awakening or revival is in progress in — under the labours of the Rev. Mr. —.

In order to perfect this public commitment, recourse is usually had to another series of expedients. Certain seats, rooms or other localities, are allotted to persons in various conditions of mind. Some have a miscalled altar to which all persons who wish conversion must come to be prayed for. Others set off a certain number of seats, usually those nearest the pulpit, which they style “anxious seats,” which answer the purpose of the altar already mentioned. To these are often added “decision seats,” “hoping seats,” &c. &c. Instead of seats, sometimes a particular room is used, styled the “anxious” or “inquiry” room; and another styled the “young converts” room. Or some other expedient is adopted answering the same purpose. And now all the influences already adverted to, and every other device which can reach the human sensibilities, are put in motion to induce sinners to come to the anxious seat, room or altar. They are made practically to believe that their salvation is staked upon it. Of course, if there is any excitement, great numbers rush to this hallowed point of en-

trance into the kingdom of God. Here they soon learn that the new birth is an act of their own sovereign power of willing, in which they choose God instead of the world, or determine to serve him, or come out on his side, or give themselves to him—an act to which they are at this moment, as at all times every way competent. This is usually followed by what is sometimes called the “dedicatory” prayer—a prayer in which the speaker calls on his hearers to unite with him in giving themselves to God, and uses expressions in accordance with his previous instructions. And in the emphatic phrase of Mr. Finney, large numbers “in the space of a few minutes come right out on the Lord’s side ;” ripe for the decision seats, or hoping seats, or young converts’ room, or any other place to which they may be allotted. It is very common, in order to rally greater numbers around the anxious seats, for leaders in the work, sometimes the preacher himself, to go around the house and address individuals singly, urging them to the anxious seat or altar, and in order more effectually to awe and startle them, they often pray for them aloud by name. This is done in many cases, while others are publicly praying or exhorting. In order still further to perfect the commitment, it is usually insisted on as a capital point, that young converts should rise and state their feelings and purposes, and otherwise exhort and pray in the meetings. This heightens the startling effect of the rest of the proceedings, and ministers fresh food to restless curiosity and love of excitement in the assembling and gazing crowds. When the proceedings reach this pass, whatever of decorum, sobriety and rationality may have attended the beginning of the excitement, are usually supplanted by phrenzied and tumultuous excitement, and “confusion worse confounded” takes the place of the solemn order and decency that befit the house of God.

That by this course of procedure, going to the anxious seat or altar becomes the great matter in conversion, in the view of those who go to it, admits, we think, of no dispute. We know that these preachers try to evade the responsibility of inculcating a sentiment so self-evidently absurd and pernicious, by taking care to say that this step has no intrinsic virtue or efficacy in it; and that, in itself considered, praying and preaching may be as salutary to an individual in one part of a church as another: but then they are ever careful to add, that there is a something in some way con-

nected with or consequent upon taking the anxious seat, which makes it almost if not altogether the turning point of their salvation or perdition. And what matters it, as to the real importance and efficacy of the anxious seat, whether it cause conversion *per se*, or by means of its necessary adjuncts and consequences? They often say that "the seat is indeed nothing in itself, but going to it serves to break down pride, and is taking the cross, without which men cannot be saved." But are not bearing the cross, and breaking down pride, things which accompany salvation, and is not that which produces these things the cause of conversion? How then do these evasions help the case? Does not the anxious seat stand in the sinner's mind after all as the great point of transition into the kingdom of God? Can it be otherwise, if a few stories are told as they always are, showing how persons who have refused to come up to the altar or anxious seat have been kept out of the hope and peace of the gospel, until they yielded the point, and on repairing to it, immediately had joy and peace in believing?

We say moreover that it is self-evident that this measure is fitted, in all its bearings, to dwarf Christian experience into a mere barren resolution to serve God for the sake of escaping misery and gaining happiness. Of course, taking the anxious seat will be deemed the highest exercise, pledge and manifestation of such a resolve.

Besides, it is a fixed principle, that wherever uncommanded outward rites and observances are conceived to have an important agency in procuring the divine favour, there they overshadow, or rather supplant, in the practical estimation of men, the real righteousness which God requires. We believe this to be an unvarying fact. The same is true of rites having a scriptural warrant, if they are invested with an importance and efficacy which the Bible does not attach to them. Those who made so much of tithing mint, anise and cumin, neglected the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith. This is the essence of formalism and hypocrisy, and has been the vice of the sacramental party in the church in all ages. No doctrine is so sweet and exhilarating to the unregenerate heart as the idea that some external ceremony propitiates the favour of God. It is eagerly grasped as a substitute for the spiritual conformity of the heart to the divine law, and for the prostration of all personal pride and self-complacency, in order to be justified exclusively by the merits of Christ.

Hence, in some form, it has been the characteristic ingredient of every form of heathen superstition and spurious Christianity. Where uncommanded rites especially are exalted, so as to be deemed influential in procuring the divine favour, they at once usurp the place which belongs to the true objects of spiritual worship, and are regarded with downright superstition. The invocation of saints, the worship of the Virgin, the bodily penances and asceticism, and all the rites of the Romish church confirm and illustrate this remark. Who does not know that the anxious seat, room or altar, is extensively regarded with a similar superstition by those who subject themselves to their exorcisms? As to the *caveats*, which warn the people not to regard them as having an inherent, but only an attendant or consequential efficacy, who does not know that every Romish rite is enveloped by its advocates in a mist of sophistry far more subtle and attenuated than this? But what do such minute distinctions avail with the bewildered mass on whom these rites are imposed?

But by Mr. Finney's own showing he invests the anxious seat with all the importance which we have contended is attached to it by those who take it. P. 153, after relating an anecdote of a man who was awakened, and "determined that he would not go into a certain grove to pray," and who "went on for weeks in this way, with no relief," but "at length he concluded he would go into the grove and pray, and as soon as he got there he was converted, and went and poured out his full heart to God," he proceeds to say, "So individuals are sometimes entrenched in a determination that they will not go to a particular meeting, perhaps the inquiry meeting, or some prayer meeting, or they will not have a certain person pray with them, or they will not take a particular seat, such as the anxious seat. They say that they can be converted just as well without yielding this point, for religion don't consist in this, going to a particular meeting, or taking a particular attitude in prayer, or a particular seat. This is true, but by taking this ground they *make* it the material point, and so long as they are entrenched there, and determined to bring God to their terms, they never can be converted." In this connexion, read the following, p. 344, "Whatever point is taken hold of between God and the sinner, when the sinner **YIELDS** that, he is converted."

To say nothing of the improvement in dialectics as well

as theology here exhibited, how could it be possible to teach more directly that taking the anxious seat is the turning of salvation or perdition to all such as, doubting its scriptural warrant, respectively consent or refuse to take it?

The ingenuity of this reasoning deserves notice. According to Mr. Finney, although "they can be converted just as well without the taking the anxious seat as with it," yet by insisting that this is the fact, and acting accordingly, "they *make* it the material point," and until they yield it, that is, go to the said seat, "they can never be converted!" This seems very like making the truth a lie, by insisting that it is the truth! Suppose then that a Romish priest should direct Mr. Finney to wear a hair shirt, in order to break down pride and lead him to bear the cross, and thus promote his conversion, and he should reply that he would not do it, for he could be converted as well without it as with it. Suppose now the Jesuit should retort, "This is true, but by taking this ground you *make* it the material point, and while you are entrenched there, determined to bring God to your terms, you never can be converted;" how, on his mode of ratiocination, could he get rid of the obligation and necessity of the austerities of the Romish church, or whatever else any one might choose to impose upon him, as essential to salvation? After all this we cease to be surprised as we read, p. 249, "Perhaps it is not too much to say that it is impossible for God himself to bring about reformation but by new measures!" "Which things indeed have a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh." Col. ii. 23.

That under this lashing process immense numbers should be spurred to form and publicly indicate their determination to serve the Lord, and that the number of such converts may be equal to that blazoned in the printed accounts of these excitements, is by no means improbable. As to resolutions to be holy, made by men with unregenerate hearts, we have a memorable instance recorded in Deut. v. 27—29, "Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say; and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee; and WE WILL HEAR IT AND DO IT. And the Lord heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken.

O THAT THERE WERE SUCH A HEART IN THEM, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them and their children forever." The great vice of the resolutions of the unregenerate is, that being made by the "will of the flesh," while the affections of the heart are still impure, there is not such a HEART in those who make them that they will keep God's commandments always. Nothing is more common than for graceless men, under mere legal conviction, and terrors wrought by the common operations of the Spirit, or in seasons of affliction, to make resolutions to live righteously, and adopt a corresponding reformation of life, which in different persons is of various extent and duration. Nay, the whole form of religion may be assumed without its power. The spirit of bondage may goad the subject of it to the earnest purpose to obey the will of God, and to put forth all the appearances of piety. But the living and abiding root of grace in the soul is wanting; so that there is no living faith, no life-giving union to Christ the only source of supplies of strength and growth, no inward transformation by the renewing of the mind, no true spirit of adoption, no love of holiness for its own sake. In this sense many are partakers of the heavenly gift, and taste the powers of the world to come, who sooner or later fall away. Many anon hear the word with joy, who, when tribulation ariseth because of the word, are straightway offended. Many, under the impulse of selfish hope or fear, or from a pride of consistency, keep up an outward and barren form of godliness through life, who nevertheless have no living principle of thrift and growth, and manifest none of the precious fruits of the Spirit. Says Dr. Owen, in the work already quoted, p. 290, "Few are so stubbornly profligate as not, at one time or other, to project and promise an amendment of life; they will abstain from their old sins for a time, and perform some duties from which they expect relief to their consciences, especially when the afflicting hand of God is upon them; and this produces that kind of goodness which is "like the morning cloud and the early dew;" things which make a fair appearance, but quickly vanish. And though this is most remote from evangelical obedience, yet hereby multitudes deceive themselves to their eternal ruin." Again, pp. 143-4, speaking of the preparatory work of the Spirit in the soul, he says, "This work is frequently carried on so far in reformation of life, that it will express the whole form of godliness. But

here also it is deficient. For it will consist with reigning sins of ignorance. It leads not to the abhorrence of all sin, as sin; nor to a desire of universal conformity to Christ; but often leaves great sins unregarded. So it left persecution in Paul, before his conversion; and so it leaves hatred and a desire of persecution in many at this day. Besides, its reformation of the life is seldom universal as to all known sin; unless it be for a season while the soul is in a flagrant pursuit of self-righteousness. When the efficacy of the first impressions abates, lust will reserve some peculiar way of venting itself. Further, the conversation of such persons is assuredly fading and decaying. Coldness, sloth, love of the world, carnal wisdom and security, get ground upon them every day. Hence, though by abstinence from open sensualities, they may not be given up to them, yet they become walking and talking skeletons in religion; dry, sapless, and useless worldlings. But where the soul is inlaid with real grace, it is in a state of thriving continually. Such an one will go from strength to strength, from grace to grace, from glory to glory, and will be fat and flourishing in old age. By these things we may learn to distinguish in ourselves, between the preparatory work mentioned, and that of real saving conversion to God." And is not this, we ask, likewise the exact contrast between the great mass of new-measure converts, and humble, experimental Christians? It is, in short, the distinction between legal and evangelical righteousness, with which new-measure preachers do not meddle. But we think it indisputable, from what has already been made to appear, that the whole genius of their principles, teaching and measures, is to lead men to a legal righteousness and nothing more; and as indisputable, that this sort of repentance falls short of that faith which works by love, unites to Christ, and without which it is impossible to please God. Although the subjects of it have a zeal for God, it is not according to knowledge; or being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, they do not submit themselves to the righteousness of God. Rom. x. 2, 3.

Quite a common direction given to anxious inquirers by a celebrated revival-preacher is, that if they would obtain peace and comfort, they must get up and speak in meetings, or go and address some impenitent person on the subject of religion, or make a public confession of the more flagrant iniquities of their past life, instead of directing them to

Christ to obtain rest for their weary and labouring souls. And this suggests, what we might have more properly adverted to earlier, that one fundamental measure which these men much insist on, is, a public confession, on the part of old professors and new converts, of all their mal-practices. Many things are thus, in some cases, publicly blazoned in a revival of religion, of which it is a shame even to speak. A motley succession of crimes and peccadillos is displayed to gratify the foul and malign passions of the listening spectators. Contrary as all this is to the solemnity of a revival, to that shrinking humility, and ingenuous shame, and unfeigned abhorrence of all pollution which every Christian ought to cherish. Who does not see that it presents new attractions to draw people to the scene of action, and fans afresh the flame of wild and tumultuous excitement?

It is usually a part of these operations to adopt a style of praying marked by the total want of all humility, solemnity and reverence. A coarse, familiar, colloquial style of address to the Most High is practised and inculcated by these men, as being the only sort of prayer that can be acceptable and prevalent with God. God is addressed as if he were a fellow worm. The names, characteristics and circumstances of individuals, are often recited in public prayer, under the pretext of making it more definite and interesting, in the style of ordinary parlance between man and man. It thus becomes a convenient vehicle of traducing the characters of any, especially ministers and church-officers, who have become obnoxious, by refusing to succumb to the revivalist. Many prayers that we have heard of this description, which were claimed to indicate a peculiarly wrestling and prevailing spirit, seemed to us little better than a profanation of divine worship. This sinking process pervades all the exercises. They are all tinged with the same irreverence, not unmingled with personal vituperation, which are the direct contrary of that solemn order, decency and reverence that God requires in his house. But this conspires with the influences already depicted, to kindle still further the excitement, such as it is; both by means of the shock it gives to the sensibilities of the pious, and the pleasure it affords to those who hate all that is comely, sacred and awe-inspiring in religion.

The last of these measures to which we shall now advert, is the immediate admission to the visible church of those, who become converts, in the manner and under the influ-

ences already described. This is notoriously a fundamental part of these operations. Almost without exception, the class of revival preachers under review, insist upon a public profession of religion, at the first opportunity after the supposed conversion. During the brief space, in which these startling proceedings are going on, opportunities are usually made, so that those who "come right out on the Lord's side" during the week, are admitted to church fellowship on the succeeding Sabbath. And generally the whole multitude of those who have resolved to be Christians, are hurried into the church with the utmost precipitancy. We consider this almost universal characteristic of these operators, as decisive proof that they have a lurking distrust of the soundness and stability of the conversions resulting from their appliances: that they know full well, that if most of their converts do not join the church under the impulse of the excitement, they will soon lose all inclination to a profession of religion, and renounce the form as well as the power of godliness. This measure consummates, it puts in the most permanent and remediless form, all the indescribable evils, which naturally, (and, unless divine grace prevent,) inevitably spring from such a course of experiments upon the community. It confirms all the false hopes which have been engendered: it loads the church with a mass of wood, hay, and stubble, sufficient to impede all its motions, and smother all its spirituality. It is opening the doors of Christ's house to things common and unclean, without applying any adequate test to distinguish those who are visibly, and in the judgment of charity holy, from those who are not. The proper and scriptural evidence of true gospel righteousness in men, is the fruits of righteousness. By their fruits shall ye know them. What doth it profit though a man say he hath faith, and have not works, can faith save him? By this we know that we know Christ, if we keep his commandments. Consequently, in order that we may have the means of judging whether the faith of a supposed convert, be living or dead, real or imaginary, some reasonable time must elapse, in which it may have a trial, and show whether it is sound, enduring, working by love, purifying the heart, overcoming the world, and producing all holy obedience, in short, a vital principle of grace implanted in the soul: or whether it is a transient ephemeral, resolution, shooting up on the shallow soil of a forced excitement of the natural susceptibilities. "They

on the rock are they, which when they hear, anon hear the word with joy : and then have no root, which for a while believe, but in time of temptation fall away." Now if there is ever a danger of making multitudes of this sort of converts, must not that danger be pre-eminently great, under such devices as have been set forth? If there is such a thing as healing slightly the hurt of sinners, will not such empiricism do it? After the most faithful vigilance and caution, many tares will be mixed with the wheat in the visible church. Many will find their way to the Lord's table, whose goodness is as the morning cloud and the early dew, dissipated by the first sharp onsets of temptation. What less than can result from the immediate union to the church of persons converted after the method in question, but a complete inundation of it, with such as are strangers to vital godliness? When the people after having been miraculously fed by Christ, were ardent to assume the attitude of being his followers, he repelled them, saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled," John vi. 26. And surely it can hardly be supposed, that these devices, would lead to conversions animated by any purer principle than self-love. Indeed if there is any thing deeply and awfully criminal, of which a minister of Christ can be guilty, we think it is the using of devices to bring unholy persons into the church of Christ. It is pestiferous and absolutely fatal in all its bearings.

We by no means intend to intimate that none, or even few of those who profess religion under such circumstances, prove in the end to be real Christians, and to walk as becometh the gospel of Christ. We rejoice in the belief that there are many such. But, as concerns the instrumental causes of this, we ascribe them chiefly to other agencies, which are wholly unnoticed in the blazing accounts of these excitements that are paraded in the public prints. We ascribe them to previous religious instruction, to the Sabbath school, to pastoral preaching, prayer and other labours; to the teachings, prayers and tears of godly parents. Will God utterly forget his covenant or disown his own ordinances, because of such vandal irruptions on his heritage, or the temporary blindness and waywardness, which happen in part unto Israel? Moreover, so much poisonous error would not be welcomed in any community having a semblance of Christian knowledge, unless it were mixed

with some truth to disguise and render it palatable. And in some cases, almighty grace may open the heart to attend to the truth and fortify it against the influx of error. Withal, some who by these devices are decoyed into a profession of religion, afterwards learn their delusion, and being favoured with sound evangelical preaching, or by means of private inquiry, are led to him who is the way, the truth, and the life. This, however, results not from the legitimate tendency of the means we have been discussing, but from a gracious counteraction of that tendency.

That we have not exaggerated the true character and results of these manœuvres, is attested by the concurrent voice of all competent witnesses in any degree acquainted with them. To present any considerable part of this description of evidence, which has been accumulating the last ten years would itself fill the usual space allotted to an article. We shall barely exhibit as a specimen the last that has come in our way. It is from a *concio ad clerum*, preached by Rev. A. Newton, at the late commencement of the Western Reserve College. It is, therefore, from a source not liable to the imputation of being warped by "Old School prejudices." We take the following extract from the *New England Puritan*, of Sept. 23, 1841. *Ex uno disce omnes.*

"I do not know that any of our modern evangelists would consent to labour in a place at all unless they could be allowed to hold a meeting of five or six weeks in continuance. During these meetings it is expected that Christians will suspend much of the ordinary business of life—that they will attend meetings from three to five times a day—that they will confess their sins in public—that they will converse with the impenitent—and generally, do what they have perhaps never done, and what they are not expected to continue to do for a great length of time. Furthermore, there is generally incorporated with this system the practice of dividing off those who seem to be affected with religious truth into classes, and assigning to them different seats, which take their names from the supposed spiritual condition of their occupants—as anxious seats—decision seats—hoping seats, &c. It is not an uncommon thing to call persons by name in prayer. There is also very generally encouraged a style and inanner of praying so grossly familiar, as to shock most minds unaccustomed to it; and a manner of preaching is practised which is calculated rather to affect

the imagination and the passions, than enlighten the understanding and impress the conscience and the heart."

He further lays to the account of this system, the producing of many spurious conversions. And after showing *how* it produces the result, he says:

"But what do facts teach us on this subject? If any reliance can be placed on the testimony of some of the most discriminating and judicious pastors whose churches have been the theatre of these operations, we must believe that the system does produce a large proportion of unsound conversions. I am not permitted to name persons or places, but I may say that in one church where an evangelist was employed, more than half that united with the church, proved, within two or three years, in the estimation of the pastor, to be destitute of piety; that in another where upwards of one hundred conversions were proclaimed, not fifteen, in the opinion of the pastor, ever gave evidence of a saving change; and the children who had been thought converts, were pronounced by their school teachers to be seven-fold worse than before; and that in another church where an evangelist had laboured with great apparent success, the pastor in less than a year afterwards declared that of the two hundred who united with his church in the season of excitement, not more than fifty gave satisfactory evidence of piety. These three examples are adduced as fair illustrations of the effects of the system. The revivals occurred in different places, and were all conducted by different evangelists. And from an inquiry somewhat extensive on this subject, I have good reason to believe that not a much greater proportion of sound conversions has been the result of such efforts generally for the last six or eight years."

Our limits will now only permit a cursory glance at some of the more flagrant evils resulting from this whole system, which have not been distinctly noted in the foregoing analysis.

These are only so many developments of that law which governs the use of preternatural stimulants, throughout every department of animated existence. They are neither foodful nor nutritious. Though they may goad for the moment into a spasmodic energy and excitement, they do it by taxing those latent, residuary powers, which constitute a reserve force for future emergencies, and consequently, in a brief period, induce a greater debility than they found.

Now all these expedients for producing a religious excitement are but so many stimulants of man's inventing, applied to the natural susceptibilities, to produce a transient stir and commotion on the subject of religion. They are a substitute for the regenerating work of the Holy Ghost in the soul, implanting new principles of hearty love and obedience to the truth as it is in Jesus. They are therefore perfectly analogous to those stimulants of the physical system, which excite a transient, unnatural, and almost a demoniac power, but instead of imparting real, abiding strength, only consume and exhaust it. As under the application of these stimulants there is a degree of overwrought, morbid excitement, which the human system cannot long endure, so, immediately on their cessation, there is a terrible relapse. An awful torpor usually ensues, and that, in most cases, immediately.

The ordinary means of grace, the unadulterated milk and meat of divine truth, cease to invigorate and quicken those who have been subjected to these exorcisms, just as nutritious food will not give the requisite tone to the system which has been chiefly kept up by narcotic or alcoholic stimulants. Hence preaching, and all other means of grace, are beyond precedent, stript of all power and interest among a people thus hardened and stupified. All the plain and solemn services of the sanctuary, as conducted by a stated ministry, become ineffably tame and dull to those who have so long been regaling themselves on droll stories, startling paradoxes, and degrading or delusive illustrations. Worshipping assemblies speedily become thin and inattentive. Decay and langour rapidly mark every thing pertaining to the cause of religion. Things wax worse and worse. And the withering re-action is equal to the overheated action. As a necessary result a species of infatuation ordinarily possesses at least the leaders in these transactions. Those who are quickened by morbid stimulants, instead of attributing their subsequent lassitude and other distempers to the true cause, will usually charge them upon something else : perhaps upon influences most salutary in their nature. So in this case. They usually charge their decay and exhaustion upon those Christians and ministers who will not fall in with and endorse such proceedings, styling them "Achans," "stumbling-blocks," &c. &c. Or they charge it upon the want of the "revival spirit, or revival preaching," in the pastor, who may be endeavouring, by a judicious

course of instruction, to restore the chaotic mass to a state of order and thrift.

Hence the remedy for this prostration and debility, which is always resorted to, unless God graciously dispel their blindness, is a more liberal use of the same sort of means which produced them. A mere repetition of the same precise measures is usually stale, and has little power to rouse the people. As novelty and strangeness formed a chief ingredient in the exciting power of their first measures, so these qualities vanish at each repetition, unless produced by some new devices still more strange and startling in their nature and disastrous in their results. And this process usually goes on from bad to worse, in places not cured of the love of such things, till the folly of these operators becomes manifest, and they can go no further, having tried experiment after experiment, till the most desperate expedients cease to affect the people. Thus Mr. Finney, who, in his discourse on measures, insists that there must always be something *NEW*, has tried every expedient, doctrinal and practical, till he has at last taken up Perfectionism as the magic instrument which is to rouse the church to a higher standard of action, and revive those slumbering professors, whom he so emphatically denounced as a *DISGRACE TO RELIGION*. And his folly has become manifest to multitudes who never could see it before. For it is an unalterable law that "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse."

And when such means come to be regarded as "the great power of God," the grand appliances by which religion receives its chief impulse and advancement, then a proportionate disparagement of the divinely instituted means of grace ensues. Having become insipid, unprofitable and powerless, they likewise become contemptible in the eyes of the people. That, in the train of these measures, the Sabbath, sanctuary, ministry, and family religion, sink in the practical judgment and affections of the people, is not so much matter of speculation as of history. All these latter means contemplate a gentle, solid, and steady growth, a progress which, if slow, is sure. Of course they are at war with the whole genius of new measures. What opinion would he have of the efficacy of family worship, or of a plain gospel-sermon on the Sabbath, who conceived that it was the province, not of God, but of some famous, story-telling, paradoxical preacher to give the increase? We be-

lieve it to be a well-established fact, that family religion does not flourish in churches, which depend chiefly on these unnatural stimulants for the promotion of religion. If the form is retained, the power of it vanishes. And what more fatal shock can the permanent interests of religion receive, than the dissemination of a general contempt of these great ordinances of God for its promotion? Of course these measures sweep away the pastoral relation in their dreadful wake.

People who have been regaling themselves on the rare entertainments afforded by this sort of preachers, with its varied condiment of vulgar humour, sarcasm, anecdote, illustration and histrionism, and who think this the great means of promoting religion, will not long endure plain gospel sermons, or those who preach them; "for the time shall come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but will after their own lusts heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears." Pastors therefore are early victims to this course of things. All this has for a long time been matter of history. Through whole presbyteries, and tracts of country where these men have figured, there is only here and there a settled pastor, and what few there are, have in most cases been settled, and are destined to continue settled, but a few months. Now if there is any sure method in which the curse of God is inflicted upon churches, it is in their privation of faithful and competent pastors.

This system is the fruitful mother of doctrinal errors and heresies of every form and hue. It works this result in various ways. It is based upon and presupposes a fundamental error respecting that power by which the heart of man is conformed and made obedient to the truths of the gospel. It substitutes human expedients which operate on the natural susceptibilities, for God's sovereign, omnipotent, transforming grace. It of course denies or explains away special grace, and all affiliated doctrines. This, as we have already seen, strikes, by inevitable consequence, at the very vitals of religious experience, and dwindles it down to a mere resolution put forth under the impulses of self-love. But after these errors, so exhilarating to the carnal mind, lose their freshness, they lose their power to arouse men; and they generally prefer to postpone attention to a religion which it is so easy to obtain at any moment, till they have a more convenient season for attending to it. Then the new conception of the "prayer of faith" is brought in to

surmount this obstacle. But when this demonstrates its own fallacy in unquestionable results, improved dietetics or Perfectionism is brought forward as the last desperate remedy for a desperate case. It is learned that external ordinances are an incubus on the free aspirations of the spirit within. The obligation of the moral law also is found to fetter inward liberty. It is discovered to be a dreadful bondage to be under any law but our own passions and lusts. Thus the most unbridled licentiousness has stalked abroad, with great swelling words of vanity, saying to humble piety, *STAND BY FOR I AM HOLIER THAN THOU*. Meanwhile, many who have been pronounced converts, and perhaps made foremost in promoting the revival, finding that their conversion is all a delusion, begin to consider all religious experience as a dream of enthusiasm, and all evangelical religion an imposture. In a genuine revival of religion, we have seen those who were fortified against it; because, as they said, "they had been all through with this conversion before, and it was all a farce." Spectators who observe these scenes and their results often imbibe the same sort of scepticism. Many of the more substantial sort of people disgusted with such a course of things, flee for relief to some of those sects, where an orderly formalism takes the place of evangelical piety. Thus infidelity, universalism and formality grow apace. The result is, in many cases, incurable divisions and feuds in churches; in others, their utter disruption and disorganization; in others, their complete apostacy and extinction, or, at best, evanescence into Perfectionism, Unionism, *et id genus omne*.

Suppose however that these more fearful rocks and quicksands are avoided. Let us consider, for a moment, the case of such as, in the judgment of charity, are real Christians in churches which have been filled with members by these measures. Although their tendency may have been so far counteracted as to prevent fatal delusion in many cases, yet it does not follow that they are harmless even in that event. On the contrary, they do exceedingly mar, distort and debilitate the piety of real Christians. They serve to make them weak in the faith; to give them confused views of that truth by which they are sanctified; to impede their growth in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; to impoverish all that part of religious experience which consists in communion with God, self-searching, mortification of lust, the inward conflict be-

tween nature and grace, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, and all the fruits of the Spirit. They greatly impair the beautiful proportion and symmetry of religious character; inspiring a disproportionate zeal for some things, and a comparative neglect of others equally important. There is often, for example, a most vehement zeal for the conversion of sinners, and the reformation of public morals, while there is little zeal against sin within the zealot himself, little habitual spirituality and heavenliness of mind. This degenerate, lean, starveling sort of religious experience has become exceedingly prevalent of late years, and is matter of universal complaint. There are immense multitudes who do not appear so much no Christians, as weak Christians; babes in knowledge and grace, who retain all the weakness and imbecility of helpless infancy. They are incapable of withstanding the seductions of error and temptation. They are "children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive." Eph. iv. 14. They have not their "senses exercised to discern both good and evil," and "when for the time, they ought to be teachers, they have need that one teach them again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." Heb. v. 12—14. And what else could be expected? Can a bad tree bring forth good fruits?

In short, what has been styled New Divinity and New Measures, is essentially Arminianism: it produces an Arminian religion: wherever it has prevailed in Calvinistic communions, it has reduced them to, if not below, the level of the surrounding Arminian sects. All that pre-eminence for scriptural knowledge, spiritual discernment, stable, sober and principled piety, which has been the glory of Calvinistic churches; which has made them pioneers in religious enterprise and useful reformations, and bulwarks of truth, liberty, order, purity, intelligence and learning, against the v. adal irruptions of rationalistic and prelatie arrogance, fanatic and ignorant zeal, instantly vanishes when this leaven prevails; and THE GLORY IS DEPARTED.

Indeed we believe these innovators took the first hint from the Methodists. Mr. Finney says, p. 253, "We must have exciting, powerful preaching, or the devil will have the people, except what the Methodists can save. It is impossible

that our ministers should continue to do good, unless we have innovations in the style of preaching. Many ministers are finding it out already, that a Methodist preacher, without the advantages of a liberal education, will draw a congregation around him which a Presbyterian minister, with perhaps ten times as much learning, cannot equal, because he has not the earnest manner of the other, and does not pour out fire upon his hearers when he preaches." But it should be borne in mind, that the Methodists rarely go the length of many of the extravagances we have noted. Moreover they are honest and avowed Arminians in their belief. All their ecclesiastical polity is adapted to this system, whereas Presbyterian and Congregational churches, in their whole structure and arrangements, presuppose the truth of Calvinism. Thus, in the reception of church members, they provide for "falling from grace," and can ease themselves of apostates without any protracted and tedious difficulties. So they make provision for a frequent change of ministers; and much more of a like nature. But we believe that no true Christian will ever become an apostate; and we know of no method of getting rid of those who prove to be so, but by toilsome discipline; and therefore the adoption of measures, which are adapted to flood the church with apostates, works clumsily according to our polity. The same is true of an unstable ministry, and of all other peculiarities of this system.

At this point it may not be amiss to make a suggestion in regard to the union of different sects in revival meetings, which has a close connexion with this whole subject. These unions are usually brought about in this wise. Some one of the sects that are accustomed to employ stimulating expedients to work up religious excitements, will commence operations in a community with copious discourses on the beauty, loveliness and excellence of union among different denominations, and especially its necessity in order to the most effective promotion of revivals. And such phrases as brotherly love, harmony, and co-operation among different denominations, are highly captivating to ingenuous Christian minds that have had no experience in such things. On this account the Congregational or Presbyterian minister is often prevailed upon to accede to the proposal, and, in many cases, against his own judgment and choice, through fear that if he refuses, his motives will be misunderstood, and he shall offend against the generation of the upright. The

consequence is, that he thereby seals his lips against uttering any truths which are denied by those with whom he unites, at a crisis when his people are pre-eminently tender and susceptible to instruction. In most cases he cannot rise above Arminianism. Moreover he is obliged practically to endorse the teaching and measures of his confederates, as comprising whatever is essential to the welfare of men's souls. Soon he finds that they are employing crafty devices to proselyte his people to their ranks, and that his own position, so far from enabling him to parry off their attacks, exposes his people to their utmost force. The invariable result, so far as we are informed, is that some of his own people are decoyed away; the breach between sects has been widened rather than healed; he has given erroneous views a very undesirable sanction and currency among his people; and he finds that this result was originally designed by the proposers of the pseudo-union. Repellant bodies increase their repellantcy in proportion to the closeness of their contiguity. We knew an exhorter who commenced operations in a place by circulating tracts on the union of sects; as soon as by this pretext he could get some dozen people together, he established a separate worship, according to the principles of his own sect on the Sabbath. This case we think is a fair illustration of the true nature and design, of the very affectionate proposals for union meetings often made by sectarians.

It deserves to be stated that there is a numerous class in the country who espouse and teach the doctrinal principles which we have discussed, who would repudiate with disgust the foregoing measures, so far as they offend against good taste and the decency and order proper to the house of God. There are some evangelists of this description, of exquisitely fine taste, who attract crowds and kindle an excitement wherever they go. While, in such cases, there is a freedom from whatever is revolting to the natural taste and sensibilities; yet so far as regeneration is explained away into a mere resolution or other act of the creature; so far as conviction of sin by the law is treated as needless; so far as human ability is exalted; so far as, in any way, the anxious are led to suppose that taking a particular position or attitude goes to make them Christians, or are induced to make any public manifestation of themselves, except for the purpose of receiving appropriate instruction; so far as an evangelist is looked upon as endued with the

power of producing a revival where he goes, so that with his aid, it is anticipated as probable, and without it despaired of as impossible; so far as by anecdotes, histrionism, &c., no matter how elegant and polished, he creates a low esteem of pastoral labour and preaching; in due proportion all the fore-mentioned disastrous fruits inevitably ensue, on the principle of cause and effect. To whatever extent it is taught, and the belief is engendered, that man is competent to make himself a child of God, without renovating grace, to the same extent mischievous delusion is propagated, and will produce its appropriate results; however its influence may be narrowed and impeded, and its disastrous effects softened and palliated by the absence of the grosser devices which have been depicted.

A few words as to the manner in which such principles and proceedings are commonly vindicated by their authors and abettors.

Although great evil confessedly attends them, yet it is deemed enough to silence all objections, that they accomplish great good, and are the occasion of many genuine conversions. But this plea renounces the only standard by which all controversies are to be tried, and appeals to results. We say "to the law and the testimony." Moreover, appealing to results, they are non-suited, as the foregoing pages abundantly show. As to those who are truly converted at such times, could not and would not the grace of God bring them into his kingdom, in the due use of his appointed means, and in a manner far more promotive of the prosperity of their souls? Are not great numbers fatally deluded and otherwise injured, and are not all the interests of religion smitten with a withering blight? Is it said that the church can be purged by discipline? Under the purest administration, and the utmost vigilance, some false professors will find their way into the church, and there will be need of an occasional excommunication. But is it not unutterably cruel to beguile men into the church by a system of devices, which can only be defended on the ground that the mischiefs flowing from them, can be counteracted by inflicting on their victims the pains of ecclesiastical decapitation? And is it not ruinous to their souls to use measures expressly designed to produce religious excitement in them, which shall stop short of true conversion? For do not scripture and experience prove that, in such cases, "the last state is worse than the first?" It is one

thing to be visited with such evils occasionally in spite of the best efforts to avoid them, and quite another to adopt a system directly adapted to engender them.

They are in the habit of replying to all objections with great assurance, by saying that in this age the world moves by steam, and unless we adopt some more improved, rapid method of converting it, it will run away from us. This idea is put forth in every variety of form, *ad captandum*, to catch the unreflecting crowd. Our readers, we fear, will think we are dealing with trifles, in giving it this distinct and formal notice. But we are impelled to do it, in view of the serious use which is made of this fancy. When those who profess to surpass all others as teachers and promoters of religion, offer it as a serious answer to the objections of the "Old School" against their fierce and impetuous movements, and loose doctrines, that "if any choose to travel in ox-carts or scows they can, but we prefer a steam-boat or locomotive," when things of this nature are seriously thrown out in "revival" sermons, as they have been freely by those who have figured most prominently in these things of late; then we say it ought to be put in print; so that it may become the object of calm contemplation; and that those who presume to argue thus about God's truth, and the order of his house, may retain whatever credit they can as teachers of "the religion of the Bible," which is the same "yesterday, to-day, and forever."

In conclusion, we think that ample cause has been shown why the orthodox Christians of this land look with greater or less distrust upon all religious excitements, which are produced under the influence either of the doctrines or measures which have been examined, or of both conjoined; and still more why they cannot look upon such excitements as evidential of the truth of the principles, the rectitude of the measures, of the men, that are instrumental in their production; and why they cannot confide in the authors and abettors of these doctrines and devices, no matter what wonders they may work, until they explicitly repudiate them.

And we think that in these things the course of duty is the course of safety; that the more entirely all ministers and churches avoid all participation in, all sanction or countenance of these extravagances, the more will they be in the way of receiving the divine blessing, and becoming ultimately sound and prosperous. Mark those which cause

divisions and offences among you and avoid them. Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them, is the course, not less of wise policy, than of gospel righteousness. And it behooves all concerned to see to it, that they so faithfully and prayerfully use the means of divine appointment for promoting the cause of religion, that they shall give no occasion to those who seek occasion, and wish a plausible pretext for thrusting upon them the contrary sort of proceedings, and thus kindling UNHALLOWED FIRE UPON THE ALTAR OF THE LORD.

J. W. Newman

ART. II.—*The Kingdom of Christ Delineated, in two Essays on our Lord's own Account of his Person and of the Nature of his Kingdom, and on the Constitution, Powers and Ministry of a Christian Church, as appointed by Himself.* By Richard, Lord Archbishop of Dublin. London: Fellowes. 1841. Svo.

THIS new work of Archbishop Whately would afford abundant matter of discussion on the general subject of the Constitution of the Christian Church. But we avail ourselves, at present, of his name, to introduce a few reflections of our own, upon one of the topics mentioned in his title-page, the Ministry of the Church, "as appointed by our Lord himself." We have wished, for some time, to suggest the inquiry, whether the members of our church do habitually join its unimposing and familiar institutions with proper views of the supreme authority of Christ. Perhaps our people, not the irreligious alone, but too frequently the professedly religious, are inclined to depose certain of the offices of the Christian church from their station of divine authority; and among these, the pastoral office, which is liable to be accounted only a human and voluntary modification of the Christian ministry. It seems to be presumed by some, that the pastoral functions do not belong of divine right to any portion of the Christian ministry; and that the claims of Christ in regard to the official administration of the gospel are met by sustaining only the more general forms of ministerial service. It cannot therefore be amiss to pass, in brief review, a portion of the argument for the divine authority of the office of the Christian pastor.

There is an evident distinction between the office of the