

# REVIVALS

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**The  
Prevailing  
Prayer-Meeting:**

**A SERMON,**

Delivered in Blackfriars' Street Congregational Chapel,  
Glasgow, on 4th September, 1859.

*On the occasion of the re-opening of Blackfriars' St. Congregational Chapel, on Sabbath, Sept. 4, the Rev. Professor Finney, president of the Oberlin College, U.S., author of 'Lectures on Revivals,' &c., preached to overflowing and deeply-interested audiences in the forenoon and evening. In the forenoon, he discoursed on 'The Prevailing Prayer-meeting,' spoken of in Acts 1:1-14, viewed in connexion with the results which followed on the day of Pentecost, the account of which he read as contained in the second chapter of that book.*

I purpose to remark this morning on the first portion of the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, relating to the meeting which, in obedience to Christ's injunction, was held in Jerusalem, where the apostles and other followers of Jesus 'continued with one accord in prayer and supplication' till the day of Pentecost, when, in answer to their prayers, as recorded in the second chapter, they were blessed with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. [After reading Acts i.1-14, the preacher proceeded.] In speaking from these words, I remark, first, that when the gospel was first introduced into the world, it naturally required to be attested by miracles. Those who were sent of God to make the new revelation to man, both under the Old Testament dispensation and the New, he bore witness to, by giving them the power, in his name, to work miracles. This was necessary, because they claimed to introduce a revelation of God's will to the world, and God thus attested their credentials and character and mission, by giving them the power of working miracles. From this fact, and some others I need not name, there has been a tendency in the church to regard the conversions which followed these miracles as being themselves miraculous. Indeed, revivals of religion have been very commonly spoken of as if they were something very much out of the order of all means and ends, and merely miraculous things, and this revival on the day of Pentecost has been looked on and spoken of as a miraculous thing altogether. This idea has prevailed to such an extent that it seems, from what we hear and see, all religious movements and appearances are

credited or discredited by many persons in proportion as they seem or seem not to have connexion with the use of appropriate means. It is common to hear people, when speaking of a revival of religion, saying, 'It must be a work of God, for it is not connected with any means as we can see'--they seem to have no feeling of regard to the connexion of means and ends. If, in any case, a religious movement occurs in connexion with any means designed to secure such results, and, so far as we can see, naturally calculated to secure such results, certain persons are disposed to discredit this as being merely human invention and something of man. It is common to hear men of certain views commend certain religious movements to the confidence of the public as being undoubtedly the work of God, because they are altogether out of the relation of means and ends, having no connexion with any human agency in producing them. They occur not under any revealed law of human or divine conduct. They are altogether exceptional to the law of order and instrumentality appearing everywhere else in the works and ways of God. Therefore they are of God. This is the wonderful logic and theology of many. In plain English, they are miracles. If reported revivals of religion are connected with human efforts designed to secure such a result, why, then, they are only of man, and not at all of God. In some instances where meetings have been appointed to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, it has been expressly said, when such notice was given, that the meetings 'are not appointed to get up a revival.' The fact is, peculiar views of the sovereignty of God, and of man's passivity in regeneration, betray certain persons into the great error of regarding all real revivals as miracles.

To what extent this prevails among you, I know not, but during forty years' experience I have constantly had occasion to remark it. Now, let me say, this idea is a great and dangerous mistake. It is as contrary to the Bible as anything can be; for God has there promised the very blessings which we are to receive under the Christian dispensation, and says, 'I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.' This is a truth, and ought to be honestly and fairly acted upon in all religious efforts. It is often taught in scripture that means must be used; the whole introduction of the Christian dispensation, and all the movements connected therewith, clearly bring out this as a necessary condition, and it is marvellous that men who profess to receive the Bible, should dissociate religious movements with appropriate means to secure such results. The Bible never recognises or countenances such an idea; and furthermore, it is contrary to the order of God's works. Both in the natural and the spiritual

world he has connected means and ends; this is the law of his universal kingdom. It is plainly so in the natural world; and if an investigation were made it would be found just as plain in the spiritual world.

I remark, again, that this is an eminently dangerous mistake, because it discourages efforts to convert the world. Suppose, when the apostles were told to go out, and Christ added, 'Lo, I am with you alway,'--suppose they had taken up the idea that, to attempt to convert the world by any direct effort designed to produce that effect that to attempt to promote a revival of religion in the world would be to take the work out of the hands of God, to get up some human movement; why, what would have been the consequence? But no, they went forward with their work, knowing Christ was with them; for he said, 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' What did Christ mean by this? He wanted it to be understood by his disciples for their encouragement, that all the divine help they needed was at their hand, and that they might rely upon it. Remember I am with you always, to give effect to the means I send you to use. Suppose they had overlooked this--that they had forgotten to go and make efforts to convert the world, and formed such a notion of God's sovereignty as to resolve on waiting till he converted the world; or, suppose they had gone on and forgotten that they were dependent on Christ's Holy Spirit, and suppose they had adopted the idea that he was not always with them, and everywhere, but only at certain times; what would have been the result, would they have succeeded? Christ said 'I am with you alway' and everywhere; they were to go and open their mouths and hold up their hands and hearts to heaven, and he would continue to anoint them, and thus they might succeed in accomplishing the thing they were sent to accomplish. They were to understand that conversion was no miracle. Although miracles were by them to be used as one means of conviction, yet, in converting the world, they were to be wise in adapting means to that end. Further, they are to remember that though conversion is no miracle, it is in fact conditional on the supernatural illumination of the Holy Spirit. The light of nature is sufficient to impose obligation, but as a matter of fact does not secure obedience. So the Bible, or the preached or written Word, can sufficiently enlighten to take away all excuses for sin, but not enough to turn the stubborn will to God. For this reason they needed, and for this reason Christ promised, his presence in the supernatural illumination of his Spirit to give saving effect to their teachings and efforts to convert the world.

But another danger of this mistaken idea is, that it fosters the neglect of appropriate means. If it be true

that religious movements which claim to be of God, are to be credited in proportion as they are not connected with, and so far as we can see, not the result of appropriate means, why then use the appropriate means? Why should preachers adapt their preaching, and aim to secure the conversion of their hearers? Why, with that idea they might preach almost anything. If a sermon be preached calculated to convert, people regard the result as human; but if something is preached not designed nor calculated to convert, then they say 'That is of God--there were no appropriate means, it came upon us we know not how.' How easy it is to see that this erroneous idea fosters a spirit of neglect--a spirit of carelessness, as to whether the means be appropriate or inappropriate, throwing all the responsibility upon God's sovereignty. There was once an old minister wished me to let a certain young man preach, and when I inquired whether he would preach anything suited to the occasion, as it was in the midst of a revival, 'Oh,' said he, 'no matter; there is no connexion between means and ends in spiritual things--he will preach the truth.' 'I shall not ask him to preach,' I said, 'unless I know he can preach what is needed, and not divert the attention of the people from the great object which should be placed before them.' I could not think it my duty, in the circumstances, to humour the old gentleman. I do not believe in this disconnection of means and ends. The Holy Spirit, when he converts men, directs them to something calculated to convert them, and anything else distracts their attention, prevents their intelligent action, and prevents their conversion.

This idea to which I have alluded is standing greatly in the way of the conversion of the world; and if the Church would go back to the promise of Christ when he commissioned her--for it was not the apostles merely whom he commissioned--to go and disciple all nations, saying, 'Lo, I am with you alway'--if Christians would plant themselves upon that promise, and seek to carry out their Lord's command in its true spirit, using the appropriate means for the accomplishment of the object, it would not be long before a different state of things existed in the world.

This leads me to inquire what are the appropriate means? And I remark here, that one of these is special prayer for the object. Not the kind of prayer offered, in which the mind is manifestly not set upon or expecting anything in particular, and when the person praying asks promiscuously for anything or everything from Dan to Beersheba, but special prayer, and the prayer of faith, which has been one of the universal antecedents of a revival of religion since God owned the world. The

whole history of the Church--all God's dealings since the world began, and since the Christian era was introduced--bring out this fact, that when the Spirit has been poured out upon the Church, special prayer has been made for that object. In the case recorded in the Acts, the brethren, without indulging in vain speculations, and throwing all the blame of the sin of the world on God, met for special prayer with reference to a definite object.

Again, preaching of the word, exhortation, and personal conversation were, and are, the appropriate and indispensable means of securing the conversion of souls. We find Peter, in his sermon, exhorting the people to 'save themselves from this untoward generation.' This is what he did, and what did his hearers do? They received his word. There must be special prayer, preaching, and conversation, and means employed to secure the desired end; and what they in those days expected, are you not to expect? What did Christ mean by the parable of the feast, when the servants were ordered to go into the highways, and streets, and lanes, and compel them to come in? He plainly intended to enjoin it upon the whole Church to go to this work of personal visitation and effort to bring sinners to God's house, and to Christ. To lay aside their indolence and their fear of man, and to go to the unconverted wherever they can be found, and urge them, with all possible importunity, to attend to the gospel call. 'Compel them to come in.' We must no longer yield obedience to that devil's call of propriety and politeness that forbids us to personally address others on the question of salvation. Blessed be God, the churches in America and in this country, I trust, are better understanding the application of this parable, and of the Master's instructions, than for some generations past. We find that to merely build churches in their neighbourhood is not enough. We must literally go to them and use a kind of moral compulsion to get them to the house of God, and when this can not be secured we must preach to them where we can.

But these means are always used where there is really a revival of religion. I will now make a few remarks on the antecedents and accompaniments of this particular revival--the means used in this case. Here we have a prayer meeting--a prevailing prayer meeting, which secured the object, the desired result.

First, there was special prayer for a particular object. Christ had told them to wait at Jerusalem till the Holy Spirit was poured out, which should take place not many days hence. Here was special prayer for a definite object, and that object the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. This is the way to pray, if you expect the Holy Ghost to

be poured out. Come together with a definite object, and let that object be sought in earnest prayer. O what mistakes are made on this point! Not long since, I attended a meeting held to pray for a revival of religion. I expected to hear some brother called on to pray for the outpouring of the Spirit. One man prayed and prayed for a quarter of an hour, but he never so much as once asked for the outpouring of the Spirit; and while he prayed for almost everything else, he failed to ask the very thing which we had come together for. People sometimes meet together for prayer, and ask for everything in the world except the very thing which they have come to present to God.

Let us look at another feature of this prayer meeting. I said they had a definite object, and that object the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. They manifestly were greatly in earnest--they greatly desired this object--their hearts were deeply set on it; they wrestled for the blessing; and there was an energy and power about their prayers.

This was a union prayer meeting; all the disciples seem to have been present. They were all united and determined; their hearts were not alienated; there was union--union in prayer; all were united in one object. There was no person to remonstrate against their petition being granted; all were desirous to have this object accomplished.

Again, there was faith or expectation. It was manifest that they expected the blessing. They laid hold upon God, and expected the blessing. Why should they not? Ay, why should they not? For Christ had told them 'ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.' But how can we pray in that way? Have we any such ground for expectation? They had a ground, because they had the Saviour's express promise; but have we any such promise? The apostles had a great many prayer meetings after that one; what do you suppose they did? Did they stumble at the thought that they had no further promise, and feel in the dark as to whether or not the influence of the Spirit would continue to be poured out? No; for he who promised that they should receive the Spirit not many days hence, said also 'Go and disciple all nations,' and 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' The meaning of this promise was--everywhere you go, remember that I am with you; there lay hold on my strength, there believe on me, and I will manifest my presence. Is that not a fair interpretation? And has not the Church, therefore, always the promise of Christ to be with them in all their efforts to build up his kingdom, and to evangelise the world? So I understood it, ever since I was converted; I have acted on this principle for nearly forty years, and never in once instance have I seen it to



fail. When the people of God have laid hold of this principle, he has poured out a blessing in many instances, till there was not room enough to receive, and it has overflowed towns and cities. Let any man take the Bible, and do as a lawyer would in dealing with any legal question--see what that means. I have seen the Scriptures quoted at times in such a manner, in support of certain opinions, that I have thought if a lawyer, in seeking to establish any point, were to quote so loosely and with such manifest latitude, he would be laughed out of a court of justice. After I was converted, I used to think it would be well if people would take the Scriptures and search them as a lawyer would, inquiring, what is the meaning of this? Take this passage--'Go and disciple all nations,' and, 'Lo, I am with you alway.' What is the meaning of that promise? Carry that before a judge in a court of law. Ask the judge what that means? Here is a command to do a certain thing, with the addition immediately following--'And lo, I am with you alway.' What does that mean? Why did he say that? Take that, as a lawyer would, in connexion with what goes before--why he bade them go into the world--and lay it before a court, and I engage that any court in Scotland would declare the meaning to be as though Christ had said--'You may always expect me, if you believe, to second your efforts; you may always expect the Holy Spirit to be poured out on you, and give effect to your honest efforts.' But this leads me to another point. Expectation, I have said, was characteristic of this prayer meeting of the disciples, and I have said we have just now as good reason to have expectation and faith as they had.

Again, observe, they gave up their time. Ah, some of you are business men. What is to become of my business? say some, when a daily prayer meeting is proposed. I don't know how I can afford to attend a daily prayer meeting! But the people who attended this meeting gave up their business; indeed, they had no business but Christ's, and that was about a great matter. There were women present at that meeting, and I suppose they had children. Some women could not find time to attend such meetings. It would be out of the question with some to have a daily prayer meeting--out of the question to have such a thing as a revival--and out of the question to use the appropriate means. These people cheerfully give up their time, and this was a great matter. God emptied out their worldly mindedness. It was the work of all, the business of all and wherefore cannot we put forward such efforts at any rate?

Again, there was mutual agreement with them. They were all present at the meeting; none stayed away and remonstrated again it. Suppose a notice should be given

in the public prints that the people of Glasgow were requested to come together to invite the Queen to visit their city. Well, suppose there should be present only some half-dozen men who could not stay but a few minutes--or perhaps a dozen, or twenty, or more, and that the great mass of the people paid no attention whatever to the matter. When this made known to the Queen, she would say--'The people of Glasgow don't want me. They were publicly invited to come to the meeting; only some fifteen or twenty attended, and waited but a few minutes, during which they transacted some formal business and made out a petition. I cannot go, for the great mass of the people remonstrate against it. Well, there is a prayer-meeting. Public notice is given. Let us seek the Lord Jesus to visit us with the powerful operations of his Spirit. How many attend?--only a few; the great mass of the people are not present. When the Lord sees this, he may say, 'The people object to it--they do not want me to come. But in this case the whole of the disciples were present--about 120; they were all agreed on the one great point, and all united in the petition. Let this be done in any place, and I engage you will get an answer, as certain as God is true. Only hold a prayer meeting like this one, and you are sure to get an answer.

In this meeting there was an agreement in regard to what they wanted, and when they wanted it, and they were willing to make any sacrifice which might be necessary, even to their own lives, which were on the altar, given up to promote the work. This was plainly the spirit of the meeting.

But another characteristic of it was mutual confidence. They did not say--There is Peter, I cannot hear him pray; I have not much confidence in him; or, there is John, I have not much confidence in him; I do not like to hear him pray. A good while ago, I attended a prayer meeting, when one said to me--'Do you hear such a one pray? I guess no one wants to hear him pray.' This spirit of distrust and want of brotherly confidence was not at the meeting to which our attention is now called. Such a feeling as this is the ruin of prayer meetings. When a person gets up to pray, some one says--'Perhaps he is a good man, but I don't like to hear him pray.' Oh, it is death to a prayer meeting, when there is want of confidence! They must come together as little children. This disposition to be captious, was not at the disciples' meeting. One prayed and another prayed. Their state of mind was one of great simplicity, and strong love and confidence in each other. Let this always characterise a prayer meeting, and it is sure to prevail.

But another characteristic of this prayer-meeting was perseverance. They held on--ah, most important

peculiarity this!--They held on from day to-day, held on, and carried out the condition--that they were to hold fast, and give God no rest till he accomplished what they had assembled to ask him for. This is not like a great many prayer-meetings, where the people can take so little time in the exercises. The fact is, they have no earnestness.

In this meeting there was no particular order established--no strait-jacket put on it, so that Mr So-and-so was asked--'Will you read a chapter?' and another--'Will you pray?' and so on. Some are ever objecting to whatever they are unaccustomed to. We are not accustomed to that, say some; but probably you are not aware how much they deceive themselves when they only do things they are accustomed to do. In that prayer-meeting, I presume, nobody was taking the lead of it, so much as to keep it in a strait-jacket. They held their hearts and hands up, waiting for God's grace, till down came the blessing. By this I do not mean to encourage any fanatical departure from a proper form of worship. I was once invited to a prayer-meeting--certain persons had been appointed to pray--the Rev. Mr So-and-so, to do one thing, and Bishop So-and-so another. I said it would amount to nothing. 'Why,' it was remarked in reply, 'they are going to keep it up.' You will see, I again observed, that it will amount to nothing; there is too much formality. Instead of giving themselves up to the spirit of prayer, and letting anybody pray, all is conducted in such a strait, formal manner that it will amount to nothing. This meeting was continued for several weeks, I believe, and it was then given up; and it will always be so where there is this formality.

Another peculiarity in this meeting of the disciples was, that there was, no doubt, great fervency in their prayer. That is the last one I will mention here. That was 'effectual fervent prayer;' all the circumstances show there was divine earnestness in it, great earnestness and great wrestling in their petitions.

This leads me to notice some mistakes that are made. One of these is that this revival (on the day of Pentecost) was itself a miracle. We should always distinguish between a miracle as a sign and attestation on the part of God, that these men, the apostles, were his servants, and that what they said was his word, and the revival that occurred as a consequence. Why, this miracle was only among the necessary means of promoting a revival, simply because it was not then established in the world that what these men said was God's Word. It must be first established that these men were authorised messengers sent from God to publish his will. This was the reason why the miracle was wrought. The miracle was thus only part of the

antecedents or accompaniments of the revival. Here, for instance, was the Spirit of God poured out, accompanied with the gift of tongues, which was a miracle, showing that the apostles were authorised messengers of God, and that what they said was from God. But what of the conversions which followed?--what did they consist in?--were they miracles? The simple account is, that the men received the word of Peter. He preached a sermon calculated to promote such a result as was promoted; they were pricked in their hearts; he told them what to do, and they did it, under the teaching of the Spirit. The revival was not a miracle, and we should lay aside the idea that this or any other revival was a miracle.

Another mistake is that such revivals are no longer to be expected. I do not mean revivals accompanied with the gift of tongues, because the apostle said these should cease; but why should not similar revivals be expected now, so far as the conversion of souls is concerned?

I have known Christian men to give themselves up to prayer with singleness of heart, and the Spirit has been poured out with a power to remove everything before it, producing a movement which has spread over a whole town or district of country, and resulted in the conversion of great multitudes of people. In fact, the antecedents, accompaniments, and results of revivals are always substantially the same as in the case before us, excepting that in this case there was miraculous interposition for the purpose I have named. Let me tell you an incident that happened in the state of New York, near the line of Massachusetts: Some ladies had come over to New York, and were much struck with the progress of the revival movement there, particularly with some instances of remarkable conversions that had occurred in the case of individuals after special prayer made by Christians. They asked me a good many questions, and, among other things, wanted to know if I really thought it of any use for them to pray for a revival in their place. I related some facts to encourage them, and told them to go home and agree, together with other ladies of their acquaintance, to observe a closet concert of prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. They went home, and engaged some half-dozen of them for that purpose, at sun-rise, at mid-day, and at sunset. Three times a-day they prayed for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on their place. Mark--they had a definite object in their prayer. They had no minister, but when the Sabbath came round the people assembled to hear a sermon read, and the conviction that the Holy Spirit was there that day was irresistible. At the close of the service no fewer than seventy individuals, who had been awakened, came together to be instructed by the

deacons in regard to what they should do about the salvation of their souls, and a great revival followed. One of the deacons said he did not believe that the Holy Spirit's presence was more certainly manifest on the day of Pentecost than on that occasion. This is only one instance among many. I recollect a meeting of young people where they made this proposition:--'we agree to observe a closet concert prayer for one week, and when we come together again at our next meeting we will see what farther is to be done. We gave ourselves up to a closet concert of prayer, and met at a throne of grace three times a-day--morning, noon, and evening.' On visiting the young people, I soon found a wonderful spirit of prayer among them. This was not long after my own conversion. Before the week was out the town was moved: numerous meetings sprang up, so many persons were inquiring the way of salvation, and Christians were aroused on every side. I could stand here till night and relate similar facts, the object of mentioning which is to show that we may all expect the outpouring of the Spirit now as then, and substantially the same way.

We have reason to expect the conversion of multitudes; only use the appropriate means. Pray for the object, labour for the object, give ourselves with singleness of heart to promote the object, and I am convinced God will hear you; rely upon it, you shall see the result.

Another mistake which often develops itself, is that of taking one of two extremes--either labouring a great deal, and losing sight of the indispensable need of special prayer; or--the opposite of this--having much prayer but no other labour--very little preaching, and perhaps no visitation, no personal conversation, no personal labour. Let the Church plead for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit--let them expect it as on the day of Pentecost. Why should we not have it and expect it? Let this be understood as an indispensable condition of a revival. Let men unite and come together for prayer; let them also pray by themselves, and for this definite object, with the expectation that the blessing will come, and meantime adopt all other appropriate means for the promotion of the same end.

Waiting for the Holy Spirit without special believing prayer, is one great error, as if the sovereignty of God withheld the blessing. Waiting in a state of inactivity is a mistake, and so also on the other side, is attempting to go forth without the Holy Spirit. Christ said to his disciples 'Go forth;' but he told them to wait in Jerusalem till they would be 'endowed with power from on high.' But how did they wait? They did not wait on the sovereignty of God without doing anything, but they waited in the agonisings of prayer with perpetual supplications.

There are certain persons who seem inclined to discredit the present great revival in America and other places, except in so far as they can disconnect it with the use of the appropriate means. It is important that I should say something on this subject. I have seen, with sorrow, in books and periodicals, that a certain class of men seem disposed to represent this great revival as a thing which had come without the appropriate means being used.

Certain old school men who have been ignorant of the real antecedents of this great movement in the U.S., are evidently anxious to make out a case in accordance with their peculiar views of God's sovereignty. Strange to say, the author of the book entitled 'The Power of Prayer,' labours to make the impression that the daily prayer-meetings were not for the purpose of promoting a revival, but were the result of a revival already existing, and which had come miraculously upon them, no one knew how. Yet in his own account of the daily prayer-meetings in New York City for example, so far is it from true that they originated in a revival already existing in the city, that the opposite was the fact. A few brethren seeing the depression of business men resulting from the great commercial revulsion, thought it a favourable time to gain their attention to religion. They agreed to try the experiment of a daily prayer-meeting for business men; the place and hour were agreed upon. At the hour, but one had arrived. He waited half-an-hour and four or five more came. They prayed for a revival. They conversed with and invited others. The meetings increased, and the great movement gradually developed itself as the appropriate means were used. This writer seems to have been entirely ignorant of the fact that for many months special prayer for the great commercial cities, and for the business men, had gone up like a cloud of incense from numerous daily prayer-meetings that had been numerous attended, and accompanied with powerful revivals in many parts of the State of New York, and in Boston and its vicinity. These men will fail to make out a case of revival commencing without the use of appropriate means, and one therefore that shall justify their peculiar views. The fact is, as we shall see, this great work of God has not been the sudden springing of a mine of miracles upon the church, but the development and steady growth through the use of special prayer and the appropriate means, up to a point when it forced an account of its phenomena into the daily papers. This, as was most natural under the law of means and ends, produced a rapid and far-spread outburst that took multitudes by surprise, among them the class of men I have mentioned. Especially do the persons alluded to seem desirous to disconnect this



great movement with any labour of evangelists. I am certain, however, that in this they will fail to make out their case wherever history shall speak truthfully upon this point. It is true that the revival in its gradual spread and development, under the intense and successful efforts of a number of evangelists and pastors, reached a point when it forced itself upon universal notice through the daily press. This gave the facts, no longer to be ignored, to the world the rapid development from this point far out-ran not only the labours of the evangelists, but of pastors also. At this point the sacramental host-the membership, male and female, rallied, and with the public press made an onset that spread the work like fire on the prairies. But these men being ignorant of the progress of the daily prayer-meetings, and the leadings of the Spirit of prayer, with the constantly spreading and increase of revival influence for several years previous to the point alluded to, are carried to the delusion, and seen in danger of leading others to the dangerous conclusion, that this great work of God was altogether a miraculous affair, not at all connected with or resulting from the use of the appropriate means.

This is calculated to prevent the Church from carrying on the work. Now, I have been in the midst of these revivals for many years; I can speak as a personal witness, and I find I am informed in regard to many of those things, respecting which these brethren are not informed. I will not accuse them of any design to misrepresent in anything they say, but they are not well informed. Previous to the great revival which took place on the continent of America, before the middle of last century, certain men there had correspondence with a number of praying men on your side of the water. President Edwards wrote, setting forth the state of religion in New England, and requesting a union of prayer between the brethren there and those in Scotland. They entered into a solemn covenant to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, and they had not prayed long before the Holy Ghost was poured out, and Whitfield and others were sent into the field to promote the work as preachers. That revival, as history informs us, resulted in the conversion of thirty thousand persons in the United States.

The phenomenon developed in the revival during the eighteenth century in this country had, as I have read, many peculiarities of the present awakening in Ireland--such as crying out, falling down, and other manifestations. Lady Huntingdon on one occasion wrote to Whitfield respecting these cases of crying out and falling down at the meetings, and advised him not remove them from the meetings, as had been done. When this was done, it seemed to bring a damper on

the meeting. She wrote, and said--'You are making a mistake. Don't be wiser than God. Let them cry out; it will do a great deal more good than your preaching; she advised to let them remain. That revival had very many of the characteristics of the present movement, and its antecedent was a great spirit of prayer, on both sides of the Atlantic, for the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. In the United States, to say nothing of the revivals that occurred all along locally for a great many years, from 1821 along to 1830, and 1835, particularly up to 1830, revivals were scattered here and there. On to 1830 and 1831, for some years a wonderful spirit of prayer was seen to prevail among Christians. Daily prayer meetings were held--ministers and laymen uniting together--and Christians of both sexes observed certain hours for closet concert prayer. This continued to increase, as I can bear witness, and I did what I could to promote it, till, in 1830, it burst out with a mighty power in the city of Rochester, and overflowed in every direction until it reached many places east and west, till Dr. Beecher remarked to me: 'This is the greatest revival of religion that has been since the world began.' 100,000 were converted this year in the United States. Taking the whole of that time, or perhaps from 1830 to 1835, there could not have been fewer than 200,000 that were converted.

Some of you have heard those revivals of religion discredited, and efforts have been made in this country to represent them as spurious. There is no greater mistake. I have been three times in great revivals in the city of Rochester, and have seen men from there recently. In 1830, 1842, and again three or four years ago, the revivals in Rochester spread themselves and overflowed till they have reached a vast extent of territory, and if there be any Christians in the world, I am sure they are to be found as the fruits of those revivals in the United States. I have been over the field of these revivals often, and can truly say that I do not believe that any revivals have ever been witnessed either in ancient or modern times that were more pure and more lasting in their results than those. The pastors and members of those churches, will tell you so, and we have seen these results for a great many years, and no man can call them in doubt, any more than he can call the Bible in doubt. Observe, in all these cases, the appropriate means were used, and, bating the question of miracles, the means were the same as those used by the apostles. Between 1830 and 1842 revivals occurred all along, more or less, every year. In 1842 a revival again took place in Rochester, overflowing as it had done before, and continued to extend. In 1843 it had spread from New York to Ohio. In March, 1843, I went over the



country in that direction, and found the revival influence at work in every town at which I stopped. In all these places the awakening partook of substantially the same character; the same means were used,—believing prayer for a definite object was offered, and daily prayer-meetings were held. This revival was of wide extent. I have seen no estimate of the number of hopeful conversions in and about 1842 and 1843. But the number must have been large. In the single city of Albany, I have been informed by a minister who was then labouring there, there were over 3000 conversions. This revival was only the development of an awakening that had, the year before (that is in 1842), been very powerful in Boston, Providence, Rochester, and many other places where evangelists had assisted the able pastors in holding daily meetings, and using the appropriate means.

It has been supposed that this present movement originated in prayer-meetings established for business men in the city of New York. This is a great mistake. A spirit of revival had been growing for several years in many parts of the United States. The people of God saw the tide rising and the cloud gathering, and they said to each other they should soon see a general movement. In Rochester, Christians of all denominations—Baptists, Congregationalists and Presbyterians,—united in the work, and daily prayer-meetings and preaching were held in the different churches in succession—the meetings moving round from church to church in a circle. So much interest began to be manifested in these meetings, that information regarding them could not longer be withheld by the secular press. The facts lay too prominently on the face of society to be ignored by the secular press. They had ignored it in great measure, but a man who is a sceptic himself as I am informed, yet editor of a paper of great importance in Rochester, having a Roman Catholic reporter, sent him to take notes of the sermons every night, and they were published next morning. He also attended the prayer-meetings in the morning, I believe, and reported them. The public demanded this—it must be done—the papers must not ignore it—they must give the intelligence to the public. As soon as this was done, it aroused the masses in every town. The daily press reported the sermons, and that brought the movement into public notice. From that the revival spread in every direction. Daily prayer-meetings were commenced, which resulted in a great many others, and the awakening gave promise of becoming general. The next winter the work commenced in Boston, and became powerful. In Boston the work continued, and, I may say, increased for two successive winters. I speak from personal knowledge,

as I was present. Meantime the revival of religion in the State of New York seemed to be growing in many places. In Brooklyn, just across the ferry from New York City, a daily prayer-meeting for the revival of God's work had been held for several months. In central and western New York a minister had given himself to the work of establishing daily prayer-meetings. In 1856, in connexion with the great revival in Rochester, N. Y., a little book had been published on daily public worship as an appointment with God. This book was circulated, and stirred up the churches in many places to hold daily meetings for prayer and conference. Evangelists, east and west, were assisting faithful pastors in preaching and holding daily prayer meetings with constant and growing success, and a mighty spirit of prayer for business men—for such men, who were neglecting their souls—spontaneously burst out. Thus it increased until 1858, when the commercial crisis occurred, previous to which New York had seemed to be on such a wave of prosperity as to be the death of revival effort. Business men were confounded, and rich families were being reduced to poverty. At this time a few individuals agreed to see if they could not get up a prayer-meeting for business men, in a business part of the city, particularly near the Exchange. This was done, and done like business men. They took pains to give public notice of these meetings, as they would notify matters of business or politics. They used the appropriate means, and it was remarked almost immediately after, 'Now God is answering prayer; this business crisis will bring about a revival.' A great many of us felt as if the commercial breakdown were the beginning of the whole movement in the great commercial city. The results probably some of you know. In gathering the statistics, from week to week, from different parts of the United States, it has been estimated that the conversions numbered at least 50,000 a-week; and it has been stated that over the United States, the number who have been converted cannot be less than 500,000. The revival is still spreading though it has abated in the large cities.

A great many overlook the fact that all these blessings from God have been progressive. The movement has been swelling and swelling till it has forced itself on the attention of the public. Every great revival wave has exceeded the former ones in power, because the number of efficient labourers has constantly increased. The great majority of the evangelical ministers in the northern States where the revival has most occurred, are themselves converts of the revivals that have blessed and preserved our country. The churches are filled with the converts of former revivals who know how

to work and pray for their promotion. The Churches believe in the reality and blessed results of revivals. They have learned more and more now, and pray and labour in faith for their promotion, and, as their numbers and efforts have increased, the revival influence has extended until this great wave has covered the broad country. The majority of the press used to ignore it; but the facts which manifested themselves were so wonderful that they could not be denied, and their publication was a means of greatly increasing the effect. The editors of these papers, in many instances, are not Christian men: but the public would have the facts, and they have had them. It ought to be said that the editor and proprietor of the New York Tribune has done much that has extended this work. He employed a special and an able Christian editor to collect and arrange the revival intelligence, and that paper was instrumental in doing very much to extend the work. All honour to Mr. Greeley for the honourable course he pursued. I sent several copies of his paper to this country--papers made up altogether with revival intelligence--and have good reason to know that they were the means of exciting prayer, and a desire for a revival on this side of the Atlantic.

If the revivals in America prove anything, it is the exact opposite of what those to whom allusion has been made would make out. Each great revival has called out and employed more and more of the laity of the church. Hence the appropriate means being more and more extended, each great revival preceded its predecessor. The present revival has employed the membership of the churches greatly beyond anything that has been done since the days of the apostles. The readers of my lectures on revivals know that I have all along insisted upon this, and that several of those lectures are devoted to this point, namely, the necessity and the consequences of the whole membership taking personally hold of the work of revival. The present work exceeds all the former, just because the means have been greatly multiplied. God has prepared the American church and ministry for the work, and by repeated and multiplied local revivals taught them how to work; and now, instead of working miraculously without well directed means, it is a fact on the face of the whole movement that the revival is now extended beyond all precedent, because the appointed means are thus extended. In all the great revivals in America, and so far as I can learn, in all great revivals everywhere, God has called into the field, and much used and greatly blessed the labours of evangelists. In the days of Edwards, the Wesleys, Whitfield, and many others were then called and used on this side of the Atlantic. Whitfield and John

Wesley were called to America, and with them were associated William and Gilbert Tenant, and others who, though pastors, travelled to many places and laboured in revivals. In that revival the Lord used laymen to a considerable extent. This was greatly objected to by many of the leading ministers. So great was the opposition to the employment of evangelists and the lay element of the church, that there was a dearth of revival influence followed for many years. No evangelist was employed--the lay element of the church lay dormant, and were not allowed to interfere with what was supposed to be the exclusive work of the ministry.

The next great revival commenced and was carried forward under the labours of Mr. Nettleton, in connexion with some excellent pastors in New England. He, however, did but little to bring other evangelists or the lay element into the field. Hence his labours were scarcely extended or felt beyond his own immediate influence. He laboured successfully, but he laboured almost alone, not daring or caring to arouse the whole church to action. His labour was, therefore, of necessity confined to a comparatively narrow field, and the results were, of course, to the same extent limited. Of late years a far different course has been pursued in the U.S. A considerable number of evangelists have been employed among the various denominations. These have assisted the pastors, and have laboured to bring out the lay element of the church. They have laboured hard and successfully to bring to pass the state of things at present attracting the attention and exciting the astonishment of the world. The pastors and churches with whom they have laboured can bear witness to their zeal and industry and enormous labour, with their blessed results. Those pastors have also laid out all their own strength in those revivals as a general thing, and have encouraged the members of their churches to take hold of the work, male and female, each in his and her sphere. The present revival is characterised far above all precedent by the individual activity and labour of the female members of the churches. If the business men have had their daily meetings, so have the women; if the men have visited and conversed with individuals, so have the women. God has greatly used and greatly honoured the instrumentality of women, and is still doing so. The ladies' meetings are now regarded as a most important branch of the great movement in many places.

I must say, in conclusion, that all these revivals, every one of them at least for the forty years now past, have been connected with means. Their antecedents have been, in every case, substantially the same, their accompaniments have been substantially the same,

their type has been substantially the same, and the results, I trust, will be, under God, substantially the same. One thing which has been brought out and greatly blessed is the lay element of the Church, and more so perhaps in this revival than in any other. Lay men and women also have had their prayer-meetings, and these have increased in number to such an extent as to fill the churches. In Boston, I have seen the vestries crowded to suffocation with ladies' prayer-meetings, and these ladies, comprising some of the most educated and talented to be found perhaps in the United States. Persons of all denominations, forgetting their differences, gave themselves to the work. They all preached the same thing, the same simple Gospel. They held out substantially the same truth: Christ died to save souls; you may be saved; you are a sinner and need to be saved; now, will you come to Christ and submit yourself to God? This was about the amount of instruction. I recollect when prayer meetings for business men were established in Boston. I was the guest of the man who established them. When it was proposed to put up a notice calling such a meeting, he said, 'Will they attend?' 'Yes, they will.' 'What! Our business men?' 'Try it.' A notice was put up, and a place secured--a certain vestry. When the time of the meeting came, the man was astonished to find not only the room filled, but all the avenues to it. 'O,' business men would say, 'I never thought to see the like of this.' There were two rooms, one above the other, in this vestry. Soon both of them were filled. From the highest to the lowest, God shook every class of society. While I was in Boston on one occasion, a gentleman stated that he had come from the capital of Nebraska, and he had found prayer-meetings established throughout all the vast extent of country over which he had travelled. Think of that. A region of 2000 miles, along which the hands and hearts of the people were lifted up to God in prayer! From north to south, till you come within the slave territory, a great and mighty cry went up to God that he would come down and take the people in hand, and convert the souls; and he heard, and everybody stood confounded. The movement has come to Ireland, to Scotland, and to this city, and like a great wave I expect to see it go over Scotland, break upon the continent, and shake it. Pray for it; let the waters of eternal life roll; and let Christians all, loving and confiding in one another, give their hearts unitedly to the work. I beseech Christians in Great Britain of all denominations to lay aside all sectarian prejudices and narrowness, and unite their hearts and hands in the promotion of this work. Do not, my

brethren, grieve and quench the Holy Spirit by setting at naught your brethren, because they do not in every particular agree in their views with you. Be tolerant. Be loving, united, faithful, active, prayerful, and persevering, and a wave of salvation will cover the land.



**NOT ORIGINALLY WRITTEN AS PRAYER TOPICS,  
BUT APPROPRIATE FOR PRAYER MEETINGS**

**January 29, 1845**

**Letters On Revival--No. 1. by Prof. Finney.**

To All The Friends And Especially All The Ministers Of  
Our Lord Jesus Christ:

Beloved in the Lord:--Many of you are aware that several years since a series of Lectures on the subject of Revivals was published through the columns of the N. York Evangelist. These Lectures were preached by me to my own congregation in the city of N. York, and reported by the editor of that paper. Since the publication of those Lectures, my observation and experience on the subject have been continually developing and ripening until I am very desirous of saying many additional things to my brethren on this subject.

When I first began to preach, I was without knowledge and without experience on the subject of revivals. I had but a very limited Christian experience. The Lord led me in a way that I knew not. I have recently thought that it might be useful to the churches, to communicate to them my ripened experience and convictions upon the same subject. I can see that in some things I erred in manner and in spirit; which things I want to point out both by way of confessing my own faults, and as a warning to others. In many things also, I fell short of securing all the desirable results which might have been secured, had I been free from the faults to which I have alluded, and had I understood and applied all the necessary means and truths to bring forward and promote that ripeness of experience and growth in grace which is indispensable to prevent reaction and disasters following revivals.

It is no part of my design to wage a war of words or opinions with my brethren, nor indeed is controversy in form or spirit, any part of my object. It is not a difference of metaphysical or theological views between myself and my brethren, upon which I wish to insist. But the thing I desire, is to be permitted to call their attention to certain facts and results with their causes, which it seems to me of the highest importance to the church well to consider.

What I have to say, I propose to publish through the columns of the Oberlin Evangelist, and wish that I had the means of sending a copy to every minister of every denomination in the land. These letters I design to write as the Lord gives me light and opportunity. I hope to be

able to publish a letter in each succeeding number of the Evangelist, until the series is completed.

I wish the brethren particularly to understand that I lay no claim to infallibility upon this subject. I only wish to give my opinions with that modesty which becomes my ignorance, and which is demanded also by the nature of the subject.

I have had a continual experience upon the subject of revivals of religion, now for about twenty years; in the course of which experience, I have watched narrowly and with much solicitude the various types, developments, results, and indeed all the phenomena pertaining to them, and resulting from them. I have occasionally seen remarks in some of the newspapers assuming that since my residence in Oberlin, I have ceased to witness powerful revivals of religion in connection with my labors and the labors of those connected with me; but this is a great mistake, as my brethren generally would have been informed had not some of the leading papers which have made the assumption just mentioned, declined giving to the public the facts as they are and have been. I do not mention this either to censure those editors, or to boast of the success of my own labors and of those associated with me, but simply to bespeak your unbiased attention to what I have to say as coming not from one whose observation and experience in revivals have long ago ceased, but from one whose opportunities from observation and experience have continued in their freshness up to the present hour. Since I have been here, my position at home and my observation abroad, have given me peculiar advantages for judging of the expedience and inexpediency of certain measures. I have seen powerful revivals in this place from time to time now for about ten years, and indeed the state of things has generally been such here as would elsewhere have been considered a revival state. Scarcely a week or even a day has passed without more or less cases coming under my observation of manifest divine influence. I have had an opportunity to witness the results of revivals in their influence over young men preparing for the ministry, over ministers themselves, over the community at large, and for years after their occurrence. I have marked with the deepest interest their rise, their progress, their temporary decline, and again their revival, the various types they have taken on, and the occasion of these modifications together with what I deem to be disastrous, dangerous, useful.

There is a considerable number of topics to which I desire to call the attention of my brethren. In the providence of God, I have witnessed a great variety of

methods in conducting revivals. When I first began to be acquainted with them, and for about ten years of my earliest labors, what are now termed protracted meetings were not known; since which, these meetings first styled 'conferences of churches,' then 'three day's meetings,' then 'four day's meetings,' and subsequently 'protracted meetings.' extending continuously through several weeks, have been the order of the day. In respect to the expedience as manifested in the results of these different methods, I have several things to say, to which I invite the prayerful consideration of all classes of christians. Also with respect to the great care that should be taken to prevent their degenerating into a spirit of fanaticism and misrule, as in at least some instances they manifestly have done. I wish also to call the attention of the brethren to the occasions of those disastrous results. Also to the great importance of stated or settled pastors to watch over, carry out, and secure the desirable results of revivals, and the almost certainly disastrous consequences of disturbing the pastoral relation. I have also many things to say on the subject of cultivating high spirituality in converts, and securing them against those declensions which have so disgraced revivals. I cannot pretend at this time to enumerate the topics on which I wish to write, but would only at present bespeak the attention of my brethren to the series of short letters which I intend to address to them. I have another series in contemplation, upon the subject of the controversies, and the controversial spirit of the present day, which I hope to lay before my brethren at no distant period, should the Lord spare my life and give me opportunity.

Your brother,  
C.G. FINNEY.

**February 12, 1845**

**Letters On Revivals--No. 2.**

**by Prof. Finney.**

To All The Friends And Especially All The Ministers Of Our Lord Jesus Christ:

Dear Brethren:

I have observed, and multitudes of others also I find have observed, that for the last ten years, revivals of religion have been gradually becoming more and more superficial. All the phenomena which they exhibit testify to this as a general fact. There is very much less deep conviction of sin and deep breaking up of the heart; much less depth of humility and much less strength in all the graces exhibited by converts in late revivals, than in the converts from the revivals which occurred about 1830 and '31 and for some time previous. I have observed, as have others also, that revivals are of much shorter duration, and that a reaction comes on much more suddenly and disastrously than formerly. Also that fewer of the converts make stable and efficient Christians; that those who so persevere, appear to much less advantage, and exhibit, as a general thing much less of the Spirit of Christ than in former revivals; have not so much of the spirit of prayer, and are not so modest and humble. In short, all the phenomena of the more recent revivals, judging from my own experience and observation and from the testimony of other witnesses, show that they have, at least very extensively, taken on a much less desirable type than formerly. Christians are much less spiritual in revivals, much less prevalent in prayer, not so deeply humbled and quickened and thoroughly baptized with the Holy Ghost as they were formerly. These statements I do not suppose to be universally applicable to modern revivals, but I do believe them to be applicable generally. As revivals now exist, I believe ministers are not nearly as desirous of seeing them in their congregations as they formerly were, nor have they good reason to be. Those ministers who have witnessed none but the later revivals of which I speak, are almost afraid of revivals. They have seen the disastrous results of modern revivals so frequently, that they honestly entertain the doubt whether they are upon the whole desirable. Those, as I have good reason to know, who saw the revivals which occurred ten or twenty years ago, greatly prefer revivals of that type. They are distressed with the superficiality of many recent revivals. I make this as a general, not a universal remark, and state only my own opinion of public sentiment. I have often heard it said

both among ministers and private Christians, We long to see the days return when we shall have such revivals as we saw years ago. I have been anxiously watching the progress of things in this direction, and enquiring as carefully and prayerfully as I could into the causes which are operating to produce these results. If I am not misinformed, and have not greatly misapprehended the case, the following will be found among them.

1. There is much less probing of the heart by a deep and thorough exhibition of human depravity, than was formerly the case. It has been of late a common remark, and a brother who has long labored as an evangelist made the same remark, that for the last few years there has been little or no opposition made by impenitent sinners to revivals. Now it is not because the carnal mind is not still enmity against God, but I greatly fear it is for the want of thoroughly turning up to the light the deep foundations of this enmity in their hearts. The unutterable depravity of the human heart has not, I fear, been laid open to the very bottom as it formerly was. A few sermons on the subject of moral depravity are generally preached in every revival, but I fear this is by no means the great theme of the preaching so much and so long as it ought to be, in order thoroughly to break up the fallow ground of the sinner's and the professor's heart. From my own experience and observation, as well as from the word of God, I am fully convinced that the character of revivals depends very much upon the stress that is laid upon the depravity of the heart. Its pride, enmity, windings, deceitfulness, and every thing else that is hateful to God should be exposed in the light of his perfect law.

2. I fear that stress enough is not laid upon the horrible guilt of this depravity. Pains enough is not taken by a series of pointed and cutting discourses, to show the sinner the utter inexcuseableness, the unutterable wickedness and guilt of his base heart. No revival can be thorough until sinners and backsliders are so searched and humbled that they cannot hold up their heads. It is a settled point with me, that while backsliders and sinners can come to an anxious meeting and hold up their head and look you and others in the face without blushing and confusion, the work of searching is by no means performed, and they are in no state to be thoroughly broken down and converted to God. I wish to call the attention of my brethren especially to this fact. When sinners and backsliders are really convicted by the Holy Ghost, they are greatly ashamed of themselves. Until they manifest deep shame, it should be known that the probe is not used sufficiently, and they do not see themselves as they ought. When I go into a meeting of inquiry and look over

the multitudes, I see them with heads up, looking at me and at each other, I have learned to understand what work I have to do. Instead of pressing them immediately to come to Christ, I must go to work to convict them of sin. Generally by looking over the room, a minister can easily tell, not only who are convicted and who are not, but who are so deeply convicted as to be prepared to receive Christ. Some are looking around and manifest no shame at all; others can not look you in the face and yet can hold up their heads; others still cannot hold up their heads and yet are silent; others by their sobbing, and breathing, and agonizing, reveal at once the fact that the sword of the Spirit has wounded them to their very heart. Now I have learned that a revival never does take on a desirable and wholesome type any farther than the preaching and means are so directed, and so efficient as to produce that kind of genuine and deep conviction which breaks the sinner and the backslider right down, and makes him unutterably ashamed and confounded before the Lord, until he is not only stripped of every excuse, but driven to go all lengths in justifying God and condemning himself.

3. I have thought that at least in a great many instances, stress enough has not been laid upon the necessity of divine influence upon the hearts of Christians and of sinners. I am confident that I have sometimes erred in this respect myself. In order to rout sinners and backsliders from their self-justifying pleas and refuges, I have laid, and I doubt not that others also have laid too much stress upon the natural ability of sinners to the neglect of showing them the nature and extent of their dependence upon the grace of God and the influence of his Spirit. This has grieved the Spirit of God. His work not being honored by being made sufficiently prominent, and not being able to get the glory to himself, of his own work, he has withheld his influences. In the mean time multitudes have been greatly excited by the means used to promote an excitement, and have obtained hopes, without ever knowing the necessity of the presence and powerful agency of the Holy Ghost. It hardly need be said that such hopes are better thrown away than kept. It were strange indeed if one could lead a Christian life upon the foundation of an experience in which the Holy Ghost is not recognized as having any thing to do.

Your brother,  
C.G. FINNEY



February 26, 1845

Letters On Revival--No. 3.

by Prof. Finney

To All The Friends And Especially All The Ministers Of Our Lord Jesus Christ:

Dear Brethren:

I have already intimated that pains enough have not been taken to search the heart and thoroughly detect and expose the sinner's depravity, so as to make him see the need of the gospel remedy. If I am not mistaken there has been in many cases an error committed in urging sinners to submission before they are prepared to understand what true submission is. They have been urged to repent before they have really understood the nature and desert of sin; to believe, before they have understood their need of Christ; to resolve to serve God before they have at all understood what the service of God is. They have been pressed to make up their minds to enter immediately upon the service of God, and have been taught that they needed only to make a resolution to obey the Lord. Hence their religion, after all, has been only a religion of resolutions, instead of a religion of faith and love, and of a broken heart. In short it appears to me, that in many instances the true idea of what constitutes pure religion has not been developed in the mind, and that consequently spurious conversions have been distressingly numerous. I have been more and more surprised from year to year to find how very numerous those professors of religion are, who manifestly have not the true idea of pure religion before their minds. It seems that in many instances the idea that love is the essence and the whole of religion, is left almost, if not entirely out of view.

There seem to be two extremes towards which different classes of persons have been continually verging. These extremes are Antinomianism on the one hand, and legality on the other--both manifestly at an equal remove from the true idea of religion.

The religion of the legalist is one of resolutions. He resolves to serve the Lord. He makes up his mind, as he says. He gets the idea that to serve the Lord is to go to work--to pray in his family--to attend meetings--to visit, and talk, and bustle about, and do the work of the Lord, as he calls it--and this with a perfectly legal spirit, with none of that love, gentleness, meekness, long-suffering, and those fruits of the Spirit which characterize true Christianity. He easily works himself into an excitement, but after all, has not the root of the matter in him, and

makes out to keep up what he calls his working for God only during a protracted meeting. Probably three months of the year is the utmost extent of his piety; in many instances probably, it does not amount to even half that. Now the difficulty in this case is, that the individual has not the root of the matter in him. The fountain of the great deep of selfishness has not been broken up. He has never been thoroughly convicted of sin by the Holy Ghost. His convictions of sin have been little more than those natural and necessary affirmations of his own mind under a clear exhibition of truth by the preacher without any supernatural illumination by the Spirit of God. Consequently all his ideas of God, of sin, of his own guilt and desert of punishment, his need of a Savior, the necessity of his being saved from his sins--in short, every fundamental idea of the Christian religion is apprehended by him with very little clearness. His mind is dark; his heart is hard. He has never been stripped of his self-dependence and self-righteousness; consequently, he has never known Christ, "the power of his resurrection, the fellowship of his sufferings," not the "being made conformable to his death;" nor has he even an idea of what these things mean. He knows little of Christ more than the name, and an obscure idea of his mediatorial work and relations. He has never been slain by the law, and found himself a dead, condemned, and lost sinner; and consequently, dead to all tendency towards God. He has no deep consciousness of sustaining the relation of an outlaw and a condemned criminal to the government of God, and being dead to all hope in himself or in any other creature. In short, instead of seeing his necessities, his true character and relations, his views of all these things are so exceedingly superficial, that he has not apprehended and does not apprehend the necessity and nature of gospel salvation. He goes about, working for God just as he would serve a man for wages, and in the same sense. His religion is not that of disinterested and universal benevolence; but he makes up his mind to serve God, just as he would make up his mind in any matter of barter, or to render a piece of service to any body else, for value received or to be received.

This class of converts may generally be distinguished by the following, among other characteristics.

1. There is a manifest want of meekness, humility, and lowliness of mind in their religion. The fact is, they never have been humbled and broken down, and consequently they do not exhibit this state of mind. Their deportment, conversation, bearing, their prayers and exhortations, all savor of a self-righteous spirit.
2. There is a manifest want of love in their religion; in other words, their religion is not love. The manner in

which they speak of old professors of religion, of Christians and ministers, and indeed of all classes, demonstrates that the law of kindness and love is not in their hearts, and consequently is not on their tongues. They are not tender of the reputation of others, regardful of their feelings, alive to their interests, gentle, kind, and courteous as those that are actuated by love. Observe them, and you will see that their religion wants the attributes laid down by Paul in 1 Cor 13. It has not that charity which suffereth long and is kind, which envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemingly, which thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. This religion, which beareth, believeth, hopeth, endureth all, is not theirs.

3. Another obvious characteristic in this class of converts is, that there is very little of Christ in their religion. They will manifest in their conversation, prayers, and in many ways, that they have not been emptied of themselves and filled with Christ.

Another characteristic will be, they are not Bible students. They do not after all, relish and deeply search the Bible. The fact is, they understand it but very slightly. They have not been so subdued that the language of the inspired writers is the natural language of their own experience. This is the secret of their not understanding, loving, and searching it. No person really understands and loves his bible, until he has such an experience as accords with the language of the bible and no farther than his experience accords with the inspired writer's, does the bible become intelligible and deeply interesting to him. Now I have observed that there are a great many professors who neither know nor care much about their bibles. There are even some young preachers, or professed preachers, who know almost nothing about their bibles, and who in fact read other things ten times as much as they read the Book of God. A vast number of professed converts know full well, and those who are well acquainted with them must also know, that they are but little interested in their bibles. Now all this shows conclusively, that their religion is not bible religion, that they are not "on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone."

Yours in Jesus,  
C.G. FINNEY.

**March 12, 1845**

**Letters On Revival--No. 4.**

**by Prof. Finney**

To All The Friends And Especially All The Ministers Of Our Lord Jesus Christ:

Dear Brethren:

I said in my last that there seemed to be two extremes toward which different classes of persons are continually verging. Those extremes are Antinomianism on the one hand, and legality on the other--both manifestly at an equal remove from the true idea of religion. In that letter I made some remarks upon the class of legalists; in this I propose to notice the Antinomian class.

Antinomianism is the opposite extreme of legalism. Legalists are all work, and Antinomians no work. The latter have almost universally been legalists and very self-righteous. They have done a great deal of hard labor in their own strength, and in a perfectly legal, as opposed to an evangelical spirit. They have depended on their own resolutions, and have found them a bruised reed and a broken staff. In short, they have generally gone through nearly every stage of legal experience, from the dead formality of a self-righteous Pharisee to the sharp conflicts and agonizing efforts described in Romans seventh. They have known what it is to be blind to their own sins, and also what it is to be in a good measure awake to their own sins; what it is to make almost no effort to serve the Lord, and what it is to make most agonizing efforts in their own strength. They have generally been brought to see the futility, emptiness, and downright wickedness of all these self-righteous, self-originated, and self-sustained efforts. Finding their own impotence, and being bad philosophers, they vault quite over into the opposite extreme, and from being all work and no faith, they become all faith and no work; not considering that this kind of faith is dead, being alone. They seem not aware that their faith is a state of the sensibility and not of the heart; a passive and not an active state of mind. It does not touch the will; if it did, their works would show it.

That they come into this state usually, by swinging like a pendulum from one extreme to the other, is most manifest. Having learned the folly of self-righteous and self-originated efforts, they feel a kind of contempt for all effort, and fall right back into a state of supineness and quietism. Professing to have yielded up their whole agency to Christ, they throw all the responsibility upon

him and do nothing. Under pretence of being led by the Spirit and of waiting for God to reveal his will to them, they give themselves up very much to spiritual indolence.

This class of persons are extremely apt to suppose that all efforts to promote revivals, are of course legal efforts, such as they are conscious they used to make. The active Christian who sympathizes with Christ and is led by the Spirit to labor as Christ and the Apostles labored, they look upon as being engaged as they formerly were, running before they are sent, going forward in their own strength, self-righteous and legal. Now these dear souls do not realize that there is such a thing as great spiritual activity and aggressiveness, and that true spirituality always implies this; that true faith always begets sympathy with Christ, that true Christianity is always and necessarily the spirit of missions, of revivals, of self-sacrifice, of holy activity; that it is a living, energizing principle; that holiness in man is just what it was in Christ; indeed that holiness is always one and the same thing--benevolence or good-willing--and by a law of its own nature is continually putting forth efforts to realize the great end of benevolence; namely, the highest good of all beings. True Christianity is the law of love written in the heart by the Holy Spirit, and of course necessarily acted out in practical life. Now any thing that professes to be Christianity and does not sympathize with Christ, must be a delusion.

The mistake of the Antinomian lies not, as with the legalist, in the want of apprehending the emptiness, folly, and even wickedness of all self-righteous efforts to please God, but rather in a mistaken apprehension of the nature of faith and of true religion. They do not distinguish between that faith which consists in a persuasion of the intellect, accompanied by a corresponding state of feeling, in which however there is no assent of the heart or will; and that faith in which the heart or will most fully yields to perceived and admitted truth. The faith of the heart is necessarily a powerful and active principle. The faith of the intellect, or mere intellectual apprehension, accompanied with corresponding feelings, is not a voluntary, active, and energizing principle. This should always be understood. It is often not very easy to distinguish between these two. It should always be remembered, that where the faith of the heart or true faith exists, the other also does and must exist; that is, where the heart confides in the truth of God, there must be an intellectual apprehension of truth and a corresponding state of feeling, so that true faith cannot exist without the other, though the other may exist without it; that is, the intellect may apprehend

the truth, the feelings may be affected by it, while the heart does not receive it.

There is another mistake into which Antinomians fall, of a very serious character. Indeed there are many, but one is of too much importance to be omitted here. I refer to their mistake in respect to being led by the Spirit of God. The manner in which they expect and profess to be led by the Spirit, seems to be that of impulse rather than divine illumination through the word. They sometimes seem to suppose that the Spirit leads the people of God by impressions upon their sensibility or feelings, rather than by enlightening their intelligence, and leading them to act rationally, and in accordance with the written word. This is undoubtedly a great and fundamental error. True religion does not consist in obeying our feelings, but in conforming our heart to the law of our intelligence. Mere feeling is blind; and to follow it is never virtue. Now for persons to give themselves up to follow mere impressions on their sensibility, is not to be led by the Spirit of God, but by the ever-varying fluctuations and effervescings of their own restless and agitated sensibility. There is no end to the mistakes into which souls may be led in this way. God has given us reason, and requires us to understand what we are about. He has given us the written word, and the Holy Spirit to shine upon it, to make us understand its great principles and the application of them to all the circumstances and duties of life. Surely then it is a great mistake to give ourselves up to blind impulse, instead of submitting ourselves to be taught and led of God in his plainly appointed way. Antinomians amuse themselves very much with views and consequent feelings. They often seem to be very happy in certain views which they have of Christ and of gospel salvation, while it cannot be perceived that they really sympathize with Christ in the great work of saving souls.

Now as I said in my last, this is one extreme, and legality is another extreme. The truth lies between them. A true Christian is active, but his activity and energy arise out of a deep sympathy with the indwelling Spirit of Christ. Christ is formed within him. The Spirit of Christ is the mighty energizing power of his soul. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made him free from the law of sin and death. In short, he has become dead to the law. He may be as active as he ever was in the days of his most strenuous legality, and even more so. His strenuousness, energy and zeal are not at all abated, but generally increased. Indeed they are always increased, unless the comparison be made with his most convicted and agonized legal states. But his activity is that of love and faith. It is the activity of the



eternal life of Christ that dwells within him. Now Antinomians commit a great mistake when they do not distinguish between this activity and their own former legal activity.

Again, I should say that legalists are exceedingly apt to reproach Antinomians without any very good reasons. In their bustle and zeal they seem to have the very spirit of Jehu. They drive furiously and seem to say--"Come see my zeal for the Lord." Now as a matter of fact, their legal bustle is not a whit better than Antinomian quietism. They would indeed compass sea and land to make one proselyte; but he is after all, a legalist like themselves; for they beget children in their own likeness.

Now it appears to me to be of the last importance that such discriminations should be made as to guard, if possible, against these two extremes, and so to conduct revivals of religion that the churches will take the middle ground; that is, that they will have the true idea of religion developed in their minds, and the true spirit of it in their hearts. So far as this can be secured, religious excitements are valuable and desirable, but no farther. It is very easy to show that there are many excitements that are not revivals of true religion; but this must be deferred to a future number.

Your brother,  
C.G. FINNEY

**March 26, 1845**

**Letters On Revival--No. 5.**

**by Prof. Finney**

To All The Friends And Especially All The Ministers Of  
Our Lord Jesus Christ:

Dear Brethren:

Another error in the promotion of revivals is a want of such discriminations in the instructions given, as thoroughly to develop the true idea of religion in the mind. I have been astonished and greatly pained, to find how few professors of religion seem ever to have had the true idea of the christian religion distinctly in their minds. Great multitudes suppose it to consist merely in certain feelings and emotions, and mere passive states of mind. Consequently when they speak of their religion,

they speak of their feelings. I feel thus and so. They seem to suppose that religion consists almost if not altogether in certain states of the sensibility, in which strictly speaking there can be no religion at all.

Multitudes make their religion consist in desires as distinct from choice and action of the will, in which certainly there can be no religion, if we use the term desire as I now do, in the sense of a passive as opposed to a voluntary state of mind. Others have supposed religion to consist in a merely legal state, in which the mind is lashed up by conscience to a reluctant performance of what it calls duty. Indeed there is almost every form of error in respect to what really constitutes true religion. Men seem to have no just idea of the nature of sin or of holiness. Selfishness is often spoken of by many professors of religion as if it were hardly to be considered sinful, and if sinful at all, only one form of sin. When I have had occasion to preach in different places, on the subject of selfishness, I have been surprised to find that great numbers of professors of religion have been struck with the idea as if it were new, that selfishness is entirely inconsistent with a religious state of mind. They seem never to have dreamed that all selfishness is inconsistent with religion. In preaching in one of our cities I was endeavoring to develop the true idea of the christian religion and demonstrate that it consisted alone in love, or in disinterested, perfect and universal benevolence. The idea that religion consisted in benevolence, seemed to be entirely new to great multitudes of professors of religion. And on one occasion when this subject had been presented, and turned over and over until the congregation understood it, a deacon of one of the churches remarked to me as I came out of the pulpit, that he did not believe there were ten real christians in the city, and a lady said she did not know of but one person in the church to which she belonged who had the religion of benevolence. All the rest, as far as she knew them, appeared to be under the dominion of selfishness. If I am not mistaken, there certainly is a great want of just and thorough discrimination of this subject in most of the congregations in this land, and especially is this manifest in seasons of revival. This is the very time to bring out and press these discriminations until the true idea of religion stands out in full development. Unless this is done, almost endless mistakes will be fallen into by professed converts. In a future letter I may point out some of these mistakes in detail; but here suffice it to say that it must be of essential importance that persons should understand what religion is, and that it is all summed up in one word, love; and that every form of true religion is only a modification of love or

disinterested benevolence; that whatever does not proceed from love is not virtue or true religion. The enquirers should be instructed that to be converted is to love God with all their hearts. To repent is to turn away from selfishness, and give their hearts to God; in short that the first and only thing which they are required to do is to love the Lord with all their hearts and their neighbor as themselves, and that until they do love, whatever else they do they are not religious, and no farther than they are actuated by supreme love to God and equal love to man are they truly religious in any case whatever. Too much pains cannot be taken to correct the errors into which men are constantly falling on this subject. But while it is of vital importance to make these distinctions, let it be forever remembered that these discriminations themselves will never convert men to true religion. And here is another error into which if I mistake not some have fallen. They have spent their whole strength in making these distinctions and showing the philosophical nature of faith, of benevolence, or repentance and of the different Christian graces. They have perhaps made just discriminations and urged them nobly and efficiently until they have really developed correct ideas in the mind, but they have fallen short after all of promoting true religion, on account of one fundamental defect. For instance, when they have made just discriminations, and developed the true idea of faith, they have stopped short and suffered the mind to please itself with the idea, while the heart does not go forth to the realization of the idea. In other words they have failed to present the objects of faith, and to hold them before the mind until the mind believes. They philosophized, perhaps correctly about the nature of faith, but they have not so forcibly arrayed before the mind the truths to be believed as to beget faith. They have made men understand what faith is, but have not succeeded in persuading them to exercise faith. They have been satisfied with developing the idea, without pressing the truth to be believed, and holding the objects of faith before the mind, until the will yields and commits itself to them in the exercise of faith. The same has been true of every other Christian grace. They have developed the true idea of benevolence, but have not pressed those considerations that tend to make the mind benevolent, until it has broken loose from its selfishness and wholly committed itself to the exercise of benevolence. It is certainly an important distinction which I have before my mind. A man may understand the philosophical nature of benevolence without being benevolent. If we satisfy ourselves with developing the true idea of benevolence and do not so present God, Christ, the love of Christ, the great interests of the universe, and all the moving considerations which tend

to make the mind benevolent, although we may develop the true idea of religion, we may fail of securing true religion. Some as I have said have greatly erred in not making just discriminations in respect to the nature of true religion, and converts have taken up with something else, supposing it to be the religion of Christ. Others have made just discriminations until they have developed the idea, and converts have mistaken the idea of true religion as it lies developed in the intelligence for religion itself. Seeing what it is so clearly, they think they have it. They understand it and do not realize that they do not exercise it. Now both these things need to be thoroughly attended to, in order to secure sound conversions. Especially is this true since a false philosophy has engendered false ideas of religion in so many minds.

What is true of faith and love, is true of repentance, humility, meekness, and every grace. Not only should its philosophical nature be defined, until its true idea is developed in the intelligence, but those truths that tend to produce it should be pressed, and turned over and explained and held up before the mind, until the heart goes forth in the exercise of these virtues. Let it be understood that the philosophical explanations which develop the idea of these virtues have no tendency to beget them. It is only a lucid and forcible exhibition of appropriate truths, such as makes it appeal to the heart, that can ever be instrumental in begetting true religion. And here I would say that if either class of truths is to be omitted, the discriminations of which I have spoken can be omitted with the greatest safety, for if we hold forth the objects of faith and love, and strongly present and press these truths, they tend to beget repentance, faith, love, humility, meekness &c. We may expect in multitudes of instances to beget these forms of virtue in their purity without the subject of them having an idea of their philosophical nature. By presenting Christ for instance, a soul may be led to believe in him, without once thinking of the philosophical nature of true faith. By holding forth the character of God, true love may be begotten in the mind without the philosophical nature of love being at all understood by the mind, and this may be true of every grace, so that it is far better to hold forth those truths that tend to beget these graces, and omit the discriminations that would develop their philosophical ideal, than to make discriminations, and leave out of view, or slightly exhibit the truths that are indispensable to engage the obedience of the heart. The discriminations of which I have spoken that develop the true idea are mostly important to cut up the false hopes of old professors and spurious converts, and to prevent enquirers from falling into error. And I would beseech

my brethren who are engaged in promoting revivals of religion, to remember and carry into practice this important consideration, that the gospel is to be set forth in all its burning and overcoming power, as the thing to be believed, until the Christian graces are brought into exercise, and that occasionally in the course of revival preaching, the preacher should bring forth these fundamental discriminations. They should develop the true idea of religion and prevent false hopes.

Your brother,  
C.G. FINNEY

**April 9, 1845**

**Letters On Revival--No. 6.**

**by Prof. Finney**

To All The Friends And Especially All The Ministers Of  
Our Lord Jesus Christ:

Dear Brethren:

Another error which has prevailed to some extent, I fear, in the promotion of revivals, has been a kind of preaching that has rather puffed up than humbled and subdued the mind. I mean a kind of preaching which dwells much more on the philosophy of religion than the great facts of revelation. Into this mistake I am sure that I have often fallen myself. Where the preaching is so metaphysical and philosophical, as to leave the impression that every thing about religion can be comprehended, and that nothing can be received which cannot be explained, and its philosophy understood, great mischief is a certain result. I do not suppose that any have fallen into the error of declaring that nothing is to be received by faith that cannot be philosophically explained and understood, yet if I am not mistaken this impression has been left after all. The human mind is so desperately wicked, so self-complacent on the one hand, and so unbelieving on the other, that it is greatly flattered and puffed up when it indulges in metaphysical and philosophical speculations about the truths of religion until it fancies itself able to comprehend most or all of the great truths that relate to God and his kingdom.

Now two evils result directly from this course of instruction. First, it substitutes our own ratiocinations for

faith. When men philosophize or speculate about a doctrine until they see it to be philosophical, they are exceedingly apt to rest in their own demonstrations or philosophical conclusions rather than in the testimony of God. But this is not faith. When men have formed this habit, they will either wholly reject all doctrines which they cannot philosophically comprehend and explain, or they will hold them so loosely that it can be easily seen they have no real confidence in them. Such men, so far as you can commend yourself to their intelligence, by explaining every thing to their comprehension, will go along with you; but they manifestly go along under the influence of your speculations and reasonings, and not at all because they implicitly confide in the testimony of God in regard to the facts of the gospel. Now it will be found that this class of Christians either absolutely reject, or hold very loosely some of the most important and precious doctrines of the gospel, such as the divinity and humanity of Christ, the doctrine of the trinity, the divine purposes, and many other truths connected with these. This kind of preaching serves not to humble the pride of the human mind but conveys the very kind of knowledge which Paul says puffs up. I have often thought of that passage in witnessing the spirit of the class of converts to which I allude. They are manifestly wise in their own conceits. They understand what they believe. They pride themselves on being philosophers and in not ignorantly and weakly believing what they cannot understand. Now I have observed it to be perfectly manifest, that this class of persons have no real faith. Their confidence is not at all in God, and the Bible, or in any of its statements, simply because God has declared them. They are pleased with and confide in their own speculations, and of course have but very little reverence for God, very little reverence for his authority, and no true confidence in his word.

The evils of this kind of philosophical preaching are, first, it does not beget faith. Secondly, if faith once existed it has no tendency to develop, strengthen, and confirm it, but rather to wither and destroy it. It is a remarkable fact that the inspired writers never philosophize, but always assume a correct philosophy. They throw out facts on which faith may lay hold. Although they never philosophize, yet it will be seen that their method of presenting truth is truly philosophical, when we consider the end which they had in view. It is very plain that the scriptural method of presenting truth is the very one which of all others is calculated to secure the end which God has in view. Faith in the character and testimony of God is forever indispensable to heart-obedience to God in all worlds. Some talk about faith being swallowed up in vision in heaven; but this can



never be. Confidence in God and his character, wisdom, goodness, and in the universality and perfection of his benevolence, will no doubt be just as indispensable in heaven to all eternity as it is on earth. From the nature of the case it must be that very many of the divine dispensations in a government so vast, managed with a policy to us so inscrutable, must be deeply mysterious and perplexing to us unless we have the most implicit confidence in God's benevolence and wisdom. Now in this world the great object of God is to restore confidence in himself and his government; to beget and develop faith to the utmost. Consequently He presents facts without explaining them. He enters not at all into their philosophy, but simply asserts the facts which he desires to communicate, and leaves it for faith to lay hold upon and rest in them. Now many of these facts we can never comprehend. We may understand that a thing is true while we cannot explain its philosophy. This is no doubt true of myriads of facts which will be ever coming up in the administration of God's government. It is therefore indispensable that we should be trained in the very beginning of our Christian course to rest unhesitatingly in the facts and wait for the explanations until we are able to receive them. Too much stress therefore cannot be laid on so presenting the gospel as to give full scope for the exercise of faith. By this I do not mean that the facts are not to be explained if they admit of philosophical explanation, but I mean that too much pains should not be taken to explain and philosophize on facts lest by so doing you leave the impression that every thing must be explained before it is received. In my own experience I have found that I have greatly injured my own piety by insisting too much on understanding every thing before I would receive it; that is I have not been satisfied oftentimes with merely understanding that such things were asserted as facts, but was restless, unsatisfied, and unstable, unless I could comprehend and explain the philosophy of the facts. Surely this has formerly been my experience on the subject of the atonement. I found myself not satisfied with the bare announcement that Christ had died as my substitute, but I must understand the how and the why, and the great principles of divine government and the policy of Jehovah's empire on which this great transaction turned. I can indeed explain to my own satisfaction the philosophy of this transaction, and have often succeeded in explaining it to the most skeptical minds; but after all from subsequent reflection I have been persuaded that had the bare facts been pressed on them, and had they received it first as a fact on the authority of divine testimony, it would have been more healthful for their souls. Within the last year or two, I have been led more to consider the importance of

holding forth facts as such until they are believed as facts, and then from time to time explaining their philosophy. I find this exceedingly healthful to my own soul, and to the souls of others, who first believe the facts without hearing the philosophy of them explained. This develops and strengthens faith. It leads them to feel that God is to be trusted, and that whatever he says is to be received barely on the authority of his own testimony. When afterwards the philosophy of it is opened to their view, they do not believe the fact any more firmly than before; but they are greatly edified, and even charmed with the philosophical illustrations of those things which before they have believed as facts on the authority of God. This I find to be exceedingly healthful to my own mind, and so far as I have had experience, to the minds of others. Indeed it is easy to see that the gospel should be presented and received in this way. This is the manner in which the Bible everywhere presents it. First, receive the facts as facts, simply because God affirms them; afterwards explain such as can be explained and comprehended, for the edification and growth in knowledge of God's dear children. But reverse the process; first, explain every thing, and there is really no room left for faith; and if there is, you will find that professed converts really have no faith, and will either wholly reject or hold very loosely and doubtfully every declared fact or doctrine of the Bible which does not admit of clear philosophical analysis and explanation. This I am sure is the result of too much philosophizing and metaphysical speculation in preaching.

But let me say again that this kind of preaching is very pleasing to certain classes of hearers, although the truly and highly spiritual will soon find themselves growing lean on it. Yet a congregation generally will be puffed up, pleased, and from sermon to sermon think themselves greatly edified, and benefitted; whereas it will generally be seen that they do not grow more prevalent in prayer, more humble, more consecrated to God; do not attain more of the meekness of a child and more of the patience of Jesus Christ. Their growth is not truly Christian growth. It is rather a philosophical growth, and oftentimes pride and egotism are the most prominent characteristics of a congregation who are fed with philosophy and metaphysics instead of the humbling facts of the gospel. I surely have been guilty enough in this respect, and I am certainly not alone in this condemnation, although others who have taken the same course substantially that I have in this respect, may not have seen their error so fully as I have been forced to see it. I wish not to be misunderstood. I would be far from advocating a mere presentation of facts

without any explanation at all. I would take a middle course, so as on the one hand, not to puff up by a disproportionate development of the intelligence, while almost no room is left for the exercise of faith in divine testimony; nor on the other hand to stultify the intelligence by simply holding forth facts for the exercise of faith.

Your Brother,  
C.G. FINNEY.

**April 23, 1845**

**LETTERS ON REVIVALS--No. 7.**

**by Prof. Finney.**

TO ALL THE FRIENDS AND ESPECIALLY ALL THE  
MINISTERS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Dear Brethren:

Another error which has prevailed to a considerable extent in promoting revivals of religion I apprehend is that of encouraging an unhealthy degree of excitement. Some degree of excitement is inevitable. The truths that must be seen and duly appreciated to induce the sinner to turn to God, will of necessity produce a considerable degree of excitement in his mind; but it should always be understood that excitement, especially where it exists in a high degree, exposes the sinner to great delusions. Religion consists in the heart's obedience to the law of the intelligence, as distinguished from its being influenced by emotion or fear. When the feelings are greatly excited, the will yields to them almost of necessity. I do not mean that it does absolutely by necessity, but that an excited state of feeling has so much power over the will that it almost certainly controls it. Now the mind is never religious when it is actuated by the feelings, for this is following impulse. Whatever the feelings are, if the soul gives itself up to be controlled by feelings rather than by the law and gospel of God, as truth lies revealed in the intelligence, it is not a religious state of mind. Now the real difficulty of obeying the law of the intelligence is in proportion to the amount of excitement. Just in proportion as the feelings are strongly excited they tend to govern the will, and in as far as they do govern the will, there is and can be no religion in the soul, whatever these feelings are. Now just so much excitement is important in revivals as is

requisite to secure the fixed and thorough attention of the mind to the truth, and no more. When excitement goes beyond this, it is always dangerous. When excitement is very great, so as really to carry the will, the subjects of this excitement invariably deceive themselves. They get the idea that they are religious in proportion as they are governed by their feelings. They are conscious of feeling deeply, and of acting accordingly, and because they do feel. They are conscious of being sincerely actuated by their feelings. This they regard as true religion. Whereas if they are really governed by their feelings as distinguished from their intelligence, they are not religious at all.

This is no doubt the secret of so many false hopes, in those revivals in which there is very great excitement. Where this has not been understood, and very great excitement has been rather nourished than controlled; where it has been taken for granted, that the revival of religion is great in proportion to the amount of excitement, great evils have invariably resulted to the cause of Christ. The great excitement attending revivals is an evil often incidental to real revivals of religion. But if the attention of the people can be thoroughly secured, no more excitement should be encouraged than is consistent with leaving the intelligence to exercise its full power on the will, without the obstruction of deeply excited feelings. I have often seen persons in so much excitement that the intelligence seemed to be almost stultified, and any thing but reason seemed to have the control of the will. This is not religion, but enthusiasm; and often times, as I shall have occasion to show in the course of these letters, has taken on at last the type of fanaticism.

Again, it is a dangerous thing in revivals to address too exclusively the hopes and fears of men, for the plain reason that selfish as man is, addressing his hopes and fears almost exclusively, tends to beget in him a selfish submission to God--a selfish religion to which he is moved on the one hand by fear of punishment, and on the other by hope of reward. Now it is true that God addresses the hopes and the fears of men, threatens them with punishment if they disobey, and offers them rewards if they obey, but still there is no virtue while the heart is actuated merely by hope of reward or fear of punishment. If sinners will disinterestedly love him and consecrate themselves to the good of universal being, he promises them a reward for this disinterested service. But he no where promises them reward for following him for the loaves and fishes. This is sheer selfishness. If sinners will repent and turn away from their sins, and disinterestedly consecrate themselves to the good of the universe and the glory of God, he

promises to forgive their sins. But this promise is not made to a selfish giving up of sin. Outward sin may be given up from selfish motives, but the sin of the heart never can be, for that consists in selfishness, and it is nonsense and absurdity to speak of really giving up sin from selfish motives. Every selfish effort at giving up the heart is only a confirmation of selfishness. All attempts to give up sin from mere fear of punishment or hope of reward are not only hypocritical but tend directly to confirm, strengthen and perpetuate the selfishness of the heart. There can be no doubt that when sinners are careless, addressing their hopes and fears is the readiest and perhaps the only way of arousing them and getting their attention to the subject of salvation; but it should be forever remembered that when their attention is thus secured, they should, as far as possible, be kept from taking a selfish view of the subject. Those considerations should then be pressed on them that tend to draw them away from themselves and constrain them to give their whole being up to God. We should present to their minds the character of God, his government, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the plan of salvation, any such thing that is calculated to charm the sinner away from his sins, and from pursuing his own interests, and that is calculated to excite him to exercise disinterested and universal love. On the other hand, his own deformity, selfishness, self-will, pride, ambition, enmity, lusts, guilt, loathsomeness, hatefulness, spiritual death: dependence, its nature and its extent; all these things should be brought to bear in a burning focus on his mind. Right over against his own selfishness, enmity, self-will, and loathsome depravity, should be set the disinterestedness, the great love, the infinite compassion, the meekness, condescension, purity, holiness, truthfulness, and justice, of the blessed God. These should be held before him like a mirror until they press on him with such mountain weight as to break his heart. It is very easy to see that this cannot be done without producing a considerable degree and often times a high degree of excitement. But it should be forever remembered that great excitement is only an incidental evil, and by no means a thing which is to be looked upon as highly favorable to his conversion. The more calm the soul can be kept while it gazes on those truths, the more free is the will left to comply with obligation as it lies revealed in the intelligence.

I have no doubt that much unreasonable opposition has been made to the excitement that is often witnessed in connection with revivals of religion, for, as I have said, great excitement is often times unavoidable. But I have just as little doubt that often-times excitement has been unnecessarily great, and that real pains have been

taken to promote deep and over-whelming excitements. I have sometimes witnessed efforts that were manifestly intended to create as much excitement as possible, and not unfrequently have measures been used which seemed to have no tendency to instruct or to subdue the will, or to bring sinners to the point of intelligently closing in with the terms of salvation; but on the contrary, it has seemed to me to beget a sort of infatuation through the power of overwhelming excitement. I cannot believe that this is healthful or at all safe in revivals. Indeed, where such a course has been taken, I believe it will be found to be a universal truth that evil instead of good has resulted from such efforts. The more I have seen of revivals, the more I am impressed with the importance of keeping excitement down as far as is consistent with a full, thorough and powerful exhibition of truth.

Often-times excitement spreads rapidly through a congregation under the influence of sympathy, and it not unfrequently becomes necessary in powerful revivals to proceed with great discretion for this reason. Where one individual becomes overwhelmed with excitement, and breaks out into loud crying and tears, where he cannot contain himself but has to wail out with excitement. It requires much judgment to dispose of such a case without injury on the one side or on the other. If the thing be severely rebuked, it will almost invariably beget such a feeling among christians as to quench the Spirit. On the other hand, if it be openly encouraged and the flame fanned, it will often produce an overwhelming amount of excitement throughout the congregation. Many will, perhaps be entirely overcome, and multitudes will profess to submit to God; whereas scarcely one of them has acted intelligently or will in the end be found to have been truly converted. It is sometimes said, no matter how great the excitement is, if it is produced by truth. Now it often comes to pass that up to a certain point, excitement will be produced by truth, at which point the intellect becomes bewildered, the sensibility becomes inflamed and overwhelmed, and there is a perfect explosion of feeling, while the intellect is almost smothered and wretched by the tornado of excitement. Now this is a state very unfavorable to true conversion. I have seen such cases repeatedly, and before I had experience on that subject, I thought well and even highly of cases of this kind. But I have learned to view them in a different light and to feel much more confidence in apparent conversions that occur where there is greater calmness of mind. I wish to be understood. Excitement cannot reasonably be objected to as a thing entirely unnecessary in revivals; but the thing I would be distinctly understood to say is, that no effort should be made to produce excitement beyond



what a lucid and powerful exposition of truth will produce. All the measures used to awaken interest, and our whole policy in regulating this awakened interest should be such as will not disturb the operations of the intelligence or divert its attention from the truth to which the heart is bound to submit.

I remark again that many excitements which are taken for revivals of religion, after all result in very little substantial piety, simply because the excitement is too great. Appeals are made too much to the feelings. Hope and fear are too exclusively addressed, a strain of preaching is adopted which appeals rather to the sympathies and the feelings than to the intelligence. A tornado of excitement results, but no intelligent action of the heart. The will is swept along by a tempest of feeling. The intelligence is rather for the time being stultified and confounded than possessed with clear views of truth. Now this certainly can never result in good.

Again, especially has this mistake been common if I am not mistaken, in endeavors to promote revivals among children. The whole tendency of things with them is to excitement, and not the least dependence can be placed on revivals among them, without the greatest pains to instruct rather than to excite them. They may be thrown into a perfect tempest of excitement, and multitudes of them profess to be and perhaps appear to be converted, when they are influenced solely by their feelings, and have no thorough discriminating and correct views of truth at all. Now the result of all such efforts and such excitements among children is to make them sceptics, and indeed this is the result among all classes of persons who are brought to be the subjects of great excitement about religion and have not sufficient solid and discriminating instruction to turn their hearts to God. Such evils are doubtless to be looked upon among the greatest evils with which communities are ever visited.

Your Brother,  
C.G. FINNEY.

May 7, 1845

## LETTERS ON REVIVALS--No. 8

by Prof. Finney

### EXCITEMENT IN REVIVALS.

TO ALL THE FRIENDS AND ESPECIALLY ALL THE  
MINISTERS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Dear Brethren:

I have by no means done with the subject of excitement as connected with revivals of religion. In every age of the church, cases have occurred in which persons have had such clear manifestations of divine truth as to prostrate their physical strength entirely. This appears to have been the case with Daniel. He fainted and was unable to stand. Saul of Tarsus seems to have been overwhelmed and prostrated under the blaze of divine glory that surrounded him. I have met with many cases where the physical powers were entirely prostrated by a clear apprehension of the infinitely great and weighty truths of religion.

With respect to these cases I remark,

1. That they are not cases of that objectionable excitement of which I spoke in my last letter. For in these cases, the intelligence does not appear to be stultified and confused, but to be full of light. The mind seems not to be conscious of any unusual excitement of its own sensibility; but on the contrary, seems to itself to be calm and its state seems peculiar only because truth is seen with unusual clearness. Manifestly there is no such effervescence of the sensibility as produces tears, or any of the usual manifestations of an excited imagination, or deeply moved feelings. There is not that gush of feeling which distracts the thoughts, but the mind sees truth unveiled, and in such relations as really to take away all bodily strength, while the mind looks in upon the unveiled glories of the Godhead. The veil seems to be removed from the mind, and truth is seen much as we must suppose it to be when the spirit is disembodied. No wonder this should overpower the body.

Now such cases have often stumbled those who have witnessed them; and yet so far as I have had opportunity to enquire into their subsequent history, I have been persuaded that in general these were sound cases of conversion. A few may possibly be counterfeits; but I do not recollect any clearly marked case of this kind in which it was not afterwards manifest

that the love of God had been deeply shed abroad in the heart, the will greatly subdued, and the whole character greatly and most desirably modified.

Now I again remark that I do not feel at liberty to object to these cases of excitement, if they may be so called. Whatever excitement attends them seems to result necessarily from the clear manifestations which God makes to the soul. This excitement, instead of being boisterous, unintelligent and enthusiastic, like that alluded to in my former letter, seems to be similar to that which we may suppose exists among the departed spirits of the just. Indeed this seems to me a just principle: we need fear no kind or degree of excitement which is produced simply by perceived truth, and is consistent with the healthful operation of the intellectual powers. Whatever exceeds this must be disastrous.

In general, those cases of bodily prostration of which I have spoken occur without the apparent intervention of any external means adapted to produce such a result. So far as I have observed, they occur when the soul is shut up to God. In the case of Daniel, of Saul, of Wm. Tennant, and others there were no human instrumentalities, or measures, or exciting appeals to the imagination or sensibility; but a simple revelation of God to the soul by the Holy Ghost.

Now the excitement produced in this manner seems to be of a very different kind from that produced by very boisterous, vociferous preaching, exhortation, or prayer; or by those very exciting appeals to fear which are often made by zealous exhorters or preachers. Exciting measures are often used and very exciting illustrations are employed, which agitate and strain the nervous system until the sensibility seems to gush forth like a flood of water, and for the time completely overwhelm and drown the intelligence.

But the excitement produced when the Holy Ghost reveals God to the soul is totally different from this. It is not only consistent with the clearest and most enlarged perceptions of the intelligence, but directly promotes and produces such perceptions. Indeed it promotes the free and unembarrassed action of both the intelligence and the will.

This is the kind of excitement that we need. It is that which the Holy Spirit always produces. It is not an excitement of sympathy; not a spasm, or explosion of the nervous sensibility, but is a calm, deep, sacred flow of the soul in view of the clear, infinitely important and impressive truths of God.

It requires often no little discrimination to distinguish between an effervescence of the sensibility produced by loud and exciting appeals; by corresponding measures

on the one hand, and on the other that calm, but deep and sometimes overpowering flow of soul which is produced by the Spirit of God revealing Jesus to the soul. I have sometimes feared that these different kind of excitement are confounded with each other, and consequently by one class of persons all alike, rejected and denounced, and by another class wholly defended. Now it appears to me of great importance to distinguish in these cases between things that differ.

When I see cases of extraordinary excitement I have learned to enquire as calmly and affectionately as I can into the views of truth taken by the mind at the time. If the individual readily and spontaneously gives such reasons as naturally account for this excitement, I can then judge of its character. If it really originates in clear views presented by the Holy Ghost, of the character of God and of the great truths of his government, the mind will be full of these truths and will spontaneously give them off whenever there is ability to utter them. It will be seen that there is a remarkably clear view of truth, and where power of speech is left, a remarkable facility in communicating it. As a general thing I do not fear the excitement in these cases however great it may be.

But where the attention seems to be occupied with one's own feelings, and when they can give no intelligible reason for feeling as they do, very little confidence can be placed in their state. I have frequently seen cases when the excitement was very great, and almost overwhelming; yet the subject of it upon the closest enquiry could give no intelligent account of any perceptions of truth which the mind had. The soul seemed to be moved to its deepest foundations; but not by clear exhibitions of truth or by manifestations of God to the soul. Hence the mind did not seem to be acting intelligently. I have learned to be afraid of this and to place little or no confidence in professed conversions under such circumstances. I have observed that the subjects of these excitements will after a season look upon themselves as having been infatuated and swept away by a tornado of unintelligent excitement.

## ILLUSTRATION: A FACT.

As an illustration of what I would say upon this subject I will relate a fact that once occurred under my own observation. I attended a camp-meeting in the State of New-York which had been in progress two or three days before my arrival. I heard the preachers and attended the exercises through most of that day, and there appeared to be very little,—indeed no visible excitement.

After several sermons had been preached and after much exhortation, prayer and singing, I observed several of the leading men to be whispering to each other for some time as if in profound deliberation, after which one of them, a man of athletic frame and stentorian voice came down from the stand and pressed his way along into the midst of a company of women who were sitting in front of the stand, and then began to clap his hands and halloo at the top of his voice; power! power!! power!!! Soon, another and another set in, till there was a general shouting and clapping of hands, followed presently by the shrieking of women, and resulting after a little time in the falling of several of them from their seats. Then it was proclaimed that the power of God was revealed from heaven. After pushing this excitement to a most extraordinary extent, the minister who began it and those who united with him and had thus succeeded as they supposed in bringing down the power of God upon the congregation, retired from the scene of confusion manifestly much gratified at the result.

This scene and some others of a similar character have often occurred to my mind. I cannot but regard such movements as calculated to promote any thing else than true religion. In the getting up of this excitement there was not a word of truth communicated; there was no prayer or exhortation,--nothing but a most vociferous shouting of power! power!! power!!! accompanied by an almost deafening clapping of hands. I believe this to have been an extraordinary case and that probably but few cases occur which are so highly objectionable. But things often occur in revivals which seem to beget an excitement but little more intelligent than this. Such appeals are made to the imagination and to certain departments of the sensibility as completely to throw the action of the intellect into the shade. So far as such efforts to promote revivals are made, they are undoubtedly highly disastrous, and should be entirely discouraged.

Your Brother,  
C.G. FINNEY.

May 21, 1845

LETTERS ON REVIVALS--No. 9.

by Prof. Finney.

### FANATICAL EXCITEMENT.

TO ALL THE FRIENDS AND ESPECIALLY ALL THE  
MINISTERS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST:

Dear Brethren:

While upon the subject of excitement I wish to make a few suggestions on the danger that highly excited feelings will take a wrong direction and result in fanaticism. Every one is aware that when the feelings are strongly excited, they are capable of being turned in various directions and of assuming various types according to the circumstances of the excited individual. Few persons who have witnessed revivals of religion have not had occasion to remark this tendency of the human mind, and the efforts of Satan to use it for his own advantage, by mingling in the spirit of fanaticism with the spirit of a religious revival.

Fanaticism results from what a certain writer calls "loveless light." Whenever the mind is enlightened in regard to what men ought to be and do and say, and is not at the same time in the exercise of benevolence, a spirit of fanaticism, indignation, rebuke, and denunciation is the almost inevitable result.

By fanaticism I mean a state of mind in which the malign emotions take the control of the will, and hurry the individual away into an outrageous and vindictive effort to sustain what he calls right and truth. He contends for what he regards as truth or right with a malign spirit.

Now in seasons of religious revival there is special danger that fanaticism will spring up under the influence of infernal agency. It is in many respects a peculiarly favorable time for Satan to sow in a rank soil the seed of some of the most turbulent and outrageous forms of error that have ever cursed the world.

Among the crowd who attend preaching at such times, there are almost always persons who have a strong fanatical tendency of mind. They are strongly inclined to censoriousness, fault-finding, vituperation, denunciation and rebuke. It is a strong and ultra democratic tendency of mind, anti-conservative in the extreme and strongly tending to misrule. Now in proportion as persons of this character become enlightened respecting the duties and the sins of men, they are very likely to break forth into a spirit of turbulent fanaticism.



It is well known that almost all the reforms of this and of every age have been cursed by this sort of fanaticism. Temperance, Moral Reform, Physiological and Dietetic Reform, Anti-Slavery,—all have felt the blight; almost nothing has escaped. When lecturers or others take up these questions and discuss them, pouring light upon the public mind, it often seems to disturb a cockatrice's den. The deep and perhaps hitherto hidden tendencies to fanaticism are blown up into flame, and often burst forth as from the molten heart of a volcano. Their indignation is aroused; their censorious and vituperative tongues are let loose; those unruly members that set on fire the course of nature and are set on fire of hell, seem to pour forth a stream of burning lava to scorch and desolate society. Their prayers, their exhortations, every thing they say or do, are but a stream of scolding, fault-finding, and recrimination. They insist upon it, they do well to be angry,—almost to manifest any thing less than the utmost indignation were profane, and suited neither to the subject nor the occasion.

Now it is remarkable to what an extent this class of minds have been brought forward by the different reforms of the day and even by revivals of religion. No matter what the subject is,—if it be the promotion of peace, they will contend for peace with the spirit of outrageous war. With their tongues they will make war upon every thing that opposes them; pour forth unmeasured abuse upon all who disagree with them, and make no compromise nor hold any communion with those who cannot at once subscribe to their peculiar views. If the subject be Anti-slavery, they contend for it with the spirit of slaveholders; and while they insist that all men are free, they will allow freedom of opinion to none but themselves. They would enslave the views and sentiments of all who differ from them, and soon castigate them into an acquiescence with their own opinions.

In revivals of religion this spirit generally manifests itself in a kind of scolding and denunciatory way of praying for all classes of people. Next, in exhortation, preaching, or in conversation. It especially attacks ministers and the leading influences of the church, and moves right on progressively until it finally regards the visible church as Babylon, and all men as on the high road to hell who do not come out and denounce her.

Now this spirit often springs up in revivals so stealthily and insidiously that its true character is not at first detected. Perhaps the church is cold, the minister and leading influences are out of the way, and it seems no more than just, nay even necessary that some severity should be used towards those who are so far out of the way. The individual himself feels this so strongly that he

does not suspect himself of fanaticism though he deals out a large measure of rebuke in which a sprinkling of the malign elements is unconsciously mingled. He pleads the example of Christ, of apostles and prophets, and can quote many passages from the Bible very similar to those which he now uses, and deems himself justified in using inasmuch as they are drawn from scripture. He assumes their application as he applies them, and also that himself stands in God's stead and is the mouth of God in rebuking iniquity.

Now when this spirit first appears it grates across the tender minds of those who are in a spirit of love. At first it distresses and agonizes them; but by and by there seems to be so much truth in what is said; their prayers and exhortations are so exciting; their own attention being directed to the faults that are so sternly rebuked, they begin to drink in the same spirit and partake of that boisterous and fiery zeal which was at first so inconsistent with the sweetness of their spirit. They begin to see as they suppose, how the denunciations of the prophets of Christ and of his apostles apply to those among whom they live. Their attention is wholly engrossed with the faults of the church and the ministry, and they can see nothing good. They begin to doubt and query whether the visible church are not all hypocrites. At first they fear but soon believe that nearly all the ministers are self-deceived, hirelings, conservatives, ambitious, stewards of the devil. Church organizations are looked upon first with suspicion, then with contempt and abhorrence. "Coming out of Babylon," becomes the order of the day.

Fanaticism takes on a very great variety of types. Its modifications are almost innumerable. From the spirit of the crusades when men went forth with boots and spurs, with fire and sword to convert their fellow men to Christianity, down to the obscure professor of religion who mutters in a corner his scolding and fault-finding with every body and every thing, all the intervening space is filled with the multiform phases of fanaticism. From the fiery zeal with which the itinerant declaims, vociferates and denounces both church and state, down to the individual who rather looks than speaks out his fanaticism, you may find this class of persons kindling up and nursing the fires of fanaticism in almost every corner of Christendom.

Now this is doubtless the spirit of Satan which he has manifested in the church and in the world through all past ages.

We have one able book on the subject of fanaticism; but we need another which shall take up and expose its more modern developments—which shall delineate as

on a page of light the workings of this dark spirit whose malign influence, silently working like leaven, would fain leaven the whole lump and make this earth malign like hell. More of this at another time.

Your Brother,  
C.G. FINNEY.

**June 4, 1845**

**LETTERS ON REVIVALS--No. 10.**

**by Prof. Finney**

**FANATICAL EXCITEMENT.**

TO ALL THE FRIENDS AND ESPECIALLY ALL THE  
MINISTERS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Dear Brethren:

I beg leave to call the attention of the brethren to the danger of revival preachers themselves introducing the spirit of fanaticism. When they meet with great opposition from the church or the world or the ministry, they sometimes indulge in a strain of remark that is strongly tinged with bitterness, or at least, with the appearance of bitterness and denunciation. There are sometimes streaks and dashes of this in the preaching and spirit of good men. Satan seems to take advantage of their circumstances to infuse, imperceptibly to themselves, into their spirit and strain of preaching, praying and talking, a dash of bitterness and vituperation. This strongly tends to beget a fanatical state of mind in their admirers.

Revival preachers have sometimes been greatly opposed by ministers until they have become sore and somewhat irritable; and in this state of mind have sometimes gone so far as to preach and speak of those ministers in a very censorious spirit. This inevitably does great mischief in the revivals in which they are engaged. It catches like fire among the converts and among those professors who are most immediately under his influence, and tends strongly to run the revival out of the

spirit of love, into a spirit of recrimination and bitterness. A sore and bitter state of mind will be manifested by those who think themselves engaged in the work of the Lord, while the spirit of meekness, gentleness, brotherly kindness and of deep and compassionate sympathy with Christ and with his church, will be almost entirely supplanted.

If I am not mistaken, revival preachers have often greatly erred in this matter. Whitfield sometimes did so, as he himself confesses, and the result was such as I have named, as every one knows who has read the history of the revivals that occurred under his labors. There is not one among the revival preachers of modern times who has not erred to a greater or less extent in this respect. I am sure that I have sometimes done so; and I do not know of a revival preacher of whom I do not think that to some extent the remarks just made are applicable.

A little spice of this spirit in a revival preacher will work like leaven until it leavens the whole lump, and if indulged in, will sooner or later totally change the character of the excitement in which he labors until it will become a revival of arrant fanaticism instead of pure religion. This result may occur without his once suspecting that such is the tendency of his spirit, preaching and movements. Hence ere he is aware, the evil is too far developed to admit of a remedy.

It does appear to me that revival preachers should be exceedingly honest with themselves on this subject, and withal very guarded, forbearing, mild and conciliatory in their manner of speaking and preaching, especially concerning those who oppose their views and measures. It is often better to take no public notice whatever of opposition, and especially not to allude to opposers, and by no means to speak of or pray for ministers or Christians in such a way as may blow up into a flame the latent sparks of fanaticism that are smothered in so many bosoms.

In thinking of this subject, in looking over the state of the church, in reading the history of revivals of religion in all ages, I have been struck and deeply affected with the innumerable instances in which promoters of revivals have erred in substantially the manner I have described. They have unwittingly imbibed more or less of a spirit of fanaticism themselves, and it manifests itself so much in their public efforts as greatly to mar the work of the Lord, and of course to grieve the Spirit of God. Indeed some revival preachers appear to me to have forsaken the right way without being aware of it, and really to have become highly fanatical in their spirit, preaching and general bearing, until God has manifestly been

obliged to rebuke them by withdrawing his Spirit and closing the doors of the church against them. If revivals of pure religion are to be preserved from fanaticism, the utmost pains should be taken to preserve the leaders from this spirit. It is one of the grand devices of the devil to infuse this spirit stealthily into the leaders and thereby poison the revival to death.

In what I have said I would not be understood to intimate by any means that revival preachers alone have fallen into this error, for I am very confident that they have not so frequently fallen into it as some who have never promoted revivals of religion. The latter have more often fallen, for the reason that their general strain of preaching has so much of jangling, of controversy, of rebuke, censoriousness and bitterness against all who differ from them, that the Spirit of God seldom if ever refreshes the heritage to which they minister. I have known several such ministers who were far enough from being revival preachers, and whose preaching tended only to revive and perpetuate the spirit of fanaticism and rebuke. But what I have intended in this letter is, that revival preachers themselves have sometimes fallen into this error which is so common with many other preachers.

Indeed sectarianism in all its forms is only a modified species of fanaticism, as might easily be shown; and revival preachers who have connected sectarian movements with their revival operations, have perhaps uniformly shown that a fanatical spirit was the result.

My brethren, let us be careful that our own spirit is heavenly, Christ-like,—that we have the wisdom that cometh down from above, which is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, full of mercy and good fruits." Let us labor in this spirit, and the result will show that we are workmen who need not be ashamed.

Your Brother,  
C.G. FINNEY.

**June 18, 1845**

## **LETTERS ON REVIVALS. --No. 11.**

by Prof. Finney

### **EXCITEMENT IN REVIVALS.**

TO ALL THE FRIENDS AND ESPECIALLY ALL THE  
MINISTERS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Dear Brethren:

If I am not entirely mistaken, many excitements that have been supposed to be revivals of religion, have after all had but very little true religion in them. It seems to have been nearly or quite overlooked, that all religion is love. And it is remarkable to see to what an extent, in some instances at least, there is a manifestation of fiery zeal, often tintured strongly with bitterness and sarcasm, instead of the gentleness and sweetness that characterizes the true religion of Jesus. If you attend the meetings of any kind, if you converse with the brethren, with the professed converts, with any who are influenced by the excitement, you find that there is a strain of evil speaking, fault-finding and scolding which is any thing but the true religion of Christ. There is to be sure a great excitement, a great deal of bustle and conversation, a great many means and measures, in short a great deal of every thing calculated to promote a certain kind of excitement. There is indeed a powerful revival, but certainly not a revival of pure religion. Sinners are speaking in great bitterness of Christians, and professed Christians are speaking with very little less bitterness of them. The preaching is very much in a strain of vituperation, and this begets almost of course the like spirit and strain in every thing else connected with the excitement. There seems to be in it a deep, turbid and bitter current of feeling, that is the very essence of fanaticism. The spirit of satan, instead of the spirit of God, has, no doubt, been poured out on the people. It has been an outpouring of a spirit, but not of the Holy Spirit of God. It seems to be a going forth of infernal agencies, a letting loose of the powers of darkness, a season of deep delusions; and what is surprising is, that even good people are often for a time carried away with it, and for weeks and perhaps for months do not discover their mistake. As a brother who had himself been laboring under this mistake, expressed it—"I have been trying," said he, "to cast out devils, through Beelzebub the prince of the devils."

You will very often see the evidence of this state of mind in the very countenances of those who are deeply



excited. They look cross; there is a deep dissatisfaction of mind manifested in their countenances. You go to a prayer meeting, or other meeting where numbers who have this kind of excitement are assembled, and you will see a dark cloud gathering on the faces of the excited ones. Instead of that open, sweet, calm, meek, but deeply solemn and humble state of mind which invariably shows itself in the countenance, there is in the eye, and in all the features of the mind, a distracted, fanatical, determined look; a self-will and denunciatory expression that seems to say, "Stand by thyself, for I am holier than thou."

I hardly know how to describe what I have sometimes witnessed in such cases. And perhaps I cannot so describe it, as to make myself understood to any except those, who in the providence of God, have fallen under circumstances to witness it. Sometimes this state of mind will not be generally manifested, in an excitement. Perhaps a revival of pure religion commences, and there is no manifestation of this spirit at all. But I scarcely ever saw a powerful revival any where without seeing more or less of a fanatical spirit in the course of the revival, manifesting itself in some one or more cases.

If the leader in such revivals keeps himself entirely clear of this spirit, and watches its development narrowly on every side round about, and is entirely faithful and timely in private and personal expostulation and warning, in the case of those who are seized with it, it can no doubt generally be prevented.

It will not unfrequently manifest itself at first in prayer meetings, if liberty is given; or if liberty is not given for any one to pray who feels disposed, you will sometimes see a man or woman break forth in a prodigiously excited manner, and let off in a torrent of vituperation of their prayers. There will be in it a strain of bitterness that will be very shocking to all who do not deeply sympathize with such a state of mind. Now if the minister at once goes to that man or woman immediately after meeting, has a plain and affectionate conversation, and sets before the individual the true state of his mind, he may succeed in the outset in so opening his eyes, as to detect the delusion and save him from farther evil. But if he neglect it, the evil will spread rapidly, the delusions will increase in the mind of the individual himself, and probably in the course of a few days, or at the utmost, weeks, it will completely change the type of the revival, grieve away the Spirit of God, and let in a flood of infernal agencies to desolate the church.

I hope my brethren will not understand from what I have said and intend to say on the subject of fanaticism, as it often appears in connection with revivals, any thing that shall give occasion to speak reproachfully of the most faithful and pungent dealing with the consciences of backsliders and impenitent sinners.

I am aware, and who that has ever seen revivals is not aware, that the spirit of complaining, fault-finding, and censoriousness, is by no means confined to those who are endeavoring to promote the excitement or revival, and that the spirit of fanaticism is by no means confined to this class of persons. It is often more appallingly manifested among those who partake not at all of the spirit of promoting revivals. It is very common indeed to see the opposers of revivals both in and out of the church, manifesting at such times, a most turbulent and intolerant spirit, and a form of fanaticism, not less disgraceful and unreasonable than that to which I have alluded.

Sometimes even ministers, prominent professors of religion, as well as those without the church and who are opposed to the revival or excitement, or whatever its character may be, are seen to be filled with the spirit of caviling, censoriousness, complaining and faultfinding, and whose minds seem occupied almost altogether with real or apparent, or at least, imagined defects in the spirit of those who are engaged in promoting the work, or in the means used by them.

It is very common to hear this class of persons find fault with really the most unobjectionable things. They seem to have the spirit of calling evil good, and good evil. Any thing like faithful and pungent dealing, any thing like a thorough searching and probing the heart of backsliders and sinners, to the bottom, is by them called abusive, personal, vituperative, and such like things.

Now what I desire to say, brethren, is this, that there are great dangers, and oftentimes great errors on both sides to be apprehended and guarded against. I have already intimated that the spirit of fanaticism, as it appears in those who are endeavoring to promote a revival, is generally provoked and developed by a spirit of fanaticism, opposed to the revival. An unreasonable opposition on the part of others, seems to develop oftentimes, in those who are trying to promote the work a spirit really hostile to the work itself.

For my own part I have seldom seen a spirit of fanaticism manifested itself among promoters of revivals, only as it was provoked and developed by a spirit of opposition to revivals. When opposition takes on certain forms, and is found to exist among ministers and leading professors of religion, there is then the greatest

danger that the good and praying people will be overcome of evil, instead of overcoming evil with good. This should be always guarded against.

Your brother,  
C.G. FINNEY

July 2, 1845

Letters On Revival--No. 12.

by Prof. Finney

### EXCITEMENT IN REVIVALS.

TO ALL THE FRIENDS AND ESPECIALLY ALL THE  
MINISTERS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST:

Dear Brethren:

I have yet many things to say on the subject of the appearance of a fanatical spirit, in connexion with revivals. The particular thing to which I would now call the attention of the brethren, is this. There is a class of minds, that in seasons of deep excitement, and especially when there is a good deal of preaching on the necessity and reality of divine influences, the spirit of prayer, being led by the Spirit, being filled with the Spirit &c., who are extremely apt to give themselves up to be led by impulses. Mistaking the true manner in which the Spirit of God influences the mind, and not realizing that he enlightens the intelligence, and leads the Christian who is under his influence to be eminently reasonable, and rational in all his views and movements, they are looking for the Spirit to make direct impressions on their feelings, and to lead them through the influence of their feelings and not through the intelligence. Hence they are very full of impressions. One has an impression that he ought to do such a thing, or say such a thing, to go to such a place, to visit a tavern for instance, and converse with the inmates of a bar-room, or to go and rebuke a minister, or to tell the elders or deacons of the church, that God has revealed it to him that they are right in the way of the revival--in short, there is no end to the forms in which these delusions appear. Sometimes they are impressed with the conviction that they ought to get up and interrupt the speaker, during public preaching, or that they ought to break forth in prayer under

circumstances that would manifestly introduce disorder,--and many such like things are very liable to occur in seasons of deep excitement in revivals of religion. Sometimes they will have particular views presented to their imaginations--that such a minister is right in the way, and leading all the souls under his influence down to hell--that terrible judgments are coming on the place--that the revival is about to cease--or that some other terrible thing is about to take place. Now if this spirit is watched, it is remarkable to see how uniformly it will take on a severe, denunciatory and turbulent type. It is remarkable to see how often it will manifest its principal hostility and opposition towards the leading and most efficient influences that are at work in promoting a genuine revival of religion. If this spirit be narrowly watched, it will soon be seen, that it is really opposition to all that is truly good in the work; and that often-times its opposition to the highest and best influences employed by the Spirit in the promotion of the revival, is truly shocking. Probably few persons who have seen powerful revivals of religion, have not witnessed with pain and astonishment, things similar to those I have described.

Now these things are exceedingly dangerous in a revival, for the reason that they often appear among those who have been regarded as most engaged in the work, most spiritual and prayerful. They often occur in connexion with experiences, or rather succeed experiences, that were manifestly truly Christian and highly spiritual.

Now with respect to these things let me remark,

1. That often times when persons are really in a spiritual frame of mind, when they are really simple-hearted, unsuspecting, and willing to be led in any direction, Satan often succeeds, by transforming himself into an angel of light, in persuading them to give themselves up to impulses and impressions; and from that moment, he leads them captive at his will.
2. I remark that as a general rule, the influence of Satan in these things may be distinguished from the influences of the Holy Spirit by this--a mere impression that you must do this or that thing, go and converse with this person or that person, go to this place or that place, is by no means to be regarded. When the Spirit of God leads an individual to take a peculiar interest, feel peculiar compassion and drawing of heart in prayer and labor for particular individuals, this influence may be safely trusted. If you find yourself drawn out in mighty prayer for certain individuals, exercised with great compassion, agonized with strong crying and tears, for a certain family or neighborhood or people, let such an

influence be yielded to. If it is all compassion, an affectionate zeal for their salvation, a deep and affectionate interest in their spiritual welfare, you may safely take it for granted that this is from God, and give the mind and the outward developments up to its influence, and put forth all the efforts that may appear reasonable to secure their salvation. But let mere impressions unconnected with love, compassion, with the spirit of prayer, &c., be strongly guarded against, for to say the least, as a general rule, such impressions are not from God. It would not, perhaps, be too much to say that they never are. God's Spirit leads men by the intelligence, and not through mere impressions made on the sensibility. When the guilt and the danger of an individual is strongly set before the mind, when the great value of his soul is made to be clearly apprehended, when the heart is drawn out in prayer for his conversion and salvation, this is indeed from God. I have known some cases where persons have rendered themselves highly ridiculous, have greatly injured their own souls, and the cause of God, by giving themselves up to an enthusiastic, and fanatical following of impressions.

Your brother,

C.G. FINNEY

**July 16, 1845**

**Letters On Revival--No. 13.**

**by Prof. Finney**

### **WHY SO FEW REVIVALS.**

TO ALL THE FRIENDS AND ESPECIALLY ALL THE  
MINISTERS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST:

Dear Brethren:

I am rejoiced to perceive that the inquiry is beginning to agitate the Church. --Why are there not more revivals! as well as why is there character so changed? The inquiry is also made, What can be done to promote them? and to promote them under a desirable and permanent type.

Now, my dear brethren, I hope and trust that you will not be offended with me, if I speak my mind on this subject with great plainness. The circumstances of the Church,

the decline in revivals, and the whole aspect of the Christian world, demand it.

I have seen in the public papers various reasons assigned for this declension of revivals, this absence of revival influence, this powerless preaching of the gospel.

Now it does appear to me that we who are ministers, instead of looking abroad and searching for the fundamental difficulty beyond and out of ourselves, should see that whatever else may be an occasion of the great falling off and decline in revivals, our own spiritual state is certainly one, if not the primary and fundamental reason of this decline. Want of personal holiness, unction, power in prayer, and in preaching the word--the want of holy living and consecration to the work--of self-denial, and energetic effort in the ministry--these, no doubt, are the principal reasons why revivals are so few and far between, and of so superficial character at the present day.

The fact is, ministers have turned aside, in a great degree, to vain jangling; have given up their attention to Church-politics, Church-government, and Ecclesiastical proceedings of various kinds. The ministers have been diverted to an alarming and most injurious extent, from promoting revivals of religion out of the Church, and holiness in the Church.

I appeal to you, my brethren, of all denominations, if it is not a fact in your own experience and observation, that ministers have to a great and alarming extent suffered themselves to be diverted from the direct work of promoting the conversion of sinners and sanctification of the Church. This is too notorious to need any proof. The Journals of the day, the movements of ecclesiastical bodies, the doctrinal collisions, and shall I say?, ambitious projects, that have come up and figured before the public, within the last few years, bear no dubious testimony to the fact that the great mass of ministers are turned aside from promoting revivals, and the holiness and entire consecration of the Church.

Now, my beloved brethren, while this is so, does it not become us to take this home, confess it, bewail it, and first of all understand that whatever else needs to be corrected and set right, we must ourselves repent and receive a new unction for the work.

Beloved brethren, it is of no use for us to go abroad and search for reasons, while the principal of all the reasons lies at our own door. While our hearts are cold, our zeal in revivals abated, while we are turned aside, and running here and there to attend Conventions, Councils, ecclesiastical bodies; while we are engaged in reading the vituperative publications of the day, and entering



into church-politics and janglings about church-government and all these things, it is no wonder that both the Church and the world are asleep on the subject of revivals.

Until the leaders enter into the work, until the ministry are baptized with the Holy Spirit, until we are awake and in the field with our armour on, and our souls anointed with the Holy Spirit, it certainly ill becomes us to be looking around at a distance for the cause of the decline of revivals.

I have no doubt that there are many causes, which, the Lord willing, we will search out. But this is the first, the greatest, the most God-dishonoring of all--that the ministry are not in the work, that the shepherds have in a measure forsaken their flocks, that is, they are not leading them into the green pastures and beside the still waters--are not themselves so anointed and full of faith and power, as to be instrumental in leading the Church into the field for the promotion of revivals.

To a considerable extent the churches seem not to be well aware of the state of the ministry, and for the reason that they themselves are in a state of decline. The decline of vital godliness in the ministry has been of course the occasion of so much decline in the churches that they are hardly aware either of their own state or of the spiritual state of the ministry.

Now, my dear brethren, I hope it will not be said, that by writing in this way, I am letting down the influence of the ministry and encouraging a fault-finding spirit in the Church. I would by no means do this. But I think that we may rest assured that unless we are frank enough, and humble enough, and honest enough, to look the true state of things in the face, confess, forsake our sins, and return to the work and engage in the promotion of revivals, God will undoubtedly rebuke us, will raise up other instruments to do his work, and set us aside; will alienate the heart of the churches from us, destroy our influence with them, and raise up we know not whom, to go forth and possess the land.

Among all the conventions of the present day, I have thought that one of a different character from any that have been, might be greatly useful. If we could have a ministerial convention for prayer, confessing our faults one to another, and getting into a revival spirit, and devising the best ways and means for the universal promotion of revivals throughout the length and breadth of the land, I should rejoice in it. It has appeared to me that of all the conventions of the day, one of this kind might be the most useful.

What shall we say brethren? Are we not greatly in fault? Have not the ministry, to a great extent, lost the spirit of

revivals? Is there not a great lack of unction and power amongst us? And have we not suffered ourselves to be greatly and criminally diverted from this great work?

If so, my dear brethren, shall we not return? shall we not see our fault, confess it to the churches, to the world, and return; and in the name of the Lord lift up our banner?

Your brother,

C.G. FINNEY

**August 14, 1845**

**Letters On Revival--No. 14.**

**by Prof. Finney**

**WHY SO FEW REVIVALS.**

**TO ALL THE FRIENDS AND ESPECIALLY ALL THE MINISTERS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST:**

Dear Brethren:

I hope my brethren will bear with me, while I further insist on the general delinquency of ministers, especially of late, in regard to revivals.

There has been so manifest and so lamentable a falling off from a revival spirit among the ministers of Christ as to become a matter of general, if not universal observation. Nothing is more common than the remark, that ministers, as a general fact, have lost the spirit of revivals, have become very zealous in ecclesiastical matters, censorious, afraid of revivals, of revival men and measures, and that they do little or nothing directly for the promotion of revivals of religion. Now I do not think that this is a universal fact, but as a general remark it is too obvious to need proof, and I think must be conceded by all.

Now, dearly beloved brethren, unless there is a spirit of revival in the ministry, it is in vain to expect it in the church. The proper place for the shepherd, is before or in advance of the sheep. The sheep will follow him whithersoever he goes, but if he attempt to drive them before him, he will scatter them in every direction. If the shepherd fall away from a revival spirit, the sheep will

naturally decline also. If he advance in the work of the Lord, they will almost as a thing of course follow him.

The greatest of all difficulties in the way of the promotion of revivals has been, a superficial work of grace in the hearts of ministers themselves. If this is not true I am greatly mistaken.

My brethren, believe me, I speak not this censoriously, or in the spirit of fault-finding; it is the full and deliberate conviction of my own mind--an opinion formed not hastily, but from protracted observation, and from an intimate acquaintance with great numbers of the ministers of Christ of different denominations.

While the ministers of Christ are filled with the Spirit of God, the Church, as a general thing, will not backslide. I say as a general thing; there may in some instances be influences brought to bear on the churches, that will divert them from the promotion of holiness in their own hearts and the conversion of the impenitent, in spite of all that the most wakeful and vigilant ministry can do. Great political excitements, great commercial embarrassments, great depressions or elevations in the business and pecuniary state of the Church or the world, may, in a great measure, divert the mass of professors of religion for a time from deep spirituality, although the ministers may be awake. And yet it is my deliberate opinion that a thoroughly wakeful, prayerful, energetic ministry by their influence would generally if not universally prevent all the calamities and disturbances by so deeply engaging the Church and the community in general on religious subjects, that war, great political excitements, great commercial excitements, speculations or embarrassments would not be likely to occur. However this may be, I cannot believe it to be otherwise than a general truth, that if the ministry are baptized with the Holy Spirit, and deeply anointed with the revival influence, so the Church will be--"Like priest, like people."

And now brethren, it does seem to me that when we ourselves are thoroughly in a revival spirit, our call to the churches to arise and engage in the general promotion of revivals, will be immediately responded to on the part of the Church. Let the ministry only come out in the true spirit of revivals, and I doubt whether any minister in the land can preach for three sabbaths to his church in the Spirit, without finding the spirit of revival waking up in the Church. Let this experiment once be tried; let us wake up to the importance of this subject, confess and forsake our own sins, and cry aloud to the Church, and spare not; let us lift up our voice like a trumpet, and rally the hosts of God's elect; and if they are deaf to the call, then let us inquire most earnestly what is next to be

done. But until we are anointed to the work, do not let us tempt the Lord or abuse the Church, by looking out of ourselves and away from ourselves for the cause of decline in revivals.

Do not misunderstand me. I know that the Church is in a state of decline, and needs greatly to be quickened and aroused; but I am confident that the prime cause of this decline in the Church is to be found in the fact that the ministers have been diverted from their appropriate work. And I am also confident that the only remedy for this state of things is first and foremost of all, for ministers to come into a deeply spiritual and revived state of mind. And as soon as this comes to pass, there will be a general revival. And I am not looking for it to come unless ministers do thoroughly wake up to their own state, and the state of the Church.

Your Brother,

C.G. FINNEY

**August 27, 1845**

**Letters On Revival--No. 15.**

**by Prof. Finney**

## **CAUSES OF THE DECLINE OF REVIVALS**

TO ALL THE FRIENDS AND ESPECIALLY ALL THE MINISTERS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST:

Dear Brethren:

Another cause of the decline of revivals, in my estimation is, that a right course has not been pursued with the churches. In some instances they have been urged to labor and visit, and put forth active efforts for the conversion of sinners, while they have had very little wholesome food to live upon. Much labor has been demanded with too spare a diet. They have heard very little else than mere legal preaching. Ministers have been preaching almost exclusively to the impenitent, and perhaps for months have given the church scarcely one wholesome meal of the real gospel. If Christians are to labor for God and souls they must be fed with a plenty of the bread that cometh down from heaven--they must be made to know and feel where their great

strength lies--must have Christ, in all his offices, and relations, and fullness, frequently presented to them. If this course is not pursued, their own piety will not only greatly suffer, but they will come into a legal spirit and all their efforts for the conversion of sinners will be only bustle and legality; and in this state they may encompass sea and land to make proselytes, and fill the church with spurious converts.

If I am not entirely mistaken, this has been, to an alarming extent, the fact in revivals that have prevailed within the last few years. Christians have had so little of the Gospel that they have become legal, self-righteous, blustering, carnal, mechanical, unbelieving; and their efforts have made converts like themselves; which has brought revivals into great disrepute.

Again, ministers by preaching too exclusively to the impenitent, and dwelling so little on the marrow and fatness and fulness of the gospel, have greatly suffered in their own piety--have themselves become, in many instances, legal, hard-hearted, and censorious. In this state they cannot promote true revivals of religion. Not living themselves on Christ, not dwelling in God and God in them they are in no state to feed the church or promote true and thorough revivals of religion.

Again, there has been so great a fear of antinomianism among ministers, for the last few years, that I fear they have greatly neglected to hold up the real fulness and perfection of a present gospel-salvation. Many of them have been misled entirely by false statements that have been made in respect to antinomianism, in the public journals which they take and read.

I have been astonished, as I have been abroad, to find how much misinformation was afloat in regard to the real views which we have here entertained and inculcate, and the results of exhibiting our views to this and other churches. This misinformation has led a great many ministers to feel it necessary to guard their people strongly against error in this direction. And in exposing what they have supposed to be the errors of Perfectionists and Sanctificationists, they have practically greatly lowered the standard of gospel holiness in their own churches. I mean this has been the practical result. Preaching against the doctrine of entire sanctification in this life, and holding out the idea, as many have, that Christians are expected to sin as long as they live,--the practical result has been a perpetual backsliding on the part of their churches. Prejudice has been created against the doctrine of sanctification in the church; and, if I am not mistaken, ministers have greatly suffered in their own piety, in consequence of this

course. And a consequent and corresponding descent in spirituality has been manifest in their churches.

I am fully persuaded that my brethren in the ministry will find it indispensable to insist on entire holiness of heart and life, as a practical attainment in this world, or they can never sustain a healthy piety in their churches.

My dear brethren, you may try it as long as you will; but if you take any lower ground than this, your churches will backslide until you yourselves will be appalled by the result. I am perfectly satisfied, from long experience, that there is no other way but to lodge the deep impression in the churches, that they are not only required, but expected to "cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." All pleading for sin, or anything that has the practical tendency of denying the practicability of attaining this state in this life, is the greatest and most ruinous error that can be inculcated on the churches. And said an English writer not long since--"No error is so destructive and to be so greatly denounced, as that Christians are expected to sin during this life."

My beloved brethren, in what I now say I am not endeavoring to win you to my opinion; but I wish to fix your attention and the attention of the church on the fact; and to have you witness the results of inculcating any lower practical standard than that which I have named.

The fact is, the churches are going rapidly away from God for want of the true bread of life; and because the ministry have, to such an alarming extent, been guarding their churches more against the doctrine of sanctification than they have against sin.

I beseech my brethren to adopt a different course, and urge the church right up to holy-living, and let them know that they are expected to obey the law, and the gospel of God. Try it my brethren, and you will find it to be life from the dead in your churches. Do not be afraid of antinomian perfectionism. It is not to me at all wonderful that at first, the true doctrine of sanctification and antinomianism should be confounded in many minds, and that the defenders of the one should be confounded with the defenders of the other. But, beloved brethren, is it not time for ministers to understand as clear as sun-light the distinction between the two, and no longer be prejudiced or alarmed themselves, and no longer prejudice and alarm the church, by confounding things that so entirely differ?

I hope in what I now say, I shall not arouse the prejudice of my brethren so that they will not further hear me in what I have to say, in regard to the errors that have prevailed in the promotion of revivals of religion; and in



regard to the causes that have operated to make them so few and far-between, and of so superficial a character.

My dear brethren, my heart is full of this subject and I have a great deal to say. I beg of you to hear me patiently, and inquire honestly whether there has not been a great error in the direction that I have just named.

Your Brother,  
C.G. FINNEY

**September 10, 1845**

**Letters On Revival--No. 16.**

**by Prof. Finney**

### **CAUSES OF THE DECLINE OF REVIVALS**

TO ALL THE FRIENDS AND ESPECIALLY ALL THE  
MINISTERS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST:

Dear Brethren:

Another thing that has acted very injuriously to the interests of revivals of religion is the false views that have prevailed in relation to the best means of promoting them. And in respect to means, if I have not been mistaken, there is a strong tendency to two opposite and almost equally injurious extremes. On the one hand, many seem to be expecting to promote revivals without the use of any special means whatever. Since revivals are the work of God, they think it enough to follow their ordinary sabbath exercises, with their regular weekly or monthly lectures, occasional prayer-meetings, etc., and leave the event, as they say, with the sovereignty of God, believing these means to be sufficient, or that God can work just as well without any means whatever. They think it would be equivalent to taking the work out of the hand of God, and attempting to promote revivals in our own strength, to make any other efforts than the ordinary sabbath exercises, to promote the salvation of souls. Now, it appears to me that there is one principle of human nature here overlooked which must be regarded if we would successfully promote the kingdom of God. When any

one mind or any number of minds are excited upon any topic, if you would gain their attention to any other subject, you must use means which are, in their nature, calculated to interest and excite them. Now the whole nominally christian world are, and have been for the last thirty years, in a state of excitement, tending to a great moral revolution. By moral revolution, I mean, the revolution of opinion, and the consequent revolution of practice. Reform is the order of the day, and many questions of deep interest are arising, one after another, to agitate the public mind, and the providence of God is pressing the whole mass of mind with agitating questions, and producing just about as much excitement as may be healthfully borne. These questions are political and religious; indeed there is scarcely any subject of deep and fundamental interest to mankind, that has not its advocates, lecturers, and public journals, through which it interests and excites the public mind. This excited state of mind is constantly increasing. Now it is perfectly unphilosophical to expect to so gain upon the attention of mankind, as to promote revivals of religion without making extra and protracted efforts. As the world are using steam-power to promote political agitation and reform, the ministry must "lift up their voices like a trumpet," "cry aloud, and spare not," and must multiply their efforts and their means in proportion to the excited state of the world on their topics, until, by the blessing of God, they gain the attention, and keep it, until the heart is subdued to God. It may be true that in those places where excitement upon other subjects but little prevails, revivals may be promoted without extra efforts, but if the church is expecting to promote revivals without great, powerful, and protracted efforts, they will find themselves mistaken. The fact that revivals are the work of God, instead of affording a reason for neglecting efforts, is the very reason which renders them indispensable. God does not subvert, but strictly adheres to the laws of mind in building up his kingdom and establishing his government in this world. For us, therefore, to plod on, and fear to use extra and exciting efforts to promote revivals of religion, while the world is all excitement on other subjects, is unphilosophical and absurd. It is true that great wisdom is needed to guard against indiscretion, and means of an unnecessarily agitating and exciting character, and means that will rather divert attention from the truth, than secure attention to the truth; but means must be used; meetings must be multiplied. Preachers and christians must be themselves excited, and must be able to life their voices above the winds and waves of this world's excitements, until they rivet attention, or they can never sanctify the heart. The erroneous view which stands

opposed to this, and which seems to me to be an opposite extreme, I shall consider in a future letter.

Your brother,  
C.G. FINNEY

**October 22, 1845**

**Letters On Revival--No. 17.**

**by Prof. Finney**

## THE IMPOLICY OF SPASMODIC EFFORTS

[continued in No. 18--Ed.]

To All The Friends And Especially All The Ministers Of  
Our Lord Jesus Christ:

Dear Brethren:

There is another class of Christians than those to whom I referred in my last, that seem to me to have fallen into an error opposed to that of which I then spoke. This class instead of taking the ground that no extra means are to be used for the conversion of sinners and the sanctification of the church, seem to have settled down in the belief that nothing can be done without protracted meetings, and the most exciting means that can be used. Hence they seem to be for doing up all their religious work in protracted meetings, giving up nearly their whole time to protracted effort, or a series of meetings, during a small part of each year, and make little or no effort to sustain the interests of religion, promote the conversion of sinners and the sanctification of the church, at other seasons.

Now it seems to me that this class of persons as radically misconceive the proper and only healthful method of promoting religion, as that class of Christians do to whom they stand opposed.

Now that a series of meetings, continued for days and weeks, may be useful, and in some instances demanded by the state of thing I think there can be no reasonable doubt. But as a general thing, it seems to me, that it would be more healthful for religion, to have meetings for preaching, and prayer, and promoting the spirituality of Christians, so frequently, at all seasons of the year, as to secure the attention of the people, and

yet so infrequently as not to disturb their ordinary, or to say the least their necessary duties, in the relations which they sustain.

When I was first acquainted with revivals of religion, my own practice was this--and so far as I know it was the general practice of ministers and churches which endeavored to promote revivals of religion. We added to the services of the Sabbath as many meetings during the week as could well be attended, and yet allow the people to carry forward their necessary worldly business; and we went no farther than this. I have seen most powerful revivals of religion in the midst of harvest in a neighborhood of farmers, and found that it could be sustained by holding as many meetings as were consistent with farmer's securing their crops, and no more. The grand error which seems to me to have prevailed for the last few years, is this: Churches that are attempting to promote revivals, break in for a time on all the ordinary and necessary duties of domestic, commercial, agricultural and mechanical life; and make every day a Sabbath for a great number of days in succession, and then seem to be under the necessity of holding no meetings for a long time except on the Sabbath. They have neglected their worldly business so much and so long, that now they must make as much extra effort to bring up the arrears in that department, as they have made in their protracted meeting to bring up the arrears in the spiritual department. They go from one extreme to another, from holding meetings every day in the week, to holding meetings on which there is any thing like a general attendance, no day in the week; from going to meeting nearly all the time until they have greatly neglected their worldly business, they break off and go to meeting at no time except on the Sabbath. Now it does seem to me that this is entirely unwise, and that its results are demonstrating to the churches, that the action of this course of things is not healthful, and that a better course would be to keep up as many meetings at all seasons of the year as can be sustained, and yet the necessary secular business transacted.

As excitement increases on other subjects, we shall find it necessary in the same proportion to increase the frequency and urgency of our appeals to mankind on the great subject of salvation. As I said in my last, if worldly men increase the means of exciting the people on worldly subjects, we must at least in equal proportion multiply the means for securing the attention of men to spiritual subjects. This seems to me to be a law of mind; and instead of this being set aside by the fact that revivals are produced by the Spirit of God, and instead of its being thereby rendered unnecessary to multiply means--inasmuch as means are essential to the Spirit's

work, they must be multiplied if we expect divine influence to produce the desired result. Ministers have perceived with pain that through the instrumentality of protracted meetings the churches are taking on more and more the type of a spasmodic and temporary excitement on the subject of revival, seizing on those seasons of the year when they have but little else to do, or neglecting whatever they have to do, and giving themselves up to a protracted effort, going to meetings day and night for a few days or weeks, and then relapsing to no effort. Whereas the churches should make a steady effort and put forth their energies every day, to secure the attention of people in proportion to the exciting topics on other subjects that are so pressed on them by worldly men, and worldly influences as to endanger their souls.

Your Brother,  
C.G. FINNEY

**November 5, 1845**

**Letters On Revival--No. 18.**

**by Prof. Finney**

### **THE IMPOLICY OF SPASMODIC EFFORTS**

[Continued from No. 17--Ed.]

To All The Friends And Especially All The Ministers Of  
Our Lord Jesus Christ:

Dear Brethren:

Before I proceed farther on the subject of my last letter, I wish to call the attention of the brethren to an evil, which seems to me to have greatly grieved the Spirit of God, and to be at present a very effectual barrier to the promotion of revivals of religion. I have already alluded to it in a former letter, but wish more distinctly to dwell on it here. The evil to which I alluded is this--an amount of prejudice has been excited against revival men and measures, that has greatly grieved the Spirit of God. It does not seem to me to have been sufficiently considered, that a mind under the influence of prejudice cannot have communion with God, and consequently cannot prevail in prayer, cannot appropriate the grace that is essential to our living in such a manner as to honor God. Now it cannot be denied that a course has been taken that has filled the church throughout the

length and breadth of the land with a variety of prejudices that are eating out the piety of the churches and preventing the promotion of revivals. Ministers have in many instances, doubtless without designing such a result, been instrumental in creating prejudices in the minds of their churches, that have shut them out from communion with God. They are in an uncandid state of mind; they are committed and unwilling to hear with both ears and then judge.

These prejudices extend to a great many subjects in some churches. Great prejudices are excited against the cause of abolition, moral reform, revival men and measures, protracted meetings, New and Old School Theology, sanctification, or anti-sanctification. Now it matters little whether the prejudices are in favor of what is really truth or against it. If they be really prejudices, and the mind be committed and in an uncandid state it effectually shuts the soul out from God. Prejudice is pre-judging a question. And pre-judgment is what Christ intended to prohibit and forbid. He did not design to teach that we should have no decided opinion, and form no unwavering judgment in respect to cases, questions, and characters on which we may be called to decide; but that we should not judge without a candid, thorough, and charitable examination in every case.

Now, ministers of a certain combative temperament are, without being aware of it, doing little else than preaching their people into the exercise of a host of prejudices that promote anything but their real piety. I have been shocked oftentimes on witnessing the prejudice evinced by ministers themselves, and by professors of all denominations.

Now, brethren, if we would promote revivals of religion among our people, we must fear to excite prejudices among them on any subject. They are naturally enough prone to prejudices--to rush into one sided judgments without our helping them into this ungodly state of mind by our preaching. If we come out and warn them against this thing, and that thing, and the other thing, denounce anti-slavery, moral reform, and even colonization, or any thing else in a spirit and manner that creates prejudices, we may think ourselves doing God service, and may please ourselves when we behold our people very zealous for what we suppose to be truth; we may form and guard their orthodoxy until they have zeal enough to encompass sea and land to make proselytes to their opinions; and when we have done we shall perceive that they are only making their converts two fold more the children of hell than themselves.

Your brother,  
C.G. FINNEY



November 19, 1845

Letters On Revival--No. 19.

by Prof. Finney

## HINDRANCES TO A REVIVAL SPIRIT

To All The Friends And Especially All The Ministers Of Our Lord Jesus Christ:

Dear Brethren:

Another thing that is working an immense evil in the present day is the growing sectarianism of the church. It seems to me that the leading denominations that have heretofore been most zealous and successful in promoting revivals of religion, are within the last ten years becoming highly sectarian in their spirit and measures. The collision and sectarianism manifested by the former leading denominations, does not, I should think, increase in its degree or virulence, but these leading denominations are becoming divided amongst themselves, and seem to be very much given up to the spirit of schism and sectarianism. There is High Church and Low Church, Old School and New School, Reformers and Conservatives in all the denominations; and these seem to be pressing their peculiarities in a spirit, and by measures that are highly sectarian. Sectarian conventions, ecclesiastical meetings, councils, synods and all the parade and paraphernalia of sectarianism, seem to an alarming extent to be engrossing the mind of the Church.

Now this is certainly a great evil; and unless a counteracting influence can be brought to bear on the churches; unless ministers cease from this sectarian spirit,--cease from these janglings and strife of words,--cease from creating prejudices,--cease from heresy-hunting, and all the management of ecclesiastical ambition, and give themselves up directly to promoting brotherly love, harmony in the church, the conversion of sinners and the sanctification of the saints, it is certain that revivals of religion cannot exist and go forward in purity and power.

What is peculiarly afflicting in view of this state of things is, that ministers and many Christians have become so thoroughly sectarian and are so thoroughly and deeply imbued with the spirit of sectarianism, as to be wholly unconscious that they are sectarian. They seem to suppose that it is a pure love of the truth, that they are only contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, that they are really and only jealous for the

honor of God and the purity of the church. They have exalted their peculiar views in their own estimation, into fundamental doctrines, and contend for them with as much pertinacity and vehemence as if all must be reprobates who do not embrace them.

Now it is remarkable that so far as my knowledge extends, all the seasons of great revivals with which the church has been blessed from the very first, have been broken up and the revival influence set aside by an ecclesiastical and sectarian jangling, to preserve what they call the purity of the church and the faith once delivered to the saints. I believe it to be a truth, that ministers, as a class, have always been responsible for the decline of revivals; that their own sectarianism, ambition and prejudice have led them to preach and contend, to run to synods, councils, and other ecclesiastical meetings, until the churches, at first pained and even shocked with this tendency of things, have come to adopt their views, imbibe their spirit, and get entirely away from God.

My beloved brethren, who does not know that a vast many ministers are too much under the influence of prejudice to have communion and power with God? Who does not know that they are not sufficiently honest, uncommitted, upright, whole-hearted lovers of truth to be thoroughly open to conviction on every subject, willing to examine patiently, and to judge charitably on every question on which they are to have or give an opinion? I have in my own experience learned that to maintain communion with God, I must wholly give up prejudice on every subject. I must hold my mind open to conviction; I must be thoroughly a candid and honest man. I must not allow myself to have or express an opinion on a subject that I have not carefully and prayerfully examined. There are many in these days that seem to have forgotten what God has said of those that "speak evil of things they understand not." And it is amazing to see to what an extent both ministers and professed Christians are given up to denouncing and speaking evil of things which they do not understand.

Now these ministers and Christians cannot pray. God will not hear them; they do not prevail with God, and every body sees that they do not. They are not men that have power with God and with men and can prevail. They will denounce certain doctrines and certain things in a manner that is unutterably shocking to those who certainly know that they do not understand what they are talking about,--who know that they are confounding things that radically differ, and making distinctions where there is no difference.

Now I might mention a great many facts and illustrations of this; but almost everyone is aware that it has been and still is perfectly common for ministers and private Christians to persist in confounding the views of entire sanctification which are entertained here with Antinomian Perfectionism. Now certainly those who do this, either do not mean what they say, or they have not well examined the subject. They are speaking what they do not know, and speaking evil of things that they understand not.

Now, my beloved brethren, I say not this to reproach any one. But who does not know, after all, that this is true; or at least who may not know that it is true?

Now whether our peculiar views are true or false, it is wholly unfair to confound them with views which we abhor as much as they do.

Now if our views are untrue, let them be examined and stand or fall on their own merits. It may be convenient for those who oppose them to confound them with Antinomian Perfectionism or with Popery or with Universalism, or with any other ism that will attach to them so much opprobrium as to make the church unwilling ever to examine them for themselves. But let me say to my dear brethren, that whether our views are true or false, that way of disposing of them is certain to bring leanness into your own souls, and into the souls of your churches. And I ask of you, brethren, if it is not as a matter of fact producing this result? When you have been engaged in denouncing our views, or confounding them with antinomianism, or persecuting them in ecclesiastical meetings, or in any way engaged in creating prejudices in opposition to them,--I beseech you to consider, have you not found that this was bringing leanness into your own souls,--that you were less spiritually-minded, had less communion with God, less heart to preach the gospel, less unction in preaching, and more and more of a sectarian spirit?

My beloved brethren, will you--ministers as well as laymen--candidly settle this question by laying open your heart at the throne of grace before the Lord?

Your Brother,  
C.G. FINNEY

**December 3, 1845**

**Letters On Revival--No. 20.**

**by Prof. Finney**

## **OBJECTIONS TO PROTRACTED MEETINGS**

To All The Friends And Especially All The Ministers Of Our Lord Jesus Christ:

Dear Brethren:

I designed to have prepared a letter for insertion previous to the one which appeared in the last paper, continuing my remarks on the subject of the use of means to promote revivals. I had said that there were two extremes, and that some were expecting to promote revivals only through the influence of protracted meetings and continuous efforts of that kind; while others were opposed to all such efforts. I also animadverted somewhat upon the tendency of certain Christians to compress nearly all their efforts for the promotion of religion into a few days and weeks of the year when they have little else to do, and do little or nothing for those objects at any other season of the year.

After I had finished that letter it occurred to me that it was liable to misapprehension, and as I said, I had designed to prepare the remarks which I now intend to make to follow that letter immediately. But as the one which appeared in your last was previously written, it has appeared without my fulfilling my intention.

The remarks which I now wish to make are summarily these:

1. All our time is God's.
2. All business is to be done for him.
3. Every thing is to be done in its season. The Sabbath has its peculiar duties, and so has the spring, the summer, the autumn, and the winter. We are just as much required to labor six days as we are to rest on the Sabbath. In other words, all our time is to be devoted to God.

Now it often happens that in certain seasons of the year, most men have much more leisure than at other seasons,--that is, God has much less for them to do with the ordinary labors in which he employs them. The farmer and indeed as a general thing all classes have less of the common business of life to transact in the winter than at other seasons of the year. Now it is highly reasonable and proper, and no doubt duty at such

seasons to have our time all employed in something that shall promote the glory of God and the good of his kingdom. It is proper to hold more meetings, to labor more in prayer and visitation and in direct efforts for the conversion of sinners and the sanctification of Christians at such seasons than at other seasons when our duties to God plainly call us to till the ground, to gather the fruits of the field, or attend to any of the necessary business of life. To do all duties in their season affords no ground for the accusation that our religion is confined to protracted meetings, is a religion of the winter or of leisure days &c. By itself this affords not a particle of evidence of a spasmodical and intermitting religion, any more than a man's going to church on the Sabbath, and working as God commands him to through the week is evidence that his religion on the Sabbath is selfishness. The fact is a man may labor through the week for the same reason that he goes to meeting on the Sabbath--namely, to obey and glorify God. Nay, he must do this or he has no religion at all. He must be just as devout and just as much consecrated to God in his business as he is in going to meeting, or as he ought to be in going to meeting, or he has no religion at all.

So the farmer, merchant, or mechanic may be and is bound to be just as singly devoted to God,--just as pious and holy in the labors of summer as in attending protracted meetings in the winter. The fact is, he is to do all for God, or in reality he does nothing for God. Unless he acts for the same end in the one case as in the other, and unless he acts in both cases with an eye single to the glory of God, he is not a holy man at all.

Now there is no certainty that a church is selfish because its members hold protracted meetings only at those seasons of the year when their duty to God, to their country, and to their families does not call them to other departments of labor. Whenever they can be spared from other departments of God's work, let them lay their hands to this. If they have any leisure time let them then make extraordinary efforts for the conversion of sinners and the sanctification of the church. This is reasonable--this is right, and I see not how this can be neglected without sin.

While then it is true and ought to be lamented that there is no doubt much spasmodical religion, or rather much that professes to be religion connected with and sometimes growing out of protracted meetings, yet it is by no means necessarily true that real Christians have turned aside from their duty in holding protracted meetings at some seasons of the year, and at other seasons of the year being very busy in laboring with their hands, tilling their grounds, plying their trades and

serving God and their generation in their secular employments.

I wish therefore that it might be distinctly understood that it is very natural that revivals of religion should prevail at certain seasons of the year when the minds of both saints and sinners are less occupied with the necessary business of life. It is very natural and very important that special efforts should be made at such seasons, and that revivals of religion should be the result of such efforts.

It is therefore entirely out of place for the opposers of revivals and protracted meetings to object to them that they seldom occur except at those seasons of the year when people have comparatively little else to do. This is as might be expected. This is in a great measure as it should be. While therefore I would recommend, as I did in a former letter, that sufficient efforts should be made during all seasons of the year to keep religion alive in the hearts of Christians and to make aggressive movements upon the kingdom of darkness in the conversion of sinners, I would at the same time recommend and beseech my brethren to encourage the churches to make special and extraordinary efforts at every season of the year when time can be spared from other necessary avocations to attend more particularly to the great work of saving souls.

Your Brother,  
C.G. FINNEY

**December 17, 1845**

**Letters On Revival--No. 21.**

**by Prof. Finney**

## **HINDRANCES TO REVIVALS.**

To All The Friends And Especially All The Ministers Of Our Lord Jesus Christ:

Dear Brethren:

In noticing the hindrances to revivals of religion I must not forget to urge more definitely and strongly than I have hitherto done, the great want of sympathy with Christ in the ministry and in the church. It cannot be



## 42 **Prayer 21** Ministers to break up their crusted over hearts to receive Spirit baptism

expected and ought not to be, that the Spirit of God should be poured out and the labors of the church and the ministry be blessed in the salvation of souls any farther than there is a single eye, and a deep sympathy with Christ in the hearts of those who are forward as co-workers with him in the great work.

The Bible abundantly teaches that it is time for God to work and that the time to favor Zion has come, when the church "takes pleasure in her stones and favors the dust thereof." When the church and the ministry are deeply exercised with disinterested love to God and man--when they have such love for the brethren that they would die for them, and such love for precious souls as to be willing to toil and make any sacrifices, and even lay down life itself for their salvation,--then, rely upon it, their labors will be blessed. And until they have this spirit they may indeed succeed in many instances in promoting an excitement and what they may call and may suppose to be revival of religion; but ordinarily time will show that in truth it was no real revival of true religion.

When Christians and ministers are not in sympathy with God, they are not in a state to distinguish between spurious and genuine revivals of religion. Hence they often go forward with a series of efforts until many supposed converts are numbered, when in reality there is not a genuine convert among them. The reason is, those who have been laboring in the work have begotten children in their own likeness. Not having the spirit of Christ themselves--not being deeply imbued with the true spirit of revival, they mistake their own excitement and the excitement around them for true religion, when it is perhaps any thing else than a real work of the Holy Spirit. Now the more such efforts are multiplied, the more spurious conversions there are, so much the more are revivals brought into contempt and so much the more deeply the cause of Christ is injured.

Now I wish I could succeed in making the impression and fastening it not only on my own mind, but upon the minds of all the brethren that we cannot expect to succeed in promoting true revivals of religion any farther than we are truly revived ourselves--truly and deeply spiritual--having a general and all-absorbing sympathy with God;--any farther than we are full of prayer and faith and love and the power of the Holy Ghost. There are so many kinds of excitement that are unfavorable to genuine religion, and yet so often mistaken for it that no man can safely engage in attempting to promote revivals of religion any farther than he truly and deeply communes with God and deeply enters into his sympathies. He must go forth and labor in the very spirit in which Christ came to die for sinners. He must have so

single an eye that his whole body shall be full of light--that he will have deep spiritual discernment and be able in a moment in the light of God's Spirit shining in his own heart to detect every form and modification of spurious excitement. He wants to walk in such deep sympathy with God that his spirit will naturally repel every spirit that is not of God. There is, no doubt, such a state of mind as this.

But the thing which I wish more particularly to insist on in this letter is that the true revival spirit has been in a great measure grieved away from the church, and as far as my observation and knowledge extend, efforts to promote revivals of religion have become so mechanical, there is so much policy and machinery, so much dependence upon means and measures, so much of man and so little of God, that the character of revivals has greatly changed within the last few years, and the true spirit of revivals seems to be fast giving way before this legal, mechanical method of promoting them.

Now the thing that needs to be done is for every one who would attempt to promote revivals of religion to be sure that he himself has a single eye, has a deep inward walk with God, has the life of God so richly developed within himself as to be able not only to prevail with God in prayer, but to preach the gospel to others with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.

It would seem as if the ministry and the churches proposed to promote revivals in the hardness of their own hearts, and without deeply breaking up their own fallow ground. They get up protracted meetings and go to work to promote a revival without beginning first in their closets and thoroughly breaking down their hearts before the Lord, and getting all melted and subdued, filled with faith and with the Holy Ghost. They seem to expect that they shall get waked up during the meeting. They appoint a meeting while in a backslidden state, and of course in a selfish state of mind. They begin the meeting and perhaps continue day after day, the minister laboring for the conversion and waking up of the church while perhaps he himself is crusted over, hard-hearted, full of unbelief, worldly-mindedness, and with much respect to his own reputation as being deeply concerned in the progress of the work. Thus the meeting will continue day after day until they become considerably excited, have some confessions, and perhaps a few real conversions; but upon the whole, they have sowed among thorns instead of breaking up their fallow ground. Little else has been done perhaps than to produce discouragement and disgust in respect to revival efforts.

## Prayer 22 Spirit of prayer, sanctifying church rather than just converting sinners 43

The fact is brethren, a revival must take place among ministers. If there could be a protracted meeting for ministers--if some hundreds of ministers would assemble and preach and pray and labor for each other's spiritual welfare until there was a deep and thorough revival of religion among them--if they would deal so faithfully with each other and so affectionately as to get their hearts together, and together get into a deep sympathy with Christ, they would no doubt return from such a meeting to their several charges and the result would be a general revival of religion throughout their churches.

Brethren, what can be done to affect the ministry rightly, to bring them off from this jangling and sectarianism, ambition and every evil way, and engage their hearts to live and die for Christ and for souls? O, this is the great thing needed. If this can be attained, the day of Zion's glory has dawned. But if ministers are to backslide and turn aside to vain jangling--to church politics and maneuvering, as they have for the last few years, I am persuaded that God must either let the churches under their influence go into a state of still deeper degradation and backsliding, or else He must set them aside and introduce some instrumentality independent of them to build up the wastes of Zion.

My soul is greatly troubled and my spirit is stirred within me in looking at the state of the ministry. Brethren, will you let me speak in love? Will you be offended with me if I tell you all my heart? For Zion's sake, I cannot rest and for Jerusalem's sake I cannot hold my peace. Will the brethren wake up and lay hold on God for a general revival of religion? When shall it once be?

Your Brother,  
C.G. FINNEY

**January 7, 1846**

**Letters On Revivals--No. 22.**

**by Prof. Finney**

### **HINDRANCES TO REVIVALS**

To All The Friends And Especially All The Ministers Of  
Our Lord Jesus Christ:

Dear Brethren:

More than ten years since I was led I think by the Spirit of the Lord to perceive that the course of things was tending rapidly towards the decline of revivals. Especially in this respect--there was very little of the right kind of preaching to the church, very little done and doing comparatively to elevate the standard of piety in the churches and to promote their permanent spirituality. Ministers, for the most part, were preaching and laboring directly for the conversion of sinners. This was the order of the day. For a time God greatly prospered this course; but as great multitudes of young converts were introduced into the churches it was indispensable to the continuance of a healthful state of piety that there should be very much and very discriminating preaching to the Church on the one hand, and every encouragement held out to make high attainments in spirituality and deep piety on the other. I perceived that this was greatly neglected by ministers in general, and that I had to some extent neglected it in my labors from church to church as an Evangelist: for in this course of labor, my principal and in many instances my almost exclusive efforts were made for the conversion of sinners. I expected that ministers and old professors of religion would follow up these powerful revivals by a thorough course of training of young converts. But I saw that my expectations in this respect were by no means realized, and that consequently there was comparatively little growth in grace in the churches, and that their increase of spiritual strength and of aggressive power was by no means commensurate with their increase of numbers.

I believe it will be admitted by nearly all persons who are acquainted with the facts, that the converts in the revivals to which I allude have been to a great extent the strength and power of those churches from that time to this; and yet it is true that in those and in all other revivals of which I could hear, I perceived that they were not followed by that spiritual culture and training which promises to make the converts deeply spiritual and efficient Christians. The consequence has been that the converts in their turn set about the conversion of sinners with but a superficial piety of their own. Being untrained in deep spirituality and walking with God, and not being aware of the wiles of the devil, the Church to a great extent fell into a mechanical method of promoting revivals; which I could not but see would be attended with most disastrous consequences. Indeed I saw that the Church generally were getting into such a state that they would soon be wholly unable to promote true revivals of religion. I saw that they were losing the spirit of prayer and power with God, and that the tendency of

## 44 Prayer 22 The church refusing to be reformed leads to backsliding to high church

things was to ruin revivals by substituting for them spurious forms of excitement.

Under this apprehension of things my own soul labored with great earnestness and agony for a deeper work in my own heart, that I might be able myself to exhibit more spiritual religion to the churches so far as I had access to them. When it pleased the Lord Jesus Christ to reveal himself more fully to my soul than he ever had done, and to show me heights and depths and lengths and breadths of the divine life which I never had perceived before, I was greatly impressed with the importance of elevating the standard of piety in the churches and of promoting among them a new type of religion in order to have them become so established in grace as to be kept from those temporary backslidings and effervescings that were disgracing religion.

But I can never reveal to man my astonishment and sorrow when I found that the ministry and the churches were so generally opposed to efforts to elevate the standard of piety among themselves. The cry was raised immediately--Why don't you preach to sinners? Why don't you labor for the conversion of sinners? Why are you endeavoring to reform the Church? I was astonished to find it generally assumed that the Church is well enough, and that the great and almost the only business of ministers is to promote the conversion of the ungodly.

Now I must say that this appeared to me then and has since to be a kind of spiritual infatuation. The state of the Church was fast becoming such as to render it a hopeless effort to aim at the real conversion of multitudes of the ungodly. The Church had been so little edified and built up in their most holy faith that they knew little or nothing of Christ except that he had died as an atoning sacrifice. Of the indwelling and energizing of his spirit within them--of holy walking and communion with Him--of being led by the Spirit--of denying all ungodliness and every worldly lust--of living above the world--of entire and universal consecration--of being filled with all the fullness of God; of these and such like things they were becoming to an alarming extent ignorant. Like people, like priest; the ministers to a great extent were in the same state. This I could not but perceive, and it filled me with unutterable agony.

I was not alone in this view of things. Here and there a brother in the ministry, and many in the churches throughout the length and breadth of the land I found had been led in the same way and had come to the same conclusions.

And now it does appear to me that the root of the difficulty that has arrested the onward, prosperous, and

rising course of revivals of religion is that the Church has been neglected. It has been too much assumed that Christians would grow without food--would be established without spiritual culture--would honor God without deep, experimental piety. It seems to have been assumed that the Church would get along well enough if they could only add greatly to their numbers by the conversion of sinners. I have been deeply and unutterably grieved to find that efforts to reform the Church have been looked upon so coldly, and in many instances have been so deeply and bitterly opposed by multitudes of the Church and by great numbers of ministers. I have occasion to know that when the question has come up about my being invited to preach in certain churches, they have been willing that I should if I would preach to sinners, but they were not willing that I should preach to the Church. Once a written request was sent to me by a Presbyterian Church to come and preach a course of lectures to the impenitent. I have frequently heard of its being strongly objected to by ministers and leading church members that I should come and preach to Christians. They were unwilling to have Christians reprov'd and searched, and deeply overhauled to the very foundations of their hope. I have often heard fault found with that course of preaching which shakes the hopes of professors of religion. This kind of preaching has been spoken of again and again as so very objectionable that it was not to be tolerated.

Now when the ministers will take such a course as this, where will their people appear in the day of judgment? What! afraid to be searched, and to have their churches searched! afraid to have the broadest daylight of truth poured in upon him! "O," said one minister, as I was informed, when requested to invite me to come and labor with his people, "I should like to have him come if he would confine his preaching to the impenitent, but I cannot bear to have him rake the Church."

Now beloved brethren, I have heard much complaint of the attempts that have been made within the last ten years to revive religion in the churches, and to elevate the standard of piety among them. And is it really to this day assumed that the churches do not need reformation? Well, all I can say to my dear brethren is this--You maintain this stand but a little longer, and it does not need a prophet's ken to predict that your churches will be any thing but Christian Churches. That they are even now tending rapidly to a high church spirit is but too manifest. Can it be possible that after all the developments that have been made, any of the brethren should be so blind as not to see that a blow must be struck at the foundation. The ax must be laid at the root of every barren fig tree. Ministers must turn their



attention to digging about and manuring these trees. An effort must be made to search, revive and purify the churches. Old professors and the converts of the recent revivals must be searched and overhauled; their foundations examined and their hearts entirely reclaimed. They must be built up and spiritualized and established in grace so as to be living epistles of Christ known and read of all men, or to attempt the farther promotion of revivals of religion is vain and worse than vain.

The fact is, brethren, that the resistance that has been offered to labors for the reformation of the Church has deeply grieved the Spirit of God. The ministry and the Church have to a great extent refused to be searched. They have refused to be reformed, and the result is that the Spirit of God has left and is fast leaving them.

If I should say less than this, I should not speak the whole truth; but in saying so much I am not without my fears that I shall offend some of my brethren. Dear Brethren, I beg of you not to be offended with me but suffer me to speak the whole truth to you in love. Is it not true with many of you who are ministers as well as laymen that you have refused candidly to lay your mind open to reproof, to correction, to searching, and to the light of the whole gospel of Christ? Is it not true that you have resisted the reformation of your own heart, and the efforts that have been made to revive the Church and to elevate the standard of holiness within her borders? Have you not been more afraid of sanctification than you have of sin, and have you not resisted efforts that have been made to enlighten you and the churches over which you preside? May God help you my brother to be honest in answering these questions. Have you not in many instances not only shut your own eyes against the light, but tried to keep the light from the eyes of others? Have you not refused to read what has been written on the subject of holiness in this life, and used an influence to prevent others from reading? Have you not even spoken against this subject, and spoken contemptuously of those whose hearts are laboring and agonizing and travailing in birth for the recovery of a backsliding Church?

My brethren these are plain questions; they are intended to be. Could I see you, I could ask you these questions on my knees; and would it avail, I would wash your feet with my tears. My brethren, where are you, and where are your churches? What is your spiritual state? How stands the thermometer of your spirituality? Are you hot or cold or lukewarm? Are you agonizing to elevate the standard of holiness in the Church, and in your own heart; or are you still assuming that the

Church is well enough, and looking coldly and contemptuously upon all efforts to revive her?

May the Lord have mercy on us, my brethren, and search us all out, and compel us to come to the light, to confess our sins and put them all away forever, and lay hold on the fullness there is in Christ.

Your Brother,

C.G. FINNEY

**January 21, 1846**

**Letters On Revivals--No. 23.**

by Prof. Finney

### **THE PERNICIOUS ATTITUDE OF THE CHURCH ON THE REFORMS OF THE AGE.**

[Pt. 1]

To All The Friends And Especially All The Ministers Of Our Lord Jesus Christ:

Dear Brethren:

There is one subject upon which I must remark further, and yet I fear it will be impossible to do it justice without giving offence. One of the most serious impediments that have been thrown in the way of revivals of religion and one that has no doubt deeply grieved the Spirit of God is the fact that the church to a very great extent has lost sight of its own appropriate work and has actually left it in a great measure to be conducted by those who are for the most part illy prepared for the work. The work to which I allude is the reformation of mankind.

It is melancholy and amazing to see to what an extent the church treats the different branches of reform either with indifference, or with direct opposition. There is not, I venture to say upon the whole earth an inconsistency more monstrous, more God-dishonoring, and I must say more manifestly insane than the attitude which many of the churches take in respect to nearly every branch of reform which is needed among mankind.

To such an extent is this true that scarcely a church can be found in the land which as a body will have any thing to do with reform. Hence the only way in which Christians in the churches who would do any thing towards reforming mankind can make their influence felt is by forming societies, composed often partly of

Christians and partly of those who profess no religion. These unite together to concentrate their influence against some form of iniquity that is cursing mankind.

Now the great business of the church is to reform the world--to put away every kind of sin. The church of Christ was originally organized to be a body of reformers. The very profession of Christianity implies the profession and virtually an oath to do all that can be done for the universal reformation of the world. The Christian church was designed to make aggressive movements in every direction--to lift up her voice and put forth her energies against iniquity in high and low places--to reform individuals, communities, and governments, and never rest until the kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High God--until every form of iniquity shall be driven from the earth.

Now when we consider the appropriate business of the church--the very end for which she is organized and for which every Christian vows eternal consecration, and then behold her appalling inconsistencies every where apparent, I do not wonder that so many persons are led to avow the solemn conviction that the nominal church is apostate from God. When we consider the manner in which the movement in behalf of the slave has been treated by ecclesiastical bodies, by missionary associations, by churches and ministers, throughout the land, is it any wonder that the Church is forsaken of the Spirit of God?

Look at the Moral Reform movement. A few devoted self-denying females, engaged in a mighty conflict with the great sin of licentiousness. This struggle has been maintained for years; and yet how few comparatively of the churches as such have treated this effort in any other way than with contempt? A few devoted Christian women in various churches form societies to aid in this work; but where are the churches themselves as a body? Where are these sworn reformers--these men and women who profess to be waging everlasting war against every form of sin? Where are the ministry? Do they lift up their voice like a trumpet? Do they cry aloud and spare not? Do they as John Adams says, thunder and lighten from their pulpit, every Sabbath against these sins?

It is amazing to see what excuses are made by ministers for remaining silent in respect to almost every branch of reform.

And pray what can be meant by the sickening cry of moral suasion? The Church with a great many ministers have resorted to the plea of using moral suasion as the

means of ridding the world of intemperance, licentiousness, slavery and every other legalized abomination; but pray what can be meant by moral suasion? Moral Government surely is a system of moral suasion. Moral suasion includes whatever is designed and adapted to influence the will of a moral agent.

Law, rewards, and punishments--these things and such as these are the very heart and soul of moral suasion. It would seem as if a great many people mean by moral suasion nothing more than flattery and palaver. Consequently when efforts are made to secure legislation that shall put these abominations away, they are afraid to employ government lest it would be a departure from the system of moral suasion. But is not God's government one of moral suasion? Are not his mighty judgments on the one hand and his mercies on the other, moral suasion?

But not to dwell on the subject of moral suasion; the idea I wish to present to the brethren is this--the great sin and utter shame of the Church and of so many of the ministry in neglecting or refusing to speak out and act promptly and efficiently on these great questions of reform. How could they more directly grieve and quench the Spirit of God than by such a course? Abandon the great work to which they are pledged and sworn, and yet profess to be Christians! No wonder that such a church and such a ministry should look coldly on revivals and find it impossible to promote them. After so much light has blazed before the churches on these subjects, it cannot be that they resist or neglect without great sin.

And shall it be persevered in? If so there can be no doubt that revivals must utterly cease--that the Spirit of God will be grieved entirely away from the ministry and the churches, and nothing better can be expected than utter and universal desolation.

Believe me, dear brethren, it grieves me greatly to feel constrained to speak thus. Is it not a shame; are we not ashamed and shall we not blush to see the Church of God not only turn back from reforming the world--refusing to lead in reform as she ought to do, and then turn around and oppose others who are compelled to lead for want of the help and countenance of those who ought to go forward in these enterprises? If doctors of divinity--if ecclesiastical bodies, theological seminaries and colleges would but lead on in these enterprises, God forbid that they should not have their place. If they would but go forward the Church would follow them, and many who are now compelled to lead because these refuse, would rejoice to fall in behind and sustain them with all their might.

But if the church will not lead--if doctors of divinity, ecclesiastical bodies, colleges and seminaries will do nothing but get together to pass resolutions condemning the movements of reform, what shall be done? Shall they refuse to work in these departments and so hinder those who would work? Who pretends that so great wisdom has been manifested in the various branches of reform as might have been, had the Church with her spiritual leaders only taken the right position? What can be expected but error and confusion, while nearly all the spiritual influence in the world is brought to oppose instead of promote reforms? My brethren, if ecclesiastical bodies, colleges and seminaries will only go forward, who will not bid them God speed? But if they will not go forward--if we hear little nor nothing from them but complaint, denunciation, and rebuke in respect to almost every branch of reform, what can be done?

My soul is sick and agonized with such a state of things. The position of the Church is one of the greatest wonders of the world;--and yet we are gravely asking, why we do not have revivals of religion? Why has the Spirit of God forsaken us? and many are even glad to have revivals cease, and seem disposed to quell every thing down into a state of death-like apathy on every branch of reform.

Now until the Church shall arise and take a different attitude, I am confident that nothing else can be expected than a retrograde movement on the part of the Churches until not even a form of godliness remains among them.

Why cannot we all do in respect to reforms as Pres. Edwards did in respect to revivals? He fearlessly pointed out whatever was wrong and of evil tendency in the means used to promote them, and at the same time was careful to show a more excellent way. His opposition to what was wrong, although fearless and uncompromising, was never so prominent as to overshadow all his engagedness in promoting them. He was their powerful, zealous, and successful advocate and promoter. It became him then to speak out and rebuke whatever was wrong. Every body saw that his rebukes arose not from opposition to revivals as such, but from his great love for them and from a quenchless zeal to promote them. When he lifted his admonitory voice, the friends of revivals would listen because they knew it to be the voice of a friend and not of an enemy of revivals. Every body knew he spake of the evils sometimes connected with revivals because he loved them in their purity.

Now why cannot we all do so on the subject of reform? My brethren, let us all come forward and show ourselves to be reformers--put our heads and hearts together to promote every branch of reform and also revivals of religion, and then we shall hold a position in which we can successfully oppose and correct the errors of the day either in revivals or reforms. But who will listen to ministers, ecclesiastical bodies, doctors of divinity, missionary societies, or any body else who make no aggressive movements at all in respect to any reform and say almost nothing except to rebuke and condemn? They can talk eloquently of the evils incident to revivals, but are not like Pres. Edwards, zealous and successful in promoting them themselves. They can denounce the madness of abolitionists and the errors and extravagances of both the leaders and followers in others reforms; but alas, how few of them have any thing efficient or impressive to say to promote these great objects either by encouragement, instruction or counsel.

Now if ecclesiastical bodies generally, doctors of divinity, colleges and theological seminaries, had uniformly manifested zeal in all departments of reform, they would be heard. If ministers had manifested zeal and efficiency in these reforms, their church would hear and respect them, and the ministry might lead them anywhere. But now the ministers are complaining that their churches are divided--that themselves are losing the confidence of their people--that ministerial influence is becoming paralyzed--the church influence an abomination.

Is it possible, my dearly beloved brethren, that we can remain blind to the tendencies of things--to the causes that are operating to produce alienation, division, distrust, to grieve away the Spirit, overthrow revivals, and cover the land with darkness and the shadow of death? Is it not time for us, brethren, to repent, to be candid and search out wherein we have been wrong and publicly and privately confess it, and pass public resolutions in our general ecclesiastical bodies, recanting and confessing what has been wrong--confessing in our pulpits, through the press, and in every proper way our sins as Christians and as ministers--our want of sympathy with Christ, our want of compassion for the slave, for the inebriate, for the wretched prostitute, and for all the miserable and ignorant of earth?

May the Lord have mercy on us, my brethren.

Your brother,  
C.G. FINNEY



February 4, 1846

**Letters On Revivals--No. 24.**

by Prof. Finney

**THE PERNICIOUS ATTITUDE OF THE CHURCH ON THE REFORMS OF THE AGE.**

[Pt. 2]

To All The Friends And Especially All The Ministers Of Our Lord Jesus Christ:

Dear Brethren:

Another subject upon which I wish to address my brethren, has respect to an error, which I fear is greatly interfering with the progress of revivals. I mean the fears that are so generally entertained respecting religious excitement, and indeed excitements on any branch of reform. Many seem to dread excitements greatly, and to be rather guarding against them than laboring to promote revivals of religion.

I have before said something upon the subject of excitement; but I am continually becoming more and more acquainted with the extent to which these fears of excitement prevail, and the great consequent evils. Many ministers seem to be so much afraid lest religious excitement should be spurious, and are guarding so strongly against spurious excitement that they really prevent all excitement.

Now it seems to me that few things can be more directly calculated to put down a revival should it commence, or to keep it down and prevent its even commencing, than to be continually guarding the people against false excitements, pointing out the marks of spurious excitements and turning the mind away from the great truths of the gospel by which men are to be sanctified, to consider those spurious forms of excitement that have often cursed the world. The fact is that spurious excitements almost always result from preaching error. Preaching truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and especially those great and fundamental truths that are indispensable to salvation, keeping clear of all admixture of error and fanaticism, either in the doctrine taught, or in the spirit of preaching, tends in the highest degree to beget a wholesome excitement, and no other than this. To arouse the attention strongly, and fix it upon those truths in their soundness and power, is the most ready way to prevent all spurious excitements and to promote those which are sound, healthful, and evangelical. Whereas to neglect to preach this class of

truths, and devote one's self to guarding the people against spurious excitement is almost sure, either wholly to allay all excitement, or to arouse the combativeness of any who may have begun to drink in a spirit of spurious excitement, and drive them still farther from the truth.

The fact is, my dear brethren, a great many ministers and churches appear to be too much afraid of spurious excitements to use any thorough means to promote revivals. They are afraid to make a powerful appeal--are afraid to lift up their voice like a trumpet, and blow a blast long and loud in the ears of the people, and to press them with overcoming urgency to lay hold on eternal life, lest they should promote a spurious excitement. If at any time an excitement commences in the church, manifesting itself in prayer and conference meetings, forthwith some over prudent elder, deacon or minister begins to throw out cautions against spurious excitements. Now this is the very way to render revivals impossible. The proper way is to guard against all those doctrines and measures that are calculated to inflame the imagination and stir up an ocean of excitement, without informing the intelligence; and to press most importunately, frequently, and powerfully the real truths of the gospel--those truths which sinners and professed saints most need to know, and if possible, to rivet and hold them so thoroughly to those truths as to afford no room for fanaticism, in doctrine or feeling, to get a footing. Then if at any time suspicious things appear, the best of all ways to correct them, so far as my experience goes, is, when it can be done, to labor in private with the individuals who are under the false excitements, and if it can possibly be avoided, not to divert the congregation to preaching upon the subject. Let the congregation be held fast by the great truths that are adapted to break their hearts, and if a dash of fanaticism or enthusiasm appears now and then, I would advise by all means, as I have said in a former letter that private interviews should correct these evils without letting the congregation know that any notice has been taken of them.

The thing I am recommending, is by no means to aim at promoting great excitement. But it should be remembered that great revivals of religion can never exist without deep excitement of feeling; and yet it is the revival of religion at which we ought to aim; and since some excitement is naturally and necessarily incidental to a revival of religion, let it come and do not fear it. Do let us remember and believe my brethren, that the readiest of all ways to prevent enthusiasm, fanaticism, and spurious excitements, is to thunder forth with power and in demonstration of the Spirit the solid and

fundamental truths of the gospel, both in season and out of season.

One thing I wish to press especially upon the brethren. The people will be excited; and they will be excited on the subject of religion. If you keep out that wholesome excitement which the naked and sound gospel is adapted to promote, you may rest assured that sooner or later, spurious excitements, or excitements that you cannot control will spring up among your people, and will distract and carry them away as with a flood. Brethren, this is no age of the world for us to dream that we can keep the churches from excitement. They cannot be kept from it, and they ought not to be. The indications of providence are plain and palpable that the excitements now abroad in the land are not to cease. Every turn in Divine Providence only multiplies the occasions and the means of excitement, and it is madness for us to throw ourselves in the way of Divine Providence, and suppose that we can correct this railroad movement of the public mind. Our enquiry should be; how shall we guide it? How shall we so control and promote it as to prevent evil and secure good results? How shall we direct and keep it within its proper channels? To attempt to arrest it were as idle as to attempt to cut off the waters of the Mississippi. Dam it across in one place, it will break out and flow in another. If we don't keep those mighty currents of excited mind in their proper channel, they will desolate the whole land. Who does not see that if we succeed in arresting excitement on one subject, immediately the waters swell and break out in another direction.--Another and another subject comes up and keeps the public mind in perpetual fermentation. Who can prevent it? No man; and it ought not to be prevented. If ministers and professed christians instead of taking advantage of the present state of things, and making clear the proper channel and guiding the public mind right by a powerful exhibition of the gospel--if instead of this, they will attempt to arrest all excitement, they must expect their people to become divided; factions and excitements will spring up; anarchy and misrule will prevail, until ministers--the shepherds of the flock, have lost their influence, and error and fanaticism carry away the public mind.

Brethren, we have the means in our hand of guiding the public mind--of moulding or modifying the excitements that overspread the land. Let ministers and Christians take their station beside the pool of life, and lift their voices above the winds and waves of popular excitement and cry, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters and he that hath no money come; yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without

price." Instead of being afraid of spurious excitement, with the experience and the means that we have, it seems to me to be certain, that the church can go forward in the promotion of revivals, until the whole land and the whole world are subdued to Christ, without the introduction and prevalence of one spurious religious excitement.

The gospel is adapted to promote a healthful excitement. Let us throw it out upon the people in all its length and breadth and power. Then, whatever excitement is incidental to such a procedure, let it come. Let ministers and christians be sober-minded and hold fast to the truth and to the form of sound words, and use those measures and those only, which are needed and are most adapted to secure a universal attention to the truth, and bring about as speedily and universally as possible a thorough submission to God. My brethren, do not let us stand timidly by, and criticise and warn against false excitements, and hush every thing down and keep our people asleep, till ere we are aware, they break loose from our influence and run headlong and in masses after some fanatical leader to the ruin of their souls.

Your brother,  
C.G. FINNEY

**February 18, 1846**

**Letters On Revivals--No. 25.**

**by Prof. Finney**

## **THE FOLLY OF ATTEMPTING TO SUSTAIN TRUE RELIGION WITHOUT REVIVALS**

To All The Friends And Especially All The Ministers Of Our Lord Jesus Christ:

Dear Brethren:

Another subject on which I wish to address my brethren, is a tendency which I perceive to exist in the public mind towards a conclusion which to me appears little short of downright infatuation, namely, that the churches can exist and prosper as well without revivals of religion as with them, or even better. Now this is certainly the most preposterous conclusion conceivable; and yet I really know not what else to infer from the general apathy

upon the subject of revivals, and especially from the quite extensive hostility against them which is apparent in many sections of the church. Many of the leading men in the church seem about ready to adopt, or at least are earnestly favoring the policy of making no efforts to promote revivals--of discountenancing the labors of Evangelists, and all those extra means and efforts that have been used from time immemorial, whenever revivals have occurred.

Now that the Christian church cannot exist without extensive revivals of religion can be clearly demonstrated; unless the Lord introduces a different mode of diffusing the gospel, from any that He ever has adopted. Nay, indeed, the very supposition is absurd and self-contradictory. What! can it be conceived that the church can succeed in converting the world without revivals? Must not the church herself be revived? Must not religion be revived among the impenitent? If not, will not true piety well nigh cease from the world? The nominal church might exist, I grant, without revivals. They might introduce another half-way covenant system, or receive hosts of ungodly men to the church without their giving any evidence of regeneration; and thus a nominal church might be kept up; but that true piety cannot exist and spread without a great and general revival of religion, and without revivals succeeding declensions as often as declensions in any portions of the church shall occur, is to my mind one of the plainest truths in the world.

I am sorry that I have not the means by me of stating definitely the real results of those experiments that have been tried of promoting religion without revivals; but who does not know that in such cases, the churches have either become extinct, or have become merely nominal churches, having only a name to live while really dead. They have resorted to a half-way covenant, and various other means of filling up the church from the world, without their being truly converted to God. How else could even the nominal church exist? Christians continue to die, and die in fact much faster than sinners will be converted to fill their places without revivals. I believe it to have been a universal fact that church members have died faster than sinners have been converted to fill their places where no means have been used to promote revivals, and where consequently they have not existed. But it is the consummation of folly for the church to expect to keep pace at all with the rapid increase of the earth's population, and especially with the increase of population in this country, without very extensive, continuous and pure revivals. Revivals alone can secure the stability and perpetuity of our religions and civil institutions. I do not believe that this

government could exist in its present form, fifty years without revivals; nor is it at all likely to me that it would exist half that time. It was remarkable to see to what an extent the revivals in this country from 1820 to 1840 influenced the public mind, developed reforms, and brought up as from the depths of oblivion the great truths and principles that are the sheet-anchor of every government of opinion under heaven. The fact is, those revivals affected all classes of the community. They affected the whole country and have extended their influence throughout all Christendom. This I have very good reason to know, not only from my acquaintance with this country, but from abundant intelligence received from Europe.

These revivals were beginning and indeed more than beginning to influence the legislation of all Christendom. But let them be done away--let the generation that has witnessed their power go to their graves without the recurrence of those scenes, and what will be the result? A government of mere opinion like ours, in the hands of a people who fear not God, with a temporizing ministry, a licentious press, and all the agencies that are at work to carry headlong all the religious institutions of the land--where are we in twenty or in fifty years without revivals of religion? Witness the efforts of the papacy--the tendency of Puseyism--the efforts of Universalists and errorists of every description--the running to and fro of lecturers on every subject--the spread of infidel books and tracts, and all the enginery of hell to overthrow all order and law and every thing that is lovely and of good report; and then say, my brethren, can the church exist and prosper without revivals of religion?

But to come nearer home;--can we or the present church become any thing less than an abomination and a curse to the world without revivals? Whither is she tending already? Witness the gossip, the worldliness, the pride, the ambition, the every thing that is hateful, growing up and prevailing in churches, just in proportion as they are destitute of the reviving influences of the Holy Spirit. Contemplate the cowardice, the trimming policy, the ecclesiastical ambition of the ministry without revivals of religion--mark how great and overcoming are their temptations to please men and even ungodly church members, when there are no copious outpourings of the Spirit to arouse the multitude and strengthen the hands of the servants of God.

O, it is impossible that desolation should not reign--that the ministry should not cower down before an ungodly public sentiment--that Popery should not prevail, the Sabbath be desecrated--the church ruined and the world undone, without great revivals of religion.



And what can this policy mean, that would hush every thing down and frown on all special efforts to promote revivals? It is certainly infatuation, and if not arrested, it must end in ruin.

I beseech my brethren in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to keep as far as possible from the appearance or the thought of discountenancing or looking coldly on revival efforts. They are our life. They are the salvation of the church--they are the hope of the world. Instead of allowing them to cease, every minister and Christian ought to aim at increasing them a hundred fold. Every one of us ought to set his heart upon rendering them pure, deep, universal, and as frequent as the necessities of the church and the world demand. Let no man stop short of aiming at this as he values his own soul, and the souls of his fellow-men.

Your brother,  
C.G. FINNEY

**March 4, 1846**

**Letters On Revivals--No. 26.**

**by Prof. Finney**

## **THE EMPLOYMENT AND QUALIFICATIONS OF EVANGELISTS**

To All The Friends And Especially All The Ministers Of Our Lord Jesus Christ:

Dear Brethren:

In connection with this subject I wish to say to my brethren several things in regard to employing Evangelists in promoting revivals.

And here I suppose I need not say that such a class of minister is distinctly recognized in the Bible, and that they are manifestly in some sense itinerating ministers of the gospel, and distinguished from pastors particularly in this--that they had no stated charge or particular church or congregation over which they presided. They seem to have been employed by the Holy Ghost to travel among the churches and perform that kind of labor to which they were adapted, and which their relations rendered it peculiarly proper for them to

perform. I design to say more in detail upon this subject hereafter.

And further I suppose I need not attempt to show that in every age of the Christian church,--to say nothing of the older dispensation, whenever religion has been extensively revived, the employment of Evangelists, or what has been equivalent to this, has uniformly been resorted to by the Holy Spirit in promoting the work. I am not aware that any extensive revival has ever existed without the use of this particular means in connection with other means for its promotion. Sometimes evangelists, properly so called, have been employed; at other times lay-men and pastors have gone abroad, visiting and laboring with the churches. I think it cannot be denied that one of the most efficient influences ever used by the Holy Spirit in promoting revivals is some form of itinerant labor either of ministers or of lay-men.

The things however which I wish to say do not so much respect the validity and importance of the office and labors of Evangelists as the mistakes into which the churches have fallen respecting them--mistakes which have led to extensive prejudices against their labors.

And first I should observe that plainly there are comparatively few men well qualified for Evangelists. An Evangelist needs very peculiar characteristics, without which they will almost inevitably work mischief in the churches. Without these peculiar qualifications, they may indeed do some and even much good; but they will be apt to disturb the relation of the pastors so seriously and get up such a state of things in the churches as will tend ultimately and necessarily to their own expulsion from those churches.

Some of the things which I wish to say upon the subject are the following.

1. An Evangelist should be an unambitious man. If he is ambitious, he will inevitably not only grieve the Spirit of God, but will aim to gather about himself an influence and a power, and if in the providence of God he should acquire it, he will use it in such a manner as to embarrass and distract rather than edify the church of God.
2. He should be a man of meekness. It is natural that he should meet with very much opposition. Unless he is a man of good temper, and of great meekness, bearing with patience and without retort the many things that may be said and written against him, he will inevitably excite angry disputes and divisions rather than promote godly edification.
3. He should be a man of discretion, so as not to be guilty of rashness in any of his movements. He should

especially avoid any such rashness as might justly array the influence of pastors against himself.

4. He should be very careful not to break open the door and enter fields of labor which the Lord has not prepared for him. When Evangelists are abroad and revivals occur under their labors, there is in almost every church more or less men and women who are perhaps really pious people, but withal a little headstrong and indiscreet, who are for crowding their measures and insisting upon having Evangelists come and labor in their churches, before either their pastors or the body of the church are at all prepared for such a movement.

I said it is almost inevitable that an Evangelist should have many things said against him. Many reports will be circulated, prejudicial to his influence and labors. These will come to the ears of pastors and churches, who may not have the means, and possibly not the heart to search into and find out the truth upon these points. Consequently they are by no means prepared to receive the Evangelist. Yet if he be a discreet and holy man--if his labors are truly useful, this will be known, and the knowledge will extend fast enough to open the eyes and the hearts of ministers and people to receive him into different fields as fast as he is able to occupy them.

Now the thing I wish to say right here is this;--that if a man has not discretion enough to refrain from pushing his labors into places, congregations and neighborhoods, where Christian churches exist and where the ministers are good men and yet by no means prepared to receive him;--he will soon hedge himself in round about and be generally resisted by the pastors and churches. If he will patiently labor from field to field as God throws the door wide open before him, it appears to me certain that prejudice will give way quite as fast as he is able to go forward and occupy the opening fields of labor. But if on account of the importance of particular places he listens to the invitation of a few who are urgent to have him come, while the ministry and churches in general, and especially the minister and many of the very church to which he is invited are through prejudice or misapprehension entirely unprepared to receive him, there may in such a case be some revival, but there will be much distraction and ultimately a powerful reaction. Indeed few things are a more sore trial to pastors than to have a few zealous men in their churches overrule their own judgments and call in to labor in the congregation an Evangelist of whose labors they sincerely stand in doubt. They sometimes yield to this as the least of two evils.

But I would most seriously advise Evangelists to let it be understood by serious and good ministers that they sympathize with them and have no disposition whatever to disturb their relation or hinder them in their work, or crowd into their pulpits or among their people at the hazard of alienation and distraction rather than with the prospect of union and of gospel love. No other course can so readily secure the confidence of pastors. If pastors find that there is no danger that Evangelists will break in upon their labors and disturb their relations they will invite them the more readily and cordially to come. If they find that an Evangelist duly appreciates the pastoral relation, its difficulties and the danger of disturbing it;--in short if they find that the Evangelist most sincerely aims at promoting a healthful and stable pastoral influence--if they become satisfied that he truly aims at the glory of God and has correct views of the best means of securing this end, they will of course give him their confidence. If they love revivals and love the cause he loves, alienation will cease, and confidence be established.

I suppose it true however that under some circumstances it may be the duty of Evangelists or other ministers to go into a region and there labor in the gospel, entirely regardless of the nominal ministry of that region. Where ministers are manifestly unconverted and churches apostate from God and spiritual desolation reigning, it may be and doubtless often is the duty of ministers to go and preach the gospel regardless of the nominal ministry there. But when the ministry are manifestly pious men and not opposed to revivals, their relation to the churches should be respected. If they have difficulties in respect to Evangelists growing out of prejudice or misapprehension, let Evangelists labor on where they have access to the churches until prejudice gives way and misapprehensions are corrected. Then a door may be opened to those fields where before only a small minority desired his labors.

Cases of this kind sometimes occur. A few zealous and perhaps furious men will insist upon the Evangelist coming forthwith, and will write to him to this effect more or less fully representing to him perhaps, that their minister and the mass of the church are opposed to revivals. Now if he listens to such men, gets his own prejudices enlisted, till he becomes excited, breaks in and goes to preaching before the way is prepared for him, the Lord will almost certainly rebuke him, and five year's time will show that his labors there resulted in more harm than good.

An able Evangelist--one who is really discreet, simple-hearted and useful, will always find fields enough fully open for his labors. If he will be satisfied to follow the

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order of God and not suffer himself to be pulled or thrust in, before the way is prepared in the view of the pastor and church for him to come, he cannot fail ultimately to secure not only the co-operation of a pious ministry and church, but also to find access to as many pulpits as he can possibly occupy.

I have many things to say respecting the errors of Evangelists, pastors, and churches on this subject, but let this suffice for the present.

Your brother,  
C.G. FINNEY

**March 18, 1846**

**Letters On Revivals--No. 27.**

**by Prof. Finney**

### ON EVANGELISTS

To All The Friends And Especially All The Ministers Of Our Lord Jesus Christ:

Dear Brethren:

Although the employment of Evangelists to promote revivals is manifestly in accordance with the order of God, and is of great service to the churches yet I have observed that the churches are liable to fall, and in some instances have fallen into injurious errors in respect to their labors which have greatly hindered their usefulness, disheartened their pastors, and led them almost to the conclusion that upon the whole the labors of Evangelists though in many cases immediately serviceable are ultimately the greater of two evils, or perhaps more strictly the less of two goods. Some of these evils which I have observed are the following:

The churches are liable to fall, and sometimes have fallen into the belief that they can have no revival at all without the labors of an Evangelist, and they have had no faith or courage to make the requisite efforts unless they could get some celebrated Evangelist to aid their pastor. This belief wherever it prevails has a pernicious influence in a great many respects.

It leads the church in reality away from God to trust in man. Churches are not aware of this; but I have often seen so great evidence of it that I could not doubt it.

During my own labors as an Evangelist I have in several instances found the chief obstacles to success in the fact that the church were expecting that if I came they should have a revival of course. I have sometimes found it more difficult to convince the church of sin on this point than upon almost any other; and yet it has been impossible to promote a revival until they are convicted upon this point and deeply humbled and brought to see that they had been trusting in man rather than in God. When they had repented and put away this sin and looked alone to God in faith to pour out his Spirit, the work would revive and go on; but not before.

This is a much more common error than churches are aware of, and it is apt to prevail precisely in proportion to the known success that attends the labors of an Evangelist. If his success has been uniform and great, the churches fall into the mistake of expecting as a matter of course that if they secure his labors they shall have a revival, and thus they dishonor God and seriously embarrass the Evangelist.

But another aspect of this error is that church members throw aside personal responsibility in a great measure, and instead of feeling that they themselves must do a great part of the labor, under God, they often expect the Evangelist and the pastor to do the labor, while they take a kind of passive attitude or at the utmost go into a kind of superficial excitement and bluster about to get people out to meeting and warn sinners as they express it, without breaking up their own fallow ground and getting into such deep sympathy with God as to be able to prevail daily and hourly with God in prayer.

The more I have seen of revivals, the more I am satisfied that one of the principle errors into which ministers and churches have fallen is that ministers attempt to do too much of the labor themselves and do not throw enough personal responsibility upon each member of the church. Whenever an attempt is made to promote a revival without securing in the outset a thorough reformation in the church, a deep and thorough breaking up of the fallow ground and a mighty taking hold of God in prayer, it will be found in the end that the revival if there should seem to be one, will be very superficial, and will leave the church more hardened than ever. It is exceedingly injurious to churches to send off and get an Evangelist to labor among them unless they intend to lay themselves individually upon the altar, to consecrate their whole being to God, and to enter so deeply into sympathy with Christ as to travail in birth for souls, until Christ be formed within them. Ordinarily, if the right course be taken, churches may have revivals of religion and powerful revivals too without any ministers at all. There



## 54 **Prayer 27** Rapid hardening if church doesn't break down and take hold in prayer

are comparatively few churches in this country that do not comprise men of sufficient intelligence to teach the essential things of the gospel, to instruct enquirers, and lead them to Christ, if they were only in the right state of mind themselves. If the churches would only get a revival spirit themselves, they could hardly help having revivals among the impenitent, even though they have no preacher at all. I could relate several instances in which powerful revivals have been promoted altogether by intelligent laymen and women, where no minister could be had, or at least where no minister had been employed. But where a church has a pious pastor, one who fears God and loves souls, if they will do their duty they will find that as a general thing, they can have revivals and even powerful revivals without employing Evangelists. When they can secure this result under their own efforts and those of their pastor, it is in general more healthful for the church, does more to strengthen the influence and promote the usefulness of the pastor and more closely cement together the pastor and his flock in mutual sympathy and confidence. It better promotes the growth in grace of both pastor and people. It gives the pastor greater influence in training the converts and in leading and edifying the church. In short in almost every way, where a powerful revival of religion can be secured by the church and their pastor, this is by far the most desirable course. Where Evangelists are employed it should rather be to strengthen and encourage the pastor in his work than to throw him into the back ground, impair the confidence of his people in him, and cast discouragements in his way. If I mistake not in most instances where Evangelists have promoted revivals in such a way as to weaken the influence of pious and faithful pastors and impair the confidence their people had in them, where the people have almost worshipped the Evangelist, and have consequently thought less of their pastor than before, it will be found ultimately that the revival has very much unsettled the congregation and unhinged the most desirable influences that should promote religion among them. In many such instances the revival seems to produce more harm than good.

Now this result is often owing to the very injudicious conduct of the church. They do not take right views of the subject. They ascribe too much to Evangelists and far too little to their pastor. By this I do not mean that so far as the pastor himself is concerned, he would care or need to care how little is ascribed to him, But the evil lies farther back. If the church take a wrong view of the subject the mischief that results falls on themselves. Losing their confidence in their pastor renders it impossible for him afterwards to do them the good it is

in his heart to do, and which he otherwise might do. The pastor has been perhaps for several months preparing the way for a revival, and already the spirit of prayer breathes in many hearts, and a spirit of supplication is poured upon the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. As soon as these appearances betoken the approach of a revival, instead of thanking God in mighty prayer, each member of the church taking his place, man, woman and child--instead of holding prayer meetings and moving in a body to promote a genuine revival, depending under God upon their pastor to do the preaching, they often just at this crisis take a course that is highly injurious. They make a move to get an Evangelist; the pastor sees that they have not confidence that he can preach so as to promote a revival. He feels distressed. As things are situated he does not like to refuse lest they should fail to have a revival. The very fact of his refusing might prevent a revival, even though they might have had a powerful one if they had said nothing about an Evangelist. He therefore consents; they send and get an Evangelist and have a revival.

Now the church are very apt right here to grieve the Spirit of God by failing to give the glory to God and failing to ascribe to the ordinary means of grace that which really belongs to them. They do not seem to see that they grieve the heart of God by undervaluing the pastoral relations and pastoral labors.

But if, where the way is thoroughly prepared for a revival, the church and pastor with right views and motives can agree in calling in the labors of a judicious Evangelist, and will take throughout a judicious course, great numbers may be induced to attend meeting, and in many cases vastly more good can be secured through his labors than without them.

If the Lord permit I will endeavor in a future number to show what I regard as a judicious course on the part of the church, the pastor, and the Evangelist.

Your brother,  
C.G. FINNEY

**April 1, 1846**

**Letters On Revivals--No. 28.**

**by Prof. Finney**

**ON THE IMPORTANCE OF LAY LABOR IN THE PROMOTION OF REVIVALS**

To All The Friends And Especially All The Ministers Of Our Lord Jesus Christ:

Dear Brethren:

In my last letter I dwelt on the errors into which the churches fall in regard to the employment of evangelists, and said that, the Lord willing, in a future number I would state what I regard as a judicious course to be pursued by a church, a pastor, and an evangelist.

In the first place I observe that nothing should be done that shall in any way relieve the church from a sense of their own personal and individual responsibility. I have always observed that where several ministers were present, employed in the promotion of revivals, so much ministerial labor is apt to do much more hurt than good. And I had much rather be entirely alone as a minister in the promotion of revivals, than to have so many ministers present as to take nearly all the active labor out of the hands of the church. When ministers are present, they are expected to take the lead in all the meetings; and if a sufficient number of them are present, they of course occupy all the time, lead in prayer and in conversation, and, in short, take the work so completely out of the hands of the laymen as to throw them very much into a passive attitude.

Now no person can read the Gospel with his eye on this fact, without perceiving that the primitive apostles and ministers, together with the Holy Ghost, threw a great portion of the labor of diffusing the Gospel and spreading religion, on the great mass of christian men and women. We find that while all the apostles remained at Jerusalem, the lay members were dispersed all abroad through the persecutions that arose about Stephen, and went every where preaching the Gospel. Now for the health of the church it is indispensable that they should be actively and individually employed in promoting the cause of religion. The more labor can be thrown on them the better. The more they are put forward in holding prayer meetings, in personal conversation from house to house, and in every way except in public preaching, the more it is for

the health of the church, and for the real interests of piety in any community.

I know that some have been afraid that in this way, laymen would get out of their place, become proud and interfere with the office of the ministry. But I beg leave to say to my brethren, that I do not think it best for ministers to attempt to be the keepers of the humility of the laymen. The true way to make christians humble is to make them holy. The true way to make them holy, is to push them forward in doing all they can by their own active exertions to promote religion; and especially to press them into positions where they will be constrained to sympathize deeply with Christ in regard to the salvation of sinners. For this purpose, nothing is like personal, individual effort to save the souls of men. This work, in order to promote a healthful piety, must be thrown as much as possible into the hands of the church at large; leaving for the minister the over-sight and superintendence of the whole movement, together with the work of publicly preaching the Gospel. Work the laymen as much as possible into conducting the anxious meeting, into conducting and managing the prayer meeting, the conference meeting, and indeed throw every thing upon the laymen that they can do. I am convinced that this is altogether the best policy; and indeed the only wise policy in promoting revivals of religion. If the laymen are ignorant, let the minister instruct them. If he is afraid to trust them in the anxious room to give directions to the inquiring sinners, let him hold one or more meetings if need be, with the laymen of his church for the very purpose of teaching them how to proceed in conducting an inquiry meeting, and how to assist in its labors. Let the minister take pains at all times, both in and out of seasons of revivals, to give the laymen and women in his church, such instruction, that they will know what to do to promote a revival; and then in the name of the Lord, throw the responsibility on them. If he attempts to do all the labor, first his health will soon fail, and he will break down; and secondly, the work cannot be done in this way; for the Lord has said, "I will be inquired of by the house of Israel, (and not merely by ministers,) to do these things for them."

Then, in short, if the question of employing an evangelist comes up, it is wise in the church to raise the question and have it distinctly understood, that whether an evangelist is employed or not, the work is not to be taken out of their hands, nor any thing done, that will in the least degree, relieve them from a personal, and individual responsibility. Nay, if they employ an evangelist, one of their principal objects should be, that through his experience they may be set to work to the best advantage, and have the greatest possible amount

of labor thrown on them. The experience of an able evangelist in respect to the employment of the lay members in the promotion of the work may be of very great service to the church. An evangelist that does not employ the laymen and women in the promotion of revivals, will by no means promote to any considerable extent their growth in grace. It is naturally impossible that they should grow in grace only as they are drawn into so deep a sympathy with Christ, as to engage in such personal and individual labors in the promotion of revivals, as shall make them strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

Your brother,

C.G. FINNEY

**April 15, 1846**

**Letters On Revivals--No. 29.**

**by Prof. Finney**

### **ON THE RELATIVE POSITION OF EVANGELISTS AND PASTORS**

To All The Friends And Especially All The Ministers Of Our Lord Jesus Christ:

Dear Brethren:

Another thing which should be avoided in attempting to promote a revival of religion by calling in the labors of an evangelist is the disturbing of the pastoral relation, or doing anything to weaken pastoral influence. I have already intimated in a former letter that churches are apt to err on this subject, and to under-value the labors of a pastor, and greatly to over-value the labors of an evangelist. Thus they wrong their pastor, grieve the Spirit of God, and render it difficult or impossible for the pastor afterwards to do them the good that is in his heart, and which he might otherwise do them. If the pastor is a pious man--and if he is not he should not be a pastor--and indeed let the pastor be what he will, great pains should be taken not to bring the pastoral relation into contempt, or in any way to lower in the estimation of the church its high and sacred importance. Therefore the church in employing an evangelist should not think of setting aside the labors of their pastor for the time being, but simply to call in one who has experience, and is filled with the Spirit of God to aid him and them in their efforts to save souls.

Again they should never suffer themselves to institute comparisons between evangelists and their pastor that shall lead them to undervalue their pastor, and to almost worship the evangelist; for if they do this they will surely grieve the Spirit of God.

The great thing to be observed is, to do nothing that shall grieve the tender Spirit of the blessed God. It very often happens when evangelists are employed, that some members of the church will have so little confidence in the pastor, and such an unreasonable degree of confidence in the evangelist, as to say and do things that will greatly distress, grieve and ultimately offend the more considerate part of the church. Such individuals become enthusiastic in their admiration of the evangelist, and just in proportion, cold and almost contemptuous in their opinions and sayings in regard to their pastor. This always works a great evil. They are ready to go the whole length of every thing the evangelist says and does, and if their pastor and the more considerate members of the church see anything in the evangelist, the tendency of which they deem injurious, and which they attempt to correct, that class of the church to which I have just alluded, become offended, accuse the pastor of being envious or jealous of the influence of the evangelist, and their brethren who think with their pastor, of being opposed to the work, &c. There are a great many dangers in this neighborhood that need to be guarded against. Such members are not considerate as they ought to be. Through the influence of such persons great odium has been brought on the labors of the evangelists; and in many instances it has rendered it very difficult for pastors to see their way clear in inviting evangelists to labor with them. The indiscretion of the churches has been in many instances so great as to lead them to form an entirely wrong estimate of the comparative value of the labors of pastors and evangelists.

Churches should consider that the pastoral relation is one of the most important relations on the earth; and the more permanent it is, if the pastor be a man of God, and what a pastor should be, the better it is for the people. By this I do not mean that circumstances may not occur that will render it very beneficial for churches to change their pastors, and for pastors to change their field of labors; for such cases in fact often do occur; but this I mean, that so long as a pastor can maintain his hold on the great mass of his hearers, keep their attention, secure their attendance at meetings, and their confidence in him as a pastor, the longer he remains with them the better. The longer he remains, the better he knows their wants, their habits, their temperament and every thing that a pastor needs to know, to be in the



highest degree useful to them. But however judicious and able a pastor may be, the novelty of calling in an evangelist, his method of presenting truth, the new trains of thought that he may start, and multitudes of such like things may arise, and fix the attention of the congregation; and if in all respect a judicious course be pursued, immense good may be the result. But let the churches remember that the labors of the evangelist are to be enjoyed but for a little season; and that if they intend to secure the permanent influence of pastoral labor, they must as far as possible encourage and strengthen the hands of the pastor in taking a leading part in the work. They should not desire to have him thrown into the back ground, but have him preach, and, so far as his health and circumstances will admit, go forward and take a leading part in all the meetings. He should give out the appointments, and indeed should be encouraged by the church and by the evangelist to do all in every way that he can, to promote the work and secure the confidence and sympathy of all classes of the people. If this is not done, there is great danger of grieving at least a part of the church, of creating a party in the congregation who will think that the pastor is superseded in his labors, and rather held in contempt--and then the Spirit of God will be grieved. The church should be very careful not to complain to the evangelist of their pastor, and thus lay a temptation before him to undervalue the character or labors of the pastor--lest he should grieve the Spirit, and himself say things that will work great mischief. It is of great importance that the evangelist and pastor should be as nearly one as possible, and that the church should so regard them; that the pastor should manifest and have confidence in the evangelist, and the evangelist should have and manifest confidence in the pastor, that they should thoroughly sympathize and co-operate together. If this cannot be done, it is extremely difficult to secure a good result.

Again, the evangelist should not suffer himself to listen to the complaints of church members about their pastor. And if anything does come to his ears that is of sufficient importance to require attention, he should candidly converse with the pastor alone, and get his version of the subject, and never suffer his ears to be filled with complaints about the pastor without communing in a most fraternal manner with the pastor himself in relation to those things. They must preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace; and if they cannot do this, evil instead of good will result in their attempt to co-operate.

Your brother,  
C.G. FINNEY

**April 29, 1846**

**Letters On Revivals--No. 30.**

**by Prof. Finney**

**REMARKS ON THE DANGERS AND DUTIES INCIDENT TO THE PERIOD OF AN EVANGELIST'S CLOSING HIS LABORS IN A REVIVAL.**

To All The Friends And Especially All The Ministers Of Our Lord Jesus Christ:

Dear Brethren:

If I am not mistaken, the churches have fallen into an error in many cases, in respect to the course which it is incumbent on them to take when an evangelist leaves the ground. When one has been employed, and his labors have been greatly blessed, and the time comes for him to leave and take another field, it is then peculiarly important that the church should rally to a man, sustain their pastor, sustain all the meetings, and make more vigorous exertions than ever to push forward the work. But it happens in some instances, instead of taking this course, they seem to regard the leaving of the evangelist as a signal for them to indulge unbelief, retire from the work, cease to labor and visit and pray, neglect meetings, and in short to take the very course that is in the highest degree calculated to discourage the pastor, to grieve the Spirit of God, and to bring on a reaction inevitably, and most dangerous results in various ways.

Again, the churches have often fallen into an error in respect to what was to be expected of the pastor, and in respect to the state of things when the evangelist leaves the ground. It often happens that the evangelist remains on the ground as long as the excitability of the congregation continues in such strength that the work can be pushed with unabated power. He remains until perhaps the church, especially those members who have labored most efficiently together with the pastor--and indeed, until the mass of mind is brought into a state so nearly bordering on exhaustion, that from the very laws of mind, there must necessarily be a pause, or at least a temporary suspension of the power of the excitement.

Now when the evangelist leaves the ground, especially if he has remained until the circumstances are such as I have just supposed, it is generally to be expected that the work will take on a somewhat and oftentimes a materially different type--that the power of the

excitement will more or less abate, and perhaps many persons who have attended the meetings more from curiosity than from any heart-interest in them, will relinquish their attendance; there will naturally be a falling off of numbers, of excitement, and many of the circumstances will tend to discourage both the pastor and the church.

Now just in these circumstances churches should be very considerate, and not suffer unbelief on the one hand to prevail, or a censorious, fault-finding spirit to come in on the other. This change of appearance ought not to discourage the expectation of christians that the work will go on, although under a modified type.

But right here an evil of this kind is sometimes observable. The evangelist has left the ground; there has more or less of a change come over the community--and the church often suffer their hearts to go off with the evangelist, their faith to fail with respect to the continuance of the work among them, and soon it begins to be thought, and of course to be spoken of among the brethren that the pastor cannot sustain the work; they begin to find fault with him, instead of sustaining him by prayer and every means of encouragement within their reach. Instead of putting forth their utmost exertions to help him just at this critical point, they cruelly abandon him and the work, and gradually give themselves up to fault-finding, until finally the pastor is discouraged, the Holy Spirit is grieved--the pastor's feelings are thrown into such an attitude that he has not courage and strength to feed and lead forward the converts--a disastrous re-action comes over the community, and shortly it is agreed on all hands that it is best to have a change of ministers. Now somewhat in this way, if I am not mistaken, not a few pastors have been induced to leave their flocks soon after most powerful and glorious revivals.

Now in these cases there is utterly a fault some where. Both the church and the pastor may be to blame. And sometimes it is to be found that the evangelist himself has not taken pains enough before his leaving, to guard the church against such a course and such results. It is of the utmost importance that the evangelist himself should understand and fully appreciate the frailty of Christians in this respect, their great liability to err, the circumstances of temptation under which they will be placed, and the evil that will inevitably result if those things should accrue of which I have spoken. The evangelist ought deeply to feel that if his influence disturbs the pastoral relation--nay if it does not strengthen and establish pastoral influence; if he does not encourage instead of discourage the pastor, if he does not do him good instead of evil, his labors are not

what they ought to be as an evangelist, and what they must be to be long sustained and desired by the churches. Notwithstanding all these dangers, if the church are but instructed and on their guard, do they but know and feel what they ought to know and feel in respect to their relations and duties to each other, to their pastor, to the evangelist, and to the great work in which they are engaged--do but the evangelist and the pastor know and do their duty, understand their relations to each other, to the church, and to their great work, glorious results may most reasonably be expected from the employment of evangelists in the promotion of revivals.

But from what has been said, it is very easy to see that an evangelist needs to be pre-eminently a wise man to manage wisely and prudently under the ever-varying circumstances in which he will find himself placed. So to demean himself as to leave a healthful influence in the churches where he labors, requires an uncommon degree of wisdom. Few men comparatively are qualified for this office. I have repeatedly known young men to get the impression that it was their duty to be evangelists, who would labor in that capacity but a short time, and for want of wisdom and those peculiar characteristics that are indispensable to the success of an evangelist, would find themselves hedged in as evangelists, and in such odor in the churches as to find it not easy to procure such a settlement as otherwise they might have procured.

By these remarks I do not design to discourage young men from becoming evangelists if they are qualified for this arduous and peculiar work.

Your brother,

C.G. FINNEY

**May 27, 1846**

**Letters On Revivals--No. 31.**

**by Prof. Finney**

## **THE SUCCESS OF EVANGELISTS AS RELATED TO PASTORS**

To All The Friends And Especially All The Ministers Of Our Lord Jesus Christ:

Dear Brethren:

Another thing that should be noticed in this connection is the great temptation to which pastors and their particular and warm friends are exposed. If the Lord manifestly blesses the labors of the evangelist, Satan will not unfrequently make powerful efforts to disturb and unsettle the confidence of the pastor, perhaps urging that he was never called to preach the gospel, that the Lord does not bless his labors and that he may as well retire from the ministry. Especially is he in danger of being attacked in this way if he has labored hard and long with little apparent success. If the blessing of God very manifestly attends the labors of the evangelist, it is very natural for Satan to take the advantage of him and of his particular friends, suggesting to them that his ministry is barren, that he is either not a Christian at all, or if he be a Christian that Christ has never called him to preach the gospel. Very much the same impression may be lodged in the minds of many of his particular friends.

Temptations of this kind often work great mischief in discouraging the pastor, in disheartening the church, begetting unbelief in both the pastor and his flock in respect to the progress of the work under the labors of the pastor. These discouraging suggestions are doubtless often intended by the adversary to prepare the way to bring on the church disastrous reaction whenever the evangelist leaves the ground.

Now this is a devise of Satan much more frequently practiced I apprehended than is generally supposed. Should inquiry be made it would, I have no doubt, be very frequently found to be true that the minds of both the pastor and the leading members of the church have received these impressions and suggestions from time to time during the progress of the work under the labors of the evangelist. And these impressions have been so often repeated on different minds that have had no communication with each other with respect to the subject, that a deep impression of discouragement has been lodged in their minds; so much so that the pastor has really very little courage and faith in attempting to carry on the work when the evangelist has gone; and the church have very little courage and faith to lay hold and sustain him.

In other circumstances it may be expected that Satan will take a different tack and ply both the pastor and the people, especially his particular friends, with another view of the subject. He will endeavor to stimulate a spirit of ambition and envy and jealousy in the mind of the pastor, and endeavor to make him unwilling to have the labors of the evangelist blessed in promoting religion in

his congregation. And if there be any constitutional tendency in the pastor's mind to ambition, or in the mind of his wife, an hundred to one if Satan does not exert himself to overthrow them by attacking them in this particular manner. He will endeavor to excite in them the spirit of envy and jealousy in view of the fact that the people are becoming so much attached to the evangelist and so much under his influence. And right here he will often, if I am not mistaken excite the members of the church to speak in the presence of the pastor and of his wife, in terms of great admiration of the evangelist, of his wisdom, talents and piety, and oftentimes put them up inconsiderately to say things that have a strong tendency to produce in the mind of the pastor and his wife just that state of mind at which he is aiming. His object is to destroy the spirituality, the piety and the usefulness of the pastor and his wife, to excite in them a spirit of ambition and jealousy so as to ruin their influence among the people. On the one hand he will make direct suggestions to them and on the other press the members of the church to make such remarks and to conduct themselves towards both the pastor and the evangelist in a manner that is calculated to accomplish his infernal design. What he aims to accomplish in the minds of the pastor and his wife, he will aim at bringing to pass in the minds of his particular friends in the church and congregation, exciting them to envy and jealousy and to resist the evangelist, because, as Satan makes them believe, through his influence their pastor is thrown into the back ground and his influence crippled.

It is sometimes very wonderful to see in how many ways Satan will endeavor to bring about divisions and discord, to injure the influence both of the evangelist and of the pastor, if possible to create distrust and alienation between them; and if he cannot effect this, to create divisions in the church, so that one shall say, "I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos." The devices of Satan in these respects must be strongly and sedulously guarded against, or he will greatly embarrass the movements of an evangelist and greatly distract the church.

The more I have seen of the policy of Satan in this respect, the more I have appreciated the importance of the labors of evangelists, and also the great necessity of evangelists and pastors and churches being on their guard against an influence, which they do not suspect to be from Satan, being exerted not only to overthrow individual revivals, but to bring about a state of things that will cripple the general usefulness of evangelists and unite pastors and churches in resisting them.



Were it proper to enter into detail on such a subject as this, I think I might relate a great many facts that have come to my knowledge that would throw much light on this subject. Those who have labored much as evangelists must have had considerable experience in respect to the policy and movements of Satan in these matters.

I have thought for several years of inviting all the evangelists in this country to meet in a general conference and compare views, look over the field, pray and converse together with respect to what is to be done for the further extension of revivals of religion; and also of inviting to meet with them all those pastors who take an interest in the labors of evangelists, and who are anxious to prove all things and to hold fast that which is good, especially in respect to the promotion of revivals of religion.

Brethren, can we not have such a convention? Is it not time that evangelists and revival pastors have a protracted meeting among themselves, compare views, sympathize with each other, freely unbosom ourselves to one another, and devise ways and means of promoting and extending a revival influence throughout the world?

Your brother,  
C.G. FINNEY

**June 24, 1846**

**Letters On Revivals--No. 32.**

**by Prof. Finney**

To All The Friends And Especially All The Ministers Of  
Our Lord Jesus Christ:

Dear Brethren:

One of the particular dangers of evangelists is that their labors may disturb the pastoral relations. This is not necessarily so, but such are the infirmities of human nature, and so many are the mistakes into which pastors, evangelists, and churches are liable to fall, that as a matter of fact the labors of evangelists have often tended strongly to this result; insomuch that churches have very often come to doubt the expediency, or to say the least, to feel very little of the necessity and

importance of the pastoral relation. And this is a great evil. It has resulted in a great measure if I am not mistaken, from a fault in pastors and churches themselves, and doubtless in some instances from the faults of the evangelists. If pastors were really what they ought to be, it would be very difficult for the churches to be so beguiled by Satan as to come to think lightly of the importance of the pastoral relation. But where a pastor has been settled for years, and very little unction and effect have attended his preaching, few additions have been made to the church--all have slept and been quiet, until an evangelist comes forward anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, and a great revival occurs under his preaching. In cases like this if churches are not strongly on their guard, these facts will lead them to take a superficial and even a totally erroneous view of the pastoral relation.

Now it is by no means justifiable in pastors to refuse evangelists because of the tendency of their labors to unsettle pastors in cases similar to that which I have just mentioned. They ought to be sensible that the fault may be and probably is in a great measure their own. The manifest barrenness and want of unction in their own minister is so strongly contrasted with the unction and power of the evangelist, that the inference is inevitable that their pastor is not such a minister as he ought to be.

And when they look abroad and see nearly all the pastors and their acquaintance in about the same state with their own pastor, they very naturally and almost inevitably infer that there is something in the relation of pastors which lead them to take matters easily, to live on their salaries, keep things quiet and build up their congregations, rather in worldliness than in the Holy Ghost and in faith.

And here I must remark again that in many instances it is the case that the labors of an evangelist are called for from the want of unction in a pastor. Now when this is the case, it tends greatly of necessity to injure the influence of the pastor and to cause the expectations of the people to set loosely upon him, and oftentimes results in destroying their confidence in him as a useful minister of the gospel.

Again it often happens that the evangelist himself will perceive and cannot but perceive that the difficulty is with the pastor--that he is worldly-minded and temporizing--that he has adopted a carnal policy--is seeking to promote his popularity, and many such things over which the evangelist cannot but secretly and deeply sorrow. In such cases he is often greatly at a loss--first, to know whether under the circumstances it is worse for him to go to labor with such a pastor;--

secondly, when he is with him, to know what course to take. He sees that the church have no confidence in their pastor and that they have no right to have. Perhaps the most spiritual members of the church venture to breath to him their misgivings and trials of mind with respect to the spiritual state and influence of the pastor. In such cases it is extremely difficult often for the evangelist to approach the minister and read his heart on the subject of his spiritual state without giving offence. Indeed it is very difficult for an evangelist to labor extensively among those churches and pastors who are settled on their lees, without finding himself surrounded with accumulated difficulties. In spite of himself his labors if successful will naturally tend to make the churches see how far their pastors have been out of the way, and where the pastors do not come into such a state as to confess to their churches and reform their ministerial character and influence, the churches will in a great measure lose their confidence in the efficiency and usefulness of their pastor without any fault on the part of the evangelist, and secondly be led to undervalue the pastoral relation in general.

Here are many dangers and faults on all hands that ought to be looked at, realized, repented of and put away in order to secure the highest influence of both pastors and evangelists. The pastoral relation is certainly of priceless value. It is no less certain that the labors of evangelists are extensively owned and blessed of God, and it is just as evident that much wakefulness, prayer, and attention will be requisite to guard effectually against the dangers in which Satan is wont to involve churches, pastors and evangelists. A volume might be written upon this subject, but I can only suggest a few things in these brief letters.

**POWER FROM ON HIGH (1871-74)****CHAPTER 1**

Please permit me through your columns to correct a misapprehension of some of the members of the late Council at Oberlin of the brief remarks which I made to them; first on Saturday morning, and afterwards on the Lord's Day. In my first remarks to them I called attention to the mission of the Church to disciple all nations, as recorded by Matthew and Luke, and stated that this commission was given by Christ to the whole Church, and that every member of the Church is under obligation to make it his lifework to convert the world. I then raised two inquiries:

1. What do we need to secure success in this great work?

2. How can we get it?

Answer. 1. We need the enduement of power from on high. Christ had previously informed the disciples that without Him they could do nothing. When He gave them the commission to convert the world, He added, "But tarry ye in Jerusalem till ye be endued with power from on high. Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. Lo, I send upon you the promise of My Father." This baptism of the Holy Ghost, this thing promised by the Father, this enduement of power from on high, Christ has expressly informed us is the indispensable condition of performing the work which he has set before us.

2. How shall we get it? Christ expressly promised it to the whole Church, and to every individual whose duty it is to labour for the conversion of the world. He admonished the first disciples not to undertake the work until they had received this enduement of power from on high. Both the promise and the admonition apply equally to all Christians of every age and nation. No one has, at any time, any right to expect success, unless he first secures this enduement of power from on high. The example of the first disciples teaches us how to secure this enduement. They first consecrated themselves to his work, and continued in prayer and supplication until the Holy Ghost fell upon them on the Day of Pentecost, and they received the promised enduement of power from on high. This, then, is the way to get it.

The Council desired me to say more upon this subject; consequently, on the Lord's Day, I took for my text the assertion of Christ, that the Father is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him than we are to give good gifts to our children.

1. I said, This text informs us that it is infinitely easy to obtain the Holy Spirit, or this enduement of power from the Father.

2. That this is made a constant subject of prayer. Everybody prays for this, at all times, and yet, with all this intercession, how few, comparatively, are really endued with this spirit of power from on high! This want is not met. The want of power is a subject of constant complaint. Christ says, "Everyone that asketh receiveth," but there certainly is a "great gulf" between the asking and receiving, that is a great stumbling-block to many. How, then, is this discrepancy to be explained? I then proceeded to show why this enduement is not received. I said:

(1) We are not willing, upon the whole, to have what we desire and ask.

(2) God has expressly informed us that if we regard iniquity in our hearts He will not hear us. But the petitioner is often self-indulgent. This is iniquity, and God will not hear him.

(3) He is uncharitable.

(4) Censorious.

(5) Self-dependent.

(6) Resists conviction of sin.

(7) Refuses to confess to all the parties concerned.

(8) Refuses to make restitution to injured parties.

(9) He is prejudiced and uncandid.

(10) He is resentful.

(11) Has a revengeful spirit.

(12) Has a worldly ambition.

(13) He has committed himself on some point, and become dishonest, and neglects and rejects further light.

(14) He is denominationally selfish.

(15) Selfish for his own congregation.

(16) He resists the teachings of the Holy Spirit.

(17) He grieves the Holy Spirit by dissension.

(18) He quenches the Spirit by persistence in justifying wrong.

(19) He grieves Him by a want of watchfulness.

(20) He resists Him by indulging evil tempers.

(21) Also by dishonesties in business.

(22) Also by indolence and impatience in waiting upon the Lord.

(23) By many forms of selfishness.



(24) By negligence in business, in study, in prayer.

(25) By undertaking too much business, too much study, and too little prayer.

(26) By a want of entire consecration.

(27) Last and greatest, by unbelief. He prays for this enduement without expecting to receive it. "He that believeth not God, hath made Him a liar." This, then, is the greatest sin of all. What an insult, what a blasphemy, to accuse God of lying!

I was obliged to conclude that these and other forms of indulged sin explained why so little is received, while so much is asked. I said I had not time to present the other side. Some of the brethren afterward inquired, "What is the other side?" The other side presents the certainty that we shall receive the promised enduement of power from on high, and be successful in winning souls, if we ask, and fulfill the plainly revealed conditions of prevailing prayer. Observe, what I said upon the Lord's Day was upon the same subject, and in addition to what I had previously said. The misapprehension alluded to was this: If we first get rid of all these forms of sin, which prevent our receiving this enduement, have we not already obtained the blessing? What more do we need?

Answer. There is a great difference between the peace and the power of the Holy Spirit in the soul. The disciples were Christians before the Day of Pentecost, and, as such, had a measure of the Holy Spirit. They must have had the peace of sins forgiven, and of a justified state, but yet they had not the enduement of power necessary to the accomplishment of the work assigned them. They had the peace which Christ had given them, but not the power which He had promised. This may be true of all Christians, and right here is, I think, the great mistake of the Church, and of the ministry. They rest in conversion, and do not seek until they obtain this enduement of power from on high. Hence so many professors have no power with either God or man. They prevail with neither. They cling to a hope in Christ, and even enter the ministry, overlooking the admonition to wait until they are endued with power from on high. But let anyone bring all the tithes and offerings into God's treasury, let him lay all upon the altar, and prove God herewith, and he shall find that God "will open the windows of heaven, and pour him out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

## CHAPTER 2 - January 18, 1872

### WHAT IS IT?

The apostles and brethren, on the Day of Pentecost, received it. What did they receive? What power did they exercise after that event?

They received a powerful baptism of the Holy Ghost, a vast increase of divine illumination. This baptism imparted a great diversity of gifts that were used for the accomplishment of their work. It manifestly included the following things: The power of a holy life. The power of a self-sacrificing life. (The manifestation of these must have had great influence with those to whom they proclaimed the gospel.) The power of a cross-bearing life. The power of great meekness, which this baptism enabled them everywhere to exhibit. The power of a loving enthusiasm in proclaiming the gospel. The power of teaching. The power of a loving and living faith. The gift of tongues. An increase of power to work miracles. The gift of inspiration, or the revelation of many truths before unrecognized by them. The power of moral courage to proclaim the gospel and do the bidding of Christ, whatever it cost them.

In their circumstances all these enduements were essential to their success; but neither separately nor all together did they constitute that power from on high which Christ promised, and which they manifestly received. That which they manifestly received as the supreme, crowning, and all-important means of success was the power to prevail with both God and man, the power to fasten saving impressions upon the minds of men. This last was doubtless the thing which they understood Christ to promise. He had commissioned the Church to convert the world to Him. All that I have named above were only means, which could never secure the end unless they were vitalized and made effectual by the power of God. The apostles, doubtless, understood this; and, laying themselves and their all upon the altar, they besieged a Throne of Grace in the spirit of entire consecration to their work.

They did, in fact, receive the gifts before mentioned; but supremely and principally this power to savingly impress men. It was manifested right upon the spot. They began to address the multitude; and, wonderful to tell, three thousand were converted the same hour. But, observe, here was no new power manifested by them upon this occasion, save the gift of tongues.

They wrought no miracle at that time, and used these tongues simply as the means of making themselves understood. Let it be noted that they had not had time to exhibit any other gifts of the Spirit which have been

above named. They had not at that time the advantage of exhibiting a holy life, or any of the powerful graces and gifts of the Spirit. What was said on the occasion, as recorded in the gospel, could not have made the impression that it did, had it not been uttered by them with a new power to make a saving impression upon the people. This power was not the power of inspiration, for they only declared certain facts of their own knowledge. It was not the power of human learning and culture, for they had but little. It was not the power of human eloquence, for there appears to have been but little of it. It was God speaking in and through them. It was a power from on high--God in them making a saving impression upon those to whom they spoke. This power to savingly impress abode with and upon them. It was, doubtless, the great and main thing promised by Christ, and received by the apostles and primitive Christians. It has existed, to a greater or less extent, in the Church ever since. It is a mysterious fact often manifested in a most surprising manner. Sometimes a single sentence, a word, a gesture, or even a look, will convey this power in an overcoming manner.

To the honour of God alone I will say a little of my own experience in this matter. I was powerfully converted on the morning of the 10th of October. In the evening of the same day, and on the morning of the following day, I received overwhelming baptisms of the Holy Ghost, that went through me, as it seemed to me, body and soul. I immediately found myself endued with such power from on high that a few words dropped here and there to individuals were the means of their immediate conversion. My words seemed to fasten like barbed arrows in the souls of men. They cut like a sword. They broke the heart like a hammer. Multitudes can attest to this. Oftentimes a word dropped, without my remembering it, would fasten conviction, and often result in almost immediate conversion. Sometimes I would find myself, in a great measure, empty of this power. I would go out and visit, and find that I made no saving impression. I would exhort and pray, with the same result. I would then set apart a day for private fasting and prayer, fearing that this power had departed from me, and would inquire anxiously after the reason of this apparent emptiness. After humbling myself, and crying out for help, the power would return upon me with all its freshness. This has been the experience of my life.

I could fill a volume with the history of my own experience and observation with respect to this power from on high. It is a fact of consciousness and of observation, but a great mystery. I have said that sometimes a look has in it the power of God. I have

often witnessed this. Let the following fact illustrate it. I once preached, for the first time, in a manufacturing village. The next morning I went into a manufacturing establishment to view its operations. As I passed into the weaving department I beheld a great company of young women, some of whom, I observed, were looking at me, and then at each other, in a manner that indicated a trifling spirit, and that they knew me. I, however, knew none of them. As I approached nearer to those who had recognized me they seemed to increase in their manifestations of lightness of mind. Their levity made a peculiar impression upon me; I felt it to my very heart. I stopped short and looked at them, I know not how, as my whole mind was absorbed with the sense of their guilt and danger. As I settled my countenance upon them I observed that one of them became very much agitated. A thread broke. She attempted to mend it; but her hands trembled in such a manner that she could not do it. I immediately observed that the sensation was spreading, and had become universal among that class of triflers. I looked steadily at them until one after another gave up and paid no more attention to their looms. They fell on their knees, and the influence spread throughout the whole room. I had not spoken a word; and the noise of the looms would have prevented my being heard if I had. In a few minutes all work was abandoned, and tears and lamentations filled the room. At this moment the owner of the factory, who was himself an unconverted man, came in, accompanied, I believe, by the superintendent, who was a professed Christian. When the owner saw the state of things he said to the superintendent, "Stop the mill." What he saw seemed to pierce him to the heart.

"It is more important," he hurriedly remarked, "that these souls should be saved than that this mill should run." As soon as the noise of the machinery had ceased, the owner inquired: "What shall we do? We must have a place to meet, where we can receive instruction." The superintendent replied: "The muleroom will do." The mules were run up out of the way, and all of the hands were notified and assembled in that room. We had a marvelous meeting. I prayed with them, and gave them such instructions as at the time they could bear. The word was with power. Many expressed hope that day; and within a few days, as I was informed, nearly every hand in that great establishment, together with the owner, had hope in Christ.

This power is a great marvel. I have many times seen people unable to endure the word. The most simple and ordinary statements would cut men off from their seats like a sword, would take away their bodily strength, and render them almost as helpless as dead men. Several

times it has been true in my experience that I could not raise my voice, or say anything in prayer or exhortation except in the mildest manner, without wholly overcoming those that were present. This was not because I was preaching terror to the people; but the sweetest sounds of the gospel would overcome them. This power seems sometimes to pervade the atmosphere of one who is highly charged with it. Many times great numbers of persons in a community will be clothed with this power, when the very atmosphere of the whole place seems to be charged with the life of God. Strangers coming into it, and passing through the place, will be instantly smitten with conviction of sin, and in many instances converted to Christ. When Christians humble themselves, and consecrate their all afresh to Christ, and ask for this power, they will often receive such a baptism that they will be instrumental in converting more souls in one day than in all their lifetime before. While Christians remain humble enough to retain this power the work of conversion will go on, till whole communities and regions of country are converted to Christ. The same is true of ministers. But this article is long enough. If you will allow me, I have more to say upon this subject.

### CHAPTER 3 - July 4, 1872

#### THE ENDUEMENT OF THE SPIRIT

Since the publication in the Independent of my article on "The Power from on High" I have been confined with protracted illness. In the meantime I have received numerous letters of inquiry upon that subject. They relate mostly to three particular points of inquiry:

1. They request further illustrations of the exhibition of this power.
2. They inquire, "Who have a right to expect this enduement?"
3. How or upon what conditions can it be obtained?

I am unable to answer these inquiries by letters to individuals. With your leave I propose, if my health continues to improve, to reply to them in several short articles through your columns. In the present number I will relate another exhibition of this power from on high, as witnessed by myself. Soon after I was licensed to preach I went into a region of country where I was an entire stranger. I went there at the request of a Female Missionary Society, located in Oneida County, New

York. Early in May, I think, I visited the town of Antwerp, in the northern part of Jefferson County. I stopped at the village hotel, and there learned that there were no religious meetings held in that town at the time. They had a brick meeting-house, but it was locked up. By personal efforts I got a few people to assemble in the parlour of a Christian lady in the place, and preached to them on the evening after my arrival. As I passed round the village I was shocked with the horrible profanity that I heard among the men wherever I went. I obtained leave to preach in the school-house on the next Sabbath; but before the Sabbath arrived I was much discouraged, and almost terrified, in view of the state of society which I witnessed. On Saturday the Lord applied with power to my heart the following words, addressed by the Lord Jesus to Paul (Acts 18:9,10): "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city." This completely subdued my fears; but my heart was loaded with agony for the people. On Sunday morning I arose early, and retired to a grove not far from the village to pour out my heart before God for a blessing on the labours of the day. I could not express the agony of my soul in words, but struggled with much groaning, and, I believe, with many tears, for an hour or two, without getting relief. I returned to my room in the hotel; but almost immediately came back to the grove. This I did thrice. The last time I got complete relief, just as it was time to go to meeting. I went to the school-house, and found it filled to its utmost capacity. I took out my little pocket Bible, and read for my text: "God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." I exhibited the love of God as contrasted with the manner in which He was treated by those for whom He gave up His Son. I charged home their profanity upon them; and, as I recognized among my hearers several whose profanity I had particularly noticed, in the fullness of my heart and the gushing of my tears I pointed to them, and said, "I heard these men call upon God to damn their fellows." The Word took powerful effect. Nobody seemed offended, but almost everybody greatly melted. At the close of the service the amiable landlord, Mr. Copeland, rose and said that he would open the meeting-house in the afternoon. He did so. The meeting-house was full, and, as in the morning, the Word took powerful effect. Thus a powerful revival commenced in the village, which soon after spread in every direction. I think it was on the second Sabbath after this, when I came out of the pulpit in the afternoon, an aged man approached, and said to me: "Can you not come and preach in our neighborhood? We have never had any religious



meetings there." I inquired the direction and the distance, and appointed to preach there the next afternoon, Monday, at five o'clock, in their school-house. I had preached three times in the village, and attended two prayer-meetings on the Lord's Day; and on Monday I went on foot to fulfill this appointment. The weather was very warm that day, and before I arrived there I felt almost too faint to walk, and greatly discouraged in my mind. I sat down in the shade by the wayside, and felt as if I was too faint to reach there; and if I did, too much discouraged to open my mouth to the people. When I arrived I found the house full, and immediately commenced the service by reading a hymn. They attempted to sing, but the horrible discord agonized me beyond expression. I leaned forward, put my elbows upon my knees and my hands over my ears, and shook my head withal, to shut out the discord, which even then I could barely endure. As soon as they had ceased to sing I cast myself down upon my knees, almost in a state of desperation. The Lord opened the windows of heaven upon me, and gave me great enlargement and power in prayer. Up to this moment I had no idea what text I should use on the occasion. As I rose from my knees the Lord gave me this: "Up, get you out of this place, for the Lord will destroy this city." I told the people, as nearly as I could recollect, where they would find it, and went on to tell them of the destruction of Sodom. I gave them an outline of the history of Abraham and Lot, and their relations to each other; of Abraham's praying for Sodom, and of Lot, as the only pious man that was found in the city. While I was doing this I was struck with the fact that the people looked exceedingly angry about me. Many countenances appeared very threatening, and some of the men near me looked as if they were about to strike me. This I could not understand, as I was only giving them, with great liberty of spirit, some interesting sketches of Bible history. As soon as I had completed the historical sketch I turned upon them, and said that I had understood they had never had any religious meetings in that neighborhood; and, applying that fact, I thrust at them with the sword of the Spirit with all my might. From this moment the solemnity increased with great rapidity. In a few moments there seemed to fall upon the congregation an instantaneous shock. I cannot describe the sensation that I felt, nor that which was apparent in the congregation; but the word seemed literally to cut like a sword. The power from on high came down upon them in such a torrent that they fell from their seats in every direction. In less than a minute nearly the whole congregation were either down on their knees, or on their faces, or in some position prostrate before God. Everyone was crying or groaning for mercy upon his

own soul. They paid no further attention to me or to my preaching. I tried to get their attention; but I could not. I observed the aged man who had invited me there as still retaining his seat near the centre of the house. He was staring around him with a look of unutterable astonishment. Pointing to him, I cried at the top of my voice, "Can't you pray?" He knelt down and roared out a short prayer, about as loud as he could holler, but they paid no attention to him. After looking round for a few moments, I knelt down and put my hand on the head of a young man who was kneeling at my feet, and engaged in prayer for mercy on his soul. I got his attention, and preached Jesus in his ear. In a few moments he seized Jesus by faith, and then broke out in prayer for those around him. I then turned to another in the same way, and with the same result; and then another, and another, till I know not how many had laid hold of Christ and were full of prayer for others. After continuing in this way till nearly sunset I was obliged to commit the meeting to the charge of the old gentleman who had invited me, and go to fulfil an appointment in another place for the evening. In the afternoon of the next day I was sent for to go down to this place, as they had not been able to break up the meeting. They had been obliged to leave the school-house, to give place to the school; but had removed to a private house near by, where I found a number of persons still too anxious and too much loaded down with conviction to go to their homes. These were soon subdued by the Word of God, and I believe all obtained a hope before they went home. Observe, I was a total stranger in that place, had never seen or heard of it, until as I have related. But here, at my second visit, I learned that the place was called Sodom, by reason of its wickedness; and the old man who invited me was called Lot, because he was the only professor of religion in the place. After this manner the revival broke out in this neighborhood. I have not been in that neighborhood for many years; but in 1856, I think, while labouring in Syracuse, New York, I was introduced to a minister of Christ from St. Lawrence County by the name of Cross. He said to me, "Mr. Finney, you don't know me; but do you remember preaching in a place called Sodom?" I said, "I shall never forget it." He replied, "I was then a young man, and was converted at that meeting." He is still living, a pastor in one of the churches in that county, and is the father of the principal of our preparatory department. Those who have lived in that region can testify of the permanent results of that blessed revival. I can only give in words a feeble description of that wonderful manifestation of power from on high attending the preaching of the Word.

**CHAPTER 4 - August 15, 1872****ENDUEMENT OF POWER FROM ON HIGH**

In this article I propose to consider the conditions upon which this enduement of power can be obtained. Let us borrow a little light from the Scriptures. I will not cumber your paper with quotations from the Bible, but simply state a few facts that will readily be recognized by all readers of the Scriptures. If the readers of this article will read in the last Chapter of Matthew and of Luke the commission which Christ gave to His disciples, and in connection read the first and second chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, they will be prepared to appreciate what I have to say in this article.

1st. The disciples had already been converted to Christ, and their faith had been confirmed by His resurrection. But here let me say that conversion to Christ is not to be confounded with a consecration to the great work of the world's conversion. In conversion the soul has to do directly and personally with Christ. It yields up its prejudices, its antagonisms, its self-righteousness, its unbelief, its selfishness; accepts Him, trusts Him, and supremely loves Him. All this the disciples had, more or less, distinctly done. But as yet they had received no definite commission, and no particular enduement of power to fulfil a commission.

2nd. But when Christ had dispelled their great bewilderment resulting from His crucifixion, and confirmed their faith by repeated interviews with them, He gave them their great commission to win all nations to Himself. But He admonished them to tarry at Jerusalem till they were endued with power from on high, which He said they should receive not many days hence. Now observe what they did. They assembled, the men and women, for prayer. They accepted the commission, and, doubtless, came to an understanding of the nature of the commission, and the necessity of the spiritual enduement which Christ had promised. As they continued day after day in prayer and conference they, no doubt, came to appreciate more and more the difficulties that would beset them, and to feel more and more their inadequacy to the task. A consideration of the circumstances and results leads to the conclusion that they, one and all, consecrated themselves, with all they had, to the conversion of the world as their life-work. They must have renounced utterly the idea of living to themselves in any form, and devoted themselves with all their powers to the work set before them. This consecration of themselves to the work, this self-renunciation, this dying to all that the world could offer them, must, in the order of nature, have preceded

their intelligent seeking of the promised enduement of power from on high. They then continued, with one accord, in prayer for the promised baptism of the Spirit, which baptism included all that was essential to their success. Observe, they had a work set before them. They had a promise of power to perform it. They were admonished to wait until the promise was fulfilled. How did they wait? Not in listlessness and inactivity; not in making preparations by study and otherwise to get along without it; not by going about their business, and offering an occasional prayer that the promise might be fulfilled; but they continued in prayer, and persisted in their suit till the answer came. They understood that it was to be a baptism of the Holy Ghost. They understood that it was to be received from Christ. They prayed in faith. They held on, with the firmest expectation, until the enduement came. Now, let these facts instruct us as to the conditions of receiving this enduement of power.

We, as Christians, have the same commission to fulfil. As truly as they did, we need an enduement of power from on high. Of course, the same injunction, to wait upon God till we receive it, is given to us.

We have the same promise that they had. Now, let us take substantially and in spirit the same course that they did. They were Christians, and had a measure of the Spirit to lead them in prayer and in consecration. So have we. Every Christian possesses a measure of the Spirit of Christ, enough of the Holy Spirit to lead us to true consecration and inspire us with the faith that is essential to our prevalence in prayer. Let us, then, not grieve or resist Him: but accept the commission, fully consecrate ourselves, with all we have, to the saving of souls as our great and our only life-work. Let us get on to the altar with all we have and are, and lie there and persist in prayer till we receive the enduement. Now, observe, conversion to Christ is not to be confounded with the acceptance of this commission to convert the world. The first is a personal transaction between the soul and Christ relating to its own salvation. The second is the soul's acceptance of the service in which Christ proposes to employ it. Christ does not require us to make brick without straw. To whom He gives the commission He also gives the admonition and the promise. If the commission is heartily accepted, if the promise is believed, if the admonition to wait upon the Lord till our strength is renewed be complied with, we shall receive the enduement.

It is of the last importance that all Christians should understand that this commission to convert the world is given to them by Christ individually.

Everyone has the great responsibility devolved upon him or her to win as many souls as possible to Christ. This is the great privilege and the great duty of all the disciples of Christ. There are a great many departments in this work. But in every department we may and ought to possess this power, that, whether we preach, or pray, or write, or print, or trade, or travel, take care of children, or administer the government of the state, or whatever we do, our whole life and influence should be permeated with this power. Christ says: "If any man believe in Me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water"—that is, a Christian influence, having in it the element of power to impress the truth of Christ upon the hearts of men, shall proceed from Him. The great want of the Church at present is, first, the realizing conviction that this commission to convert the world is given to each of Christ's disciples as his life-work. I fear I must say that the great mass of professing Christians seem never to have been impressed with this truth. The work of saving souls they leave to ministers. The second great want is a realizing conviction of the necessity of this endowment of power upon every individual soul. Many professors of religion suppose it belongs especially and only to such as are called to preach the Gospel as a life-work. They fail to realize that all are called to preach the Gospel, that the whole life of every Christian is to be a proclamation of the glad tidings. A third want is an earnest faith in the promise of this endowment. A vast many professors of religion, and even ministers, seem to doubt whether this promise is to the whole Church and to every Christian. Consequently, they have no faith to lay hold of it. If it does not belong to all, they don't know to whom it does belong. Of course they cannot lay hold of the promise by faith. A fourth want is that persistence in waiting upon God for it that is enjoined in the Scriptures. They faint before they have prevailed, and, hence, the endowment is not received. Multitudes seem to satisfy themselves with a hope of eternal life for themselves. They never get ready to dismiss the question of their own salvation, leaving that, as settled, with Christ. They don't get ready to accept the great commission to work for the salvation of others, because their faith is so weak that they do not steadily leave the question of their own salvation in the hands of Christ; and even some ministers of the Gospel, I find, are in the same condition, and halting in the same way, unable to give themselves wholly to the work of saving others, because in a measure unsettled about their own salvation. It is amazing to witness the extent to which the Church has practically lost sight of the necessity of this endowment of power. Much is said of our dependence upon the Holy Spirit by almost everybody; but how little is this dependence realized.

Christians and even ministers go to work without it. I mourn to be obliged to say that the ranks of the ministry seem to be filling up with those who do not possess it. May the Lord have mercy upon us! Will this last remark be thought uncharitable? If so, let the report of the Home Missionary Society, for example, be heard upon this subject. Surely, something is wrong.

An average of five souls won to Christ by each missionary of that Society in a year's toil certainly indicates a most alarming weakness in the ministry. Have all or even a majority of these ministers been endued with the power which Christ promised? If not, why not? But, if they have, is this all that Christ intended by His promise? In a former article I have said that the reception of this endowment of power is instantaneous. I do not mean to assert that in every instance the recipient was aware of the precise time at which the power commenced to work mightily within him. It may have commenced like the dew and increased to a shower. I have alluded to the report of the Home Missionary Society. Not that I suppose that the brethren employed by that Society are exceptionally weak in faith and power as labourers for God. On the contrary, from my acquaintance with some of them, I regard them as among our most devoted and self-denying labourers in the cause of God. This fact illustrates the alarming weakness that pervades every branch of the Church, both clergy and laity. Are we not weak? Are we not criminally weak? It has been suggested that by writing thus I should offend the ministry and the Church. I cannot believe that the statement of so palpable a fact will be regarded as an offence. The fact is, there is something sadly defective in the education of the ministry and of the Church. The ministry is weak, because the Church is weak. And then, again, the Church is kept weak by the weakness of the ministry. Oh for a conviction of the necessity of this endowment of power and faith in the promise of Christ!

## CHAPTER 5 - September 5, 1872

### IS IT A HARD SAYING?

In a former article I said that the want of an endowment of power from on high should be deemed a disqualification for a pastor, a deacon or elder, a Sabbath-school superintendent, a professor in a Christian college, and especially for a professor in a theological seminary. Is this a hard saying? Is this an uncharitable saying? Is it unjust? Is it unreasonable? Is it unscriptural? Suppose any one of the Apostles, or



those present on the day of Pentecost, had failed, through apathy, selfishness, unbelief, indolence, or ignorance, to obtain this endowment of power, would it have been uncharitable, unjust, unreasonable, or unscriptural, to have accounted him disqualified for the work which Christ had appointed them?

Christ had expressly informed them that without this endowment they could do nothing. He had expressly enjoined it upon them not to attempt it in their own strength, but to tarry at Jerusalem until they received the necessary power from on high. He had also expressly promised that if they tarried, in the sense which He intended, they should receive it "not many days hence." They evidently understood Him to enjoin upon them to tarry in the sense of a constant waiting upon Him in prayer and supplication for the blessing. Now, suppose that any one of them had stayed away and attended to his own business, and waited for the sovereignty of God to confer this power. He of course would have been disqualified for the work; and if his fellow-Christians, who had obtained this power, had deemed him so, would it have been uncharitable, unreasonable, unscriptural?

And is it not true of all to whom the command to disciple the world is given, and to whom the promise of this power is made, if through any shortcoming or fault of theirs they fail to obtain this gift, that they are in fact disqualified for the work, and especially for any official station? Are they not, in fact, disqualified for leadership in the sacramental host? Are they qualified for teachers of those who are to do the work? If it is a fact that they do lack this power, however this defect is to be accounted for, it is also a fact that they are not qualified for teachers of God's people; and if they are seen to be disqualified because they lack this power, it must be reasonable and right and Scriptural so to deem them, and so to speak of them, and so to treat them. Who has a right to complain? Surely, they have not. Shall the Church of God be burdened with teachers and leaders who lack this fundamental qualification, when their failing to possess it must be their own fault? The manifest apathy, indolence, ignorance, and unbelief that exist upon this subject are truly amazing. They are inexcusable. They must be highly criminal. With such a command to convert the world ringing in our ears; with such an injunction to wait in constant, wrestling prayer till we receive the power; with such a promise, made by such a Savior, held out to us of all the help we need from Christ Himself, what excuse can we offer for being powerless in this great work? What an awful responsibility rests upon us, upon the whole Church, upon every Christian! One might ask, How is apathy,

how is indolence, how is the common fatal neglect possible, under such circumstances? If any of the primitive Christians to whom this commandment was given had failed to receive this power, should we not think them greatly to blame? If such default had been sin in them, how much more in us with all the light of history and of fact blazing upon us, which they had not received? Some ministers and many Christians treat this matter as if it were to be left to the sovereignty of God, without any persistent effort to obtain this endowment. Did the primitive Christians so understand and treat it? No, indeed. They gave themselves no rest till this baptism of power came upon them. I once heard a minister preaching upon the subject of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. He treated it as a reality; and when he came to the question of how it was to be obtained, he said truly that it was to be obtained as the Apostles obtained it on the day of Pentecost. I was much gratified, and listened eagerly to hear him press the obligation on his hearers to give themselves no rest till they had obtained it. But in this I was disappointed: for before he sat down he seemed to relieve the audience from the feeling of obligation to obtain the baptism, and left the impression that the matter was to be left to the discretion of God, and said what appeared to imply a censure of those that vehemently and persistently urged upon God the fulfilment of the promise. Neither did he hold out to them the certainty of their obtaining the blessing if they fulfilled the conditions. The sermon was in most respects a good one; but I think the audience left without any feeling of encouragement or sense of obligation to seek earnestly the baptism. This is a common fault of the sermons that I hear. There is much that is instructive in them; but they fail to leave either a sense of obligation or a feeling of great encouragement, as to the use of means, upon the congregation. They are greatly defective in their winding up. They neither leave the conscience under a pressure nor the whole mind under the stimulus of hope. The doctrine is often good, but the "what then?" is often left out. Many ministers and professors of religion seem to be theorizing, criticizing, and endeavouring to justify their neglect of this attainment. So did not the Apostles and other Christians. It was not a question which they endeavoured to grasp with their intellects before they embraced it with their hearts. It was with them, as it should be with us, a question of faith in a promise. I find many persons endeavouring to grasp with their intellect and settle as a theory questions of pure experience. They are puzzling themselves with endeavours to apprehend with the intellect that which is to be received as a conscious experience through faith.

There is need of a great reformation in the Church on this particular point. The Churches should wake up to the facts in the case, and take a new position, a firm stand in regard to the qualifications of ministers and Church officers. They should refuse to settle a man as pastor of whose qualifications for the office in this respect they are not well satisfied. Whatever else he may have to recommend him, if his record does not show that he has this enduement of power to win souls to Christ, they should deem him unqualified. It used to be the custom of Churches, and I believe in some places is so still, in presenting a call to the pastorate, to certify that, having witnessed the spiritual fruits of his labours, they deem him qualified and called of God to the work of the ministry. Churches should be well satisfied in some way that they call a fruitful minister, and not a dry stalk—that is, a mere intellect, a mere head with little heart; an elegant writer, but with no unction; a great logician, but of little faith; a fervid imagination, it may be, with no Holy Ghost power.

The Churches should hold the theological seminaries to a strict account in this matter; and until they do, I fear the theological seminaries will never wake up to their responsibility. Some years since, one branch of the Scotch Church was so tried with the want of unction and power in the ministers furnished them by their theological seminary that they passed a resolution that until the seminary reformed in this respect they would not employ ministers that were educated there. This was a necessary, a just, a timely rebuke, which I believe had a very salutary effect. A theological seminary ought by all means to be a school not merely for the teaching of doctrine, but also, and even more especially, for the development of Christian experience. To be sure the intellect should be well furnished in those schools; but it is immeasurably more important that the pupils should be led to a thorough personal knowledge of Christ, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, and to be made conformable to His death. A theological seminary that aims mainly at the culture of the intellect, and sends out learned men who lack this enduement of power from on high, is a snare and a stumbling-block to the Church. The seminaries should recommend no one to the Churches, however great his intellectual attainments, unless he has this most essential of all attainments, the enduement of power from on high. The seminaries should be held as incompetent to educate men for the ministry if it is seen that they send out men as ministers who have not this most essential qualification. The Churches should inform themselves, and look to those seminaries which furnish not merely the best educated, but the most

unctuous and spiritually powerful ministers. It is amazing that, while it is generally admitted that the enduement of power from on high is a reality, and essential to ministerial success, practically it should be treated by the Churches and by the schools as of comparatively little importance. In theory it is admitted to be everything; but in practice treated as if it were nothing. From the Apostles to the present day it has been seen that men of very little human culture, but endued with this power, have been highly successful in winning souls to Christ; whilst men of the greatest learning, with all that the schools have done for them, have been powerless so far as the proper work of the ministry is concerned. And yet we go on laying ten times more stress on human culture than we do on the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Practically human culture is treated as infinitely more important than the enduement of power from on high. The seminaries are furnished with learned men, but often not with men of spiritual power; hence, they do not insist upon this enduement of power as indispensable to the work of the ministry. Students are pressed almost beyond endurance with study and the culture of the intellect, while scarcely an hour in a day is given to instruction in Christian experience. Indeed, I do not know that so much as one course of lectures on Christian experience is given in the theological seminaries. But religion is an experience. It is a consciousness. Personal intercourse with God is the secret of the whole of it. There is a world of most essential learning in this direction wholly neglected by the theological seminaries. With them doctrine, philosophy, theology, Church history, sermonizing are everything, and real heart-union with God nothing. Spiritual power to prevail with God and to prevail with man has but little place in their teaching. I have often been surprised at the judgment men form in regard to the prospective usefulness of young men preparing for the ministry. Even professors are very apt, I see, to deceive themselves on this subject. If a young man is a good scholar, a fine writer, makes good progress in exegesis, and stands high in intellectual culture, they have strong hopes of him, even though they must know in many such cases that these young men cannot pray; that they have no unction, no power in prayer, no spirit of wrestling, of agonizing, and prevailing with God. Yet they are expecting them, because of their culture, to make their mark in the ministry, to be highly useful. For my part, I expect no such thing of this class of men. I have infinitely more hope of the usefulness of a man who, at any cost, will keep up daily intercourse with God; who is yearning for and struggling after the highest possible spiritual attainment; who will not live without daily prevalence in prayer and being clothed with power

from on high. Churches, presbyteries, associations, and whoever license young men for the ministry, are often very faulty in this respect. They will spend hours in informing themselves of the intellectual culture of the candidates, but scarcely as many minutes in ascertaining their heart culture, and what they know of the power of Christ to save from sin, what they know of the power of prayer, and whether and to what extent they are endued with power from on high to win souls to Christ. The whole proceeding on such occasions cannot but leave the impression that human learning is preferred to spiritual unction. Oh! that it were different, and that we were all agreed, practically, now and for ever, to hold fast to the promise of Christ, and never think ourselves or anybody else to be fit for the great work of the Church till we have received a rich endowment of power from on high. I beg of my brethren, and especially my younger brethren, not to conceive of these articles as written in the spirit of reproach. I beg the Churches, I beg the seminaries, to receive a word of exhortation from an old man, who has had some experience in these things, and one whose heart mourns and is weighed down in view of the shortcomings of the Church, the ministers, and the seminaries on this subject. Brethren, I beseech you to more thoroughly consider this matter, to wake up and lay it to heart, and rest not till this subject of the endowment of power from on high is brought forward into its proper place, and takes that prominent and practical position in view of the whole Church that Christ designed it should.

## CHAPTER 6 - March 5, 1874

### PREVAILING PRAYER

Prevailing prayer is that which secures an answer. Saying prayers is not offering prevailing prayer. The prevalence of prayer does not depend so much on quantity as on quality. I do not know how better to approach this subject than by relating a fact of my own experience before I was converted. I relate it because I fear such experiences are but too common among unconverted men.

I do not recollect having ever attended a prayer-meeting until after I began the study of law. Then, for the first time, I lived in a neighbourhood where there was a prayer-meeting weekly. I had neither known, heard, nor seen much of religion; hence I had no settled opinions about it. Partly from curiosity and partly from an uneasiness of mind upon the subject, which I could not

well define, I began to attend that prayer-meeting. About the same time I bought the first Bible that I ever owned, and began to read it. I listened to the prayers which I heard offered in those prayer-meetings with all the attention that I could give to prayers so cold and formal. In every prayer they prayed for the gift and outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Both in their prayers and in their remarks, which were occasionally interspersed, they acknowledged that they did not prevail with God. This was most evident, and had almost made me a sceptic.

Seeing me so frequently in their prayer-meeting, the leader, on one occasion, asked me if I did not wish them to pray for me. I replied: "No." I said: "I suppose that I need to be prayed for, but your prayers are not answered. You confess it yourselves." I then expressed my astonishment at this fact, in view of what the Bible said about the prevalence of prayer. Indeed, for some time my mind was much perplexed and in doubt in view of Christ's teaching on the subject of prayer and the manifest facts before me, from week to week, in this prayer-meeting. Was Christ a divine teacher? Did He actually teach what the Gospels attributed to Him? Did He mean what He said? Did prayer really avail to secure blessings from God? If so, what was I to make of what I witnessed from week to week and month to month in that prayer-meeting? Were they real Christians? Was that which I heard real prayer, in the Bible sense? Was it such prayer as Christ had promised to answer? Here I found the solution.

I became convinced that they were under a delusion; that they did not prevail because they had no right to prevail. They did not comply with the conditions upon which God had promised to hear prayer. Their prayers were just such as God had promised not to answer. It was evident they were overlooking the fact that they were in danger of praying themselves into scepticism in regard to the value of prayer.

In reading my Bible I noticed such revealed conditions as the following:

- (a) Faith in God as the answerer of prayer. This, it is plain, involves the expectation of receiving what we ask.
- (b) Another revealed condition is the asking according to the revealed will of God. This plainly implies asking not only for such things as God is willing to grant, but also asking in such a state of mind as God can accept. I fear it is common for professed Christians to overlook the state of mind in which God requires them to be as a condition of answering their prayers.

For example: In offering the Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come," it is plain that sincerity is a condition of prevailing with God. But sincerity in offering this petition



implies the whole heart and life devotion of the petitioner to the building up of this kingdom. It implies the sincere and thorough consecration of all that we have and all that we are to this end. To utter this petition in any other state of mind involves hypocrisy, and is an abomination.

So in the next petition, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," God has not promised to hear this petition unless it be sincerely offered. But sincerity implies a state of mind that accepts the whole revealed will of God, so far as we understand it, as they accept it in heaven. It implies a loving, confiding, universal obedience to the whole known will of God, whether that will is revealed in His Word, by His Spirit, or in His providence. It implies that we hold ourselves and all that we have and are as absolutely and cordially at God's disposal as do the inhabitants of heaven. If we fall short of this, and withhold anything whatever from God, we "regard iniquity in our hearts," and God will not hear us.

Sincerity in offering this petition implies a state of entire and universal consecration to God. Anything short of this is withholding from God that which is His due. It is "turning away our ear from hearing the law." But what saith the Scriptures? "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination." Do professed Christians understand this?

What is true of offering these two petitions is true of all prayer. Do Christians lay this to heart? Do they consider that all professed prayer is an abomination if it be not offered in a state of entire consecration of all that we have and are to God? If we do not offer ourselves with and in our prayers, with all that we have; if we are not in a state of mind that cordially accepts and, so far as we know, perfectly conforms to the whole will of God, our prayer is an abomination. How awfully profane is the use very frequently made of the Lord's Prayer, both in public and in private. To hear men and women chatter over the Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," while their lives are anything but conformed to the known will of God is shocking and revolting. To hear men pray, "Thy kingdom come," while it is most evident that they are making little or no sacrifice or effort to promote this kingdom, forces the conviction of bare-faced hypocrisy. Such is not prevailing prayer.

(c) Unselfishness is a condition of prevailing prayer. "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (James iv:3).

(d) Another condition of prevailing prayer is a conscience void of offense toward God and man. 1 John iii:20, 22: "If our heart (conscience) condemn us, God is greater than our heart and knoweth all things; if our

heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God, and whatsoever we ask we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." Here two things are made plain: first, that to prevail with God we must keep a conscience void of offense; and, second, that we must keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.

(e) A pure heart is also a condition of prevailing prayer. Psalm lxi:18: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

(f) All due confession and restitution to God and man is another condition of prevailing prayer. Proverbs xxviii:13: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper. Whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy."

(g) Clean hands is another condition. Psalm xxvi:6: "I will wash mine hands in innocence, so will I compass thine altar, O Lord." 1 Timothy 6:8: "I will that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."

(h) The settling of disputes and animosities among brethren is a condition. Matthew v:23,24: "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way. First be reconciled to thy brother, then come and offer thy gift."

(i) Humility is another condition of prevailing prayer. James iv:6: "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."

(j) Taking up the stumbling-blocks is another condition. Ezekiel xiv:3: "Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their face. Should I be inquired of at all by them?"

(k) A forgiving spirit is a condition. Matthew vi:12: "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors"; 15: "But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive your trespasses."

(l) The exercise of a truthful spirit is a condition. Psalm li:6: "Behold, Thou desireth truth in the inward parts." If the heart be not in a truthful state, if it be not entirely sincere and unselfish, we regard iniquity in our hearts; and, therefore, the Lord will not hear us.

(m) Praying in the name of Christ is a condition of prevailing prayer.

(n) The inspiration of the Holy Spirit is another condition. All truly prevailing prayer is inspired by the Holy Ghost. Romans viii:26, 27: "For we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be

uttered. And He that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." This is the true spirit of prayer. This is being led by the Spirit in prayer. It is the only really prevailing prayer. Do professed Christians really understand this? Do they believe that unless they live and walk in the Spirit, unless they are taught how to pray by the intercession of the Spirit in them, they cannot prevail with God?

(o) Fervency is a condition. A prayer, to be prevailing, must be fervent. James v:16: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

(p) Perseverance or persistence in prayer is often a condition of prevailing. See the case of Jacob, of Daniel, of Elijah, of the Syrophenician woman, of the unjust judge, and the teaching of the Bible generally.

(q) Travail of soul is often a condition of prevailing prayer. "As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." "My little children," said Paul, "for whom I travail in birth again, till Christ be formed in you." This implies that he had travailed in birth for them before they were converted. Indeed, travail of soul in prayer is the only real revival prayer. If anyone does not know what this is, he does not understand the spirit of prayer. He is not in a revival state. He does not understand the passage already quoted--Romans viii:26, 27. Until he understands this agonizing prayer he does not know the real secret of revival power.

(r) Another condition of prevailing prayer is the consistent use of means to secure the object prayed for, if means are within our reach, and are known by us to be necessary to the securing of the end. To pray for a revival of religion, and use no other means, is to tempt God. This, I could plainly see, was the case of those who offered prayer in the prayer-meeting of which I have spoken. They continued to offer prayer for a revival of religion, but out of meeting they were as silent as death on the subject, and opened not their mouths to those around them. They continued this inconsistency until a prominent impenitent man in the community administered to them in my presence a terrible rebuke. He expressed just what I deeply felt. He rose, and with the utmost solemnity and tearfulness said: "Christian people, what can you mean? You continue to pray in these meetings for a revival of religion. You often exhort each other here to wake up and use means to promote a revival. You assure each other, and assure us who are impenitent, that we are in the way to hell; and I believe it. You also insist that if you should wake up,

and use the appropriate means, there would be a revival, and we should be converted. You tell us of our great danger, and that our souls are worth more than all worlds; and yet you keep about your comparatively trifling employments and use no such means. We have no revival and our souls are not saved." Here he broke down and fell, sobbing, back into his seat. This rebuke fell heavily upon that prayer-meeting, as I shall ever remember. It did them good; for it was not long before the members of that prayer-meeting broke down, and we had a revival. I was present in the first meeting in which the revival spirit was manifest. Oh! how changed was the tone of their prayers, confessions, and supplications. I remarked, in returning home, to a friend: "What a change has come over these Christians. This must be the beginning of a revival." Yes; a wonderful change comes over all the meetings whenever the Christian people are revived. Then their confessions mean something. They mean reformation and restitution. They mean work. They mean the use of means. They mean the opening of their pockets, their hearts and hands, and the devotion of all their powers to the promotion of the work.

(s) Prevailing prayer is specific. It is offered for a definite object. We cannot prevail for everything at once. In all the cases recorded in the Bible in which prayer was answered, it is noteworthy that the petitioner prayed for a definite object.

(t) Another condition of prevailing prayer is that we mean what we say in prayer; that we make no false pretenses; in short, that we are entirely childlike and sincere, speaking out of the heart, nothing more nor less than we mean, feel, and believe.

(u) Another condition of prevailing prayer is a state of mind that assumes the good faith of God in all His promises.

(v) Another condition is "watching unto prayer" as well as "praying in the Holy Ghost." By this I mean guarding against everything that can quench or grieve the Spirit of God in our hearts. Also watching for the answer, in a state of mind that will diligently use all necessary means, at any expense, and add entreaty to entreaty.

When the fallow ground is thoroughly broken up in the hearts of Christians, when they have confessed and made restitution--if the work be thorough and honest--they will naturally and inevitably fulfill the conditions, and will prevail in prayer. But it cannot be too distinctly understood that none others will. What we commonly hear in prayer and conference meetings is not prevailing prayer. It is often astonishing and lamentable to witness the delusions that prevail upon the subject. Who that

has witnessed real revivals of religion has not been struck with the change that comes over the whole spirit and manner of the prayers of really revived Christians? I do not think I ever could have been converted if I had not discovered the solution of the question: "Why is it that so much that is called prayer is not answered?"

## CHAPTER 7 - November 2, 1871

### HOW TO WIN SOULS

"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." --1 Timothy iv:16.

I beg leave in this article to suggest to my younger brethren in the ministry some thoughts on the philosophy of so preaching the gospel as to secure the salvation of souls. They are the result of much study, much prayer for divine teaching, and a practical experience of many years.

I understand the admonition at the head of this article to relate to the matter, order, and manner of preaching.

The problem is, How shall we win souls wholly to Christ? Certainly we must win them away from themselves.

1st. They are free moral agents, of course--rational, accountable.

2nd. They are in rebellion against God, wholly alienated, intensely prejudiced, and committed against Him.

3rd. They are committed to self-gratification as the end of their being.

4th. This committed state is moral depravity, the fountain of sin within them, from which flow by a natural law all their sinful ways. This committed voluntary state is their "wicked heart." This it is that needs a radical change.

5th. God is infinitely benevolent, and unconverted sinners are supremely selfish, so that they are radically opposed to God. Their committal to the gratification of their appetites and propensities is known in Bible language as the "carnal mind"; or, as in the margin, "the minding of the flesh," which is enmity against God.

6th. This enmity is voluntary, and must be overcome, if at all, by the Word of God, made effectual by the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

7th. The gospel is adapted to this end, and when wisely presented we may confidently expect the effectual co-operation of the Holy Spirit. This is implied in our

commission, "Go and disciple all nations, and lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

8th. If we are unwise, illogical, unphilosophical, and out of all natural order in presenting the gospel, we have no warrant for expecting divine co-operation.

9th. In winning souls, as in everything else, God works through and in accordance with natural laws. Hence, if we would win souls we must wisely adapt means to this end. We must present those truths and in that order adapted to the natural laws of mind, of thought and mental action. A false mental philosophy will greatly mislead us, and we shall often be found ignorantly working against the agency of the Holy Spirit.

10th. Sinners must be convicted of their enmity. They do not know God, and consequently are often ignorant of the opposition of their hearts to Him. "By the law is the knowledge of sin," because by the law the sinner gets his first true idea of God. By the law he first learns that God is perfectly benevolent, and infinitely opposed to all selfishness. This law, then, should be arrayed in all its majesty against the selfishness and enmity of the sinner.

11th. This law carries irresistible conviction of its righteousness, and no moral agent can doubt it.

12th. All men know that they have sinned, but all are not convicted of the guilt and ill desert of sin. The many are careless and do not feel the burden of sin, the horrors and terrors of remorse, and have not a sense of condemnation and of being lost.

13th. But without this they cannot understand or appreciate the gospel method of salvation. One cannot intelligently and heartily ask or accept a pardon until he sees and feels the fact and justice of his condemnation.

14th. It is absurd to suppose that a careless, unconvicted sinner can intelligently and thankfully accept the gospel offer of pardon until he accepts the righteousness of God in his condemnation. Conversion to Christ is an intelligent change. Hence the conviction of ill desert must precede the acceptance of mercy; for without this conviction the soul does not understand its need of mercy. Of course, the offer is rejected. The gospel is no glad tidings to the careless, unconvicted sinner.

15th. The spirituality of the law should be unsparingly applied to the conscience until the sinner's self-righteousness is annihilated, and he stands speechless and self-condemned before a holy God.

16th. In some men this conviction is already ripe, and the preacher may at once present Christ, with the hope of His being accepted; but at ordinary times such cases



are exceptional. The great mass of sinners are careless, unconvicted, and to assume their conviction and preparedness to receive Christ, and, hence, to urge sinners immediately to accept Him, is to begin at the wrong end of our work—to render our teaching unintelligible. And such a course will be found to have been a mistaken one, whatever present appearances and professions may indicate. The sinner may obtain a hope under such teaching; but, unless the Holy Spirit supplies something which the preacher has failed to do, it will be found to be a false one. All the essential links of truth must be supplied.

17th. When the law has done its work, annihilated self-righteousness, and shut the sinner up to the acceptance of mercy, he should be made to understand the delicacy and danger of dispensing with the execution of the penalty when the precept of law has been violated.

18th. Right here the sinner should be made to understand that from the benevolence of God he cannot justly infer that God can consistently forgive him. For unless public justice can be satisfied, the law of universal benevolence forbids the forgiveness of sin. If public justice is not regarded in the exercise of mercy, the good of the public is sacrificed to that of the individual. God will never do this.

19th. This teaching will shut the sinner up to look for some offering to public justice.

20th. Now give him the atonement as a revealed fact, and shut him up to Christ as his own sin offering. Press the revealed fact that God has accepted the death of Christ as a substitute for the sinner's death, and that this is to be received upon the testimony of God.

21st. Being already crushed into contrition by the convicting power of the law, the revelation of the love of God manifested in the death of Christ will naturally beget great self-loathing, and that godly sorrow that needeth not to be repented of. Under this showing the sinner can never forgive himself. God is holy and glorious; and he a sinner, saved by sovereign grace. This teaching may be more or less formal as the souls you address are more or less thoughtful, intelligent, and careful to understand.

22nd. It was not by accident that the dispensation of law preceded the dispensation of grace; but it is in the natural order of things, in accordance with established mental laws, and evermore the law must prepare the way for the gospel. To overlook this in instructing souls is almost certain to result in false hope, the introduction of a false standard of Christian experience, and to fill the Church with spurious converts. Time will make this plain.

23rd. The truth should be preached to the persons present, and so personally applied as to compel everyone to feel that you mean him or her. As has been often said of a certain preacher: "He does not preach, but explains what other people preach, and seems to be talking directly to me."

24th. This course will rivet attention, and cause your hearers to lose sight of the length of your sermon. They will tire if they feel no personal interest in what you say. To secure their individual interest in what you are saying is an indispensable condition of their being converted. And, while their individual interest is thus awakened, and held fast to your subject, they will seldom complain of the length of your sermon. In nearly all cases, if the people complain of the length of our sermons, it is because we fail to interest them personally in what we say.

25th. If we fail to interest them personally, it is either because we do not address them personally, or because we lack unction and earnestness, or because we lack clearness and force, or certainly because we lack something that we ought to possess. To make them feel that we and that God means them is indispensable.

26th. Do not think that earnest piety alone can make you successful in winning souls. This is only one condition of success. There must be common sense, there must be spiritual wisdom in adapting means to the end. Matter and manner and order and time and place all need to be wisely adjusted to the end we have in view.

27th. God may sometimes convert souls by men who are not spiritually minded, when they possess that natural sagacity which enables them to adapt means to that end; but the Bible warrants us in affirming that these are exceptional cases. Without this sagacity and adaptation of means to this end a spiritual mind will fail to win souls to Christ.

28th. Souls need instruction in accordance with the measure of their intelligence. A few simple truths, when wisely applied and illuminated by the Holy Ghost, will convert children to Christ. I say wisely applied, for they too are sinners, and need the application of the law, as a schoolmaster, to bring them to Christ, that they may be justified by faith. It will sooner or later appear that supposed conversions to Christ are spurious where the preparatory law work has been omitted, and Christ has not been embraced as a Saviour from sin and condemnation.

29th. Sinners of education and culture, who are, after all, unconvicted and sceptical in their hearts, need a vastly more extended and thorough application of truth.

Professional men need the gospel net to be thrown quite around them, with no break through which they can escape; and, when thus dealt with, they are all the more sure to be converted in proportion to their real intelligence. I have found that a course of lectures addressed to lawyers, and adapted to their habits of thought and reasoning, is most sure to convert them.

30th. To be successful in winning souls, we need to be observing--to study individual character, to press the facts of experience, observation, and revelation upon the consciences of all classes.

31st. Be sure to explain the terms you use. Before I was converted, I failed to hear the terms repentance, faith, regeneration, and conversion intelligibly explained. Repentance was described as a feeling. Faith was represented as an intellectual act or state, and not as a voluntary act of trust. Regeneration was represented as some physical change in the nature, produced by the direct power of the Holy Ghost, instead of a voluntary change of the ultimate preference of the soul, produced by the spiritual illumination of the Holy Ghost. Even conversion was represented as being the work of the Holy Ghost in such a sense as to cover up the fact that it is the sinner's own act, under the persuasions of the Holy Ghost.

32nd. Urge the fact that repentance involves the voluntary and actual renunciation of all sin; that it is a radical change of mind toward God.

33rd. Also the fact that saving faith is heart trust in Christ; that it works by love, it purifies the heart, and overcomes the world; that no faith is saving that has not these attributes.

34th. The sinner is required to put forth certain mental acts. What these are he needs to understand. Error in mental philosophy but embarrasses, and may fatally deceive the inquiring soul. Sinners are often put upon a wrong track. They are put upon a strain to feel instead of putting forth the required acts of will. Before my conversion I never received from man any intelligible idea of the mental acts that God required of me.

35th. The deceitfulness of sin renders the inquiring soul exceedingly exposed to delusion; therefore it behoves teachers to beat about every bush, and to search out every nook and corner where a soul can find a false refuge. Be so thorough and discriminating as to render it as nearly impossible as the nature of the case will admit that the inquirer should entertain a false hope.

36th. Do not fear to be thorough. Do not through false pity put on a plaster where the probe is needed. Do not fear that you shall discourage the convicted sinner, and turn him back, by searching him out to the bottom. If the

Holy Spirit is dealing with him, the more you search and probe the more impossible it will be for the soul to turn back or rest in sin.

37th. If you would save the soul, do not spare a right hand, or right eye, or any darling idol; but see to it that every form of sin is given up. Insist upon full confession of wrong to all that have a right to confession. Insist upon full restitution, so far as is possible, to all injured parties. Do not fall short of the express teachings of Christ on this subject. Whoever the sinner may be, let him distinctly understand that unless he forsakes all that he has he cannot be the disciple of Christ. Insist upon entire and universal consecration of all the powers of body and mind, and of all the property, possessions, character, and influence to God. Insist upon the total abandonment to God of all ownership of self, or anything else, as a condition of being accepted.

38th. Understand yourself, and, if possible, make the sinner understand, that nothing short of this is involved in true faith or true repentance, and that true consecration involves them all.

39th. Keep constantly before the sinner's mind that it is the personal Christ with whom he is dealing, that God in Christ is seeking his reconciliation to Himself, and that the condition of his reconciliation is that he gives up his will and his whole being to God--that he "leave not a hoof behind."

40th. Assure him that "God has given to him eternal life, and this life is in His Son"; that "Christ is made unto him wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption"; and that from first to last he is to find his whole salvation in Christ.

41st. When satisfied that the soul intelligently receives all this doctrine, and the Christ herein revealed, then remember that he must persevere unto the end, as the further condition of his salvation. Here you have before you the great work of preventing the soul from backsliding, of securing its permanent sanctification and sealing for eternal glory.

42nd. Does not the very common backsliding in heart of converts indicate some grave defect in the teachings of the pulpit on this subject?

What does it mean that so many hopeful converts, within a few months of their apparent conversion, lose their first love, lose all their fervency in religion, neglect their duty, and live on in name Christians, but in spirit and life worldlings?

43rd. A truly successful preacher must not only win souls to Christ, but must keep them won. He must not

only secure their conversion, but their permanent sanctification.

44th. Nothing in the Bible is more expressly promised in this life than permanent sanctification. 1 Thessalonians v:23, 24: "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it." This is unquestionably a prayer of the apostle for permanent sanctification in this life, with an express promise that He who has called us will do it.

45th. We learn from the Scriptures that "after we believe" we are, or may be, sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, and that this sealing is the earnest of our salvation. Ephesians i:13,14: "In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory." This sealing, this earnest of our inheritance, is that which renders our salvation sure. Hence, in Ephesians 4:30, the apostle says: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." And in 2 Corinthians 1:21 and 22 the apostle says: "Now He which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God, who hath also sealed us and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." Thus we are established in Christ and anointed by the Spirit, and also sealed by the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. And this, remember, is a blessing that we receive after that we believe, as Paul has informed us in his Epistle to the Ephesians, above quoted. Now, it is of the first importance that converts should be taught not to rest short of this permanent sanctification, this sealing, this being established in Christ by the special anointing of the Holy Ghost.

46th. Now, brethren, unless we know what this means by our own experience, and lead converts to this experience, we fail most lamentably and essentially in our teaching. We leave out the very cream and fullness of the Gospel.

47th. It should be understood that while this experience is rare amongst ministers it will be discredited by the Churches, and it will be next to impossible for an isolated preacher of this doctrine to overcome the unbelief of his Church. They will feel doubtful about it, because so few preach it or believe in it; and will account for their pastor's insisting upon it by saying that his experience is owing to his peculiar temperament, and thus they will fail to receive this anointing because

of their unbelief. Under such circumstances it is all the more necessary to insist much upon the importance and privilege of permanent sanctification.

48th. Sin consists in carnal-mindedness, in "obeying the desires of the flesh and of the mind." Permanent sanctification consists in entire and permanent consecration to God. It implies the refusal to obey the desires of the flesh or of the mind. The baptism or sealing of the Holy Spirit subdues the power of the desires, and strengthens and confirms the will in resisting the impulse of desire, and in abiding permanently in a state of making the whole being an offering to God.

49th. If we are silent upon this subject, the natural inference will be that we do not believe in it, and, of course, that we know nothing about it in experience. This will inevitably be a stumbling-block to the Church.

50th. Since this is undeniably an important doctrine, and plainly taught in the gospel, and is, indeed, the marrow and fatness of the gospel, to fail in teaching this is to rob the Church of its richest inheritance.

51st. The testimony of the Church, and to a great extent of the ministry, on the subject has been lamentably defective. This legacy has been withheld from the Church, and is it any wonder that she so disgracefully backslides? The testimony of the comparatively few, here and there, that insist upon this doctrine is almost nullified by the counter-testimony or culpable silence of the great mass of Christ's witnesses.

52nd. My dear brethren, my convictions are so ripe and my feelings so deep upon this subject that I must not conceal from you my fears that lack of personal experience, in many cases, is the reason of this great defect in preaching the gospel. I do not say this to reproach you; it is not in my heart to do so. It is not wonderful that many of you, at least, have not this experience. Your religious training has been defective. You have been led to take a different view of this subject. Various causes have operated to prejudice you against this blessed doctrine of the glorious gospel. You have not intellectually believed it; and, of course, have not received Christ in His fullness into your hearts. Perhaps this doctrine to you has been a stumbling-block and a rock of offence; but I pray you let not prejudice prevail, but venture upon Christ by a present acceptance of Him as your wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, and see if He will not do for you exceeding abundantly above all that you asked or thought.

53rd. No man, saint or sinner, should be left by us to rest or be quiet in the indulgence of any sin. No one



should be allowed to entertain the hope of heaven, if we can prevent it, who lives in the indulgence of known sin in any form. Our constant demand and persuasion should be, "Be ye holy, for God is holy." "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." Let us remember the manner in which Christ concludes His memorable Sermon on the Mount. After spreading out those awfully searching truths before His hearers, and demanding that they should be perfect, as their Father in heaven was perfect, He concludes by assuring them that no one could be saved who did not receive and obey His teachings. Instead of attempting to please our people in their sins, we should continually endeavor to hunt and persuade them out of their sins. Brethren, let us do it, as we would not have our skirts defiled with their blood. If we pursue this course and constantly preach with unction and power, and abide in the fullness of the doctrine of Christ, we may joyfully expect to save ourselves and them that hear us.

## CHAPTER 8

### PREACHER, SAVE THYSELF

"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee."--I Timothy 4:16.

I am not going to preach to preachers, but to suggest certain conditions upon which the salvation promised in this text may be secured by them.

1st. See that you are constrained by love to preach the gospel, as Christ was to provide a gospel.

2nd. See that you have the special enduement of power from on high, by the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

3rd. See that you have a heart, and not merely a head call to undertake the preaching of the gospel. By this I mean, be heartily and most intensely inclined to seek the salvation of souls as the great work of life, and do not undertake what you have no heart to.

4th. Constantly maintain a close walk with God.

5th. Make the Bible your book of books. Study it much, upon your knees, waiting for divine light.

6th. Beware of leaning on commentaries. Consult them when convenient; but judge for yourself, in the light of the Holy Ghost.

7th. Keep yourself pure--in will, in thought, in feeling, in word and action.

8th. Contemplate much the guilt and danger of sinners, that your zeal for their salvation may be intensified.

9th. Also deeply ponder and dwell much upon the boundless love and compassion of Christ for them.

10th. So love them yourself as to be willing to die for them.

11th. Give your most intense thought to the study of ways and means by which you may save them. Make this the great and intense study of your life.

12th. Refuse to be diverted from this work. Guard against every temptation that would abate your interest in it.

13th. Believe the assertion of Christ that He is with you in this work always and everywhere, to give you all the help you need.

14th. "He that winneth souls is wise"; and "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and he shall receive." But let him ask in faith." Remember, therefore, that you are bound to have the wisdom that shall win souls to Christ.

15th. Being called of God to the work, make your calling your constant argument with God for all that you need for the accomplishment of the work.

16th. Be diligent and laborious, "in season and out of season."

17th. Converse much with all classes of your hearers on the question of their salvation, that you may understand their opinions, errors, and wants. Ascertain their prejudices, ignorance, temper, habits, and whatever you need to know to adapt your instruction to their necessities.

18th. See that your own habits are in all respects correct; that you are temperate in all things--free from the stain or smell of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or anything of which you have reason to be ashamed, and which may stumble others.

19th. Be not "light-minded," but "set the Lord always before you."

20th. Bridle your tongue, and be not given to idle and unprofitable conversation.

21st. Always let your people see that you are in solemn earnest with them, both in the pulpit and out of it; and let not your daily intercourse with them nullify your serious teaching on the Sabbath.

22nd. Resolve to "know nothing" among your people "save Jesus Christ and Him crucified"; and let them understand that, as an ambassador of Christ, your business with them relates wholly to the salvation of their souls.

23rd. Be sure to teach them as well by example as by precept. Practise yourself what you preach.

24th. Be especially guarded in your intercourse with women, to raise no thought or suspicion of the least impurity in yourself.

25th. Guard your weak points. If naturally tending to gaiety and trifling, watch against occasions of failure in this direction.

26th. If naturally sombre and unsocial, guard against moroseness and unsociability.

27th. Avoid all affectation and sham in all things. Be what you profess to be, and you will have no temptation to "make believe."

28th. Let simplicity, sincerity, and Christian propriety stamp your whole life.

29th. Spend much time every day and night in prayer and direct communion with God. This will make you a power for salvation. No amount of learning and study can compensate for the loss of this communion. If you fail to maintain communion with God, you are "weak as another man."

30th. Beware of the error that there are no means of regeneration, and, consequently, no connection of means and ends in the regeneration of souls.

31st. Understand that regeneration is a moral, and therefore a voluntary change.

32nd. Understand that the gospel is adapted to change the hearts of men, and in a wise presentation of it you may expect the efficient co-operation of the Holy Spirit.

33rd. In the selection and treatment of your texts, always secure the direct teaching of the Holy Spirit.

34th. Let all your sermons be heart and not merely head sermons.

35th. Preach from experience, and not from hearsay, or mere reading and study.

36th. Always present the subject which the Holy Spirit lays upon your heart for the occasion. Seize the points presented by the Holy Spirit to your own mind, and present them with the greatest possible directness to your congregation.

37th. Be full of prayer whenever you attempt to preach, and go from your closet to your pulpit with the inward groanings of the Spirit pressing for utterance at your lips.

38th. Get your mind fully imbued with your subject, so that it will press for utterance; then open your mouth, and let it forth like a torrent.

39th. See that "the fear of man that bringeth a snare" is not upon you. Let your people understand that you fear God too much to be afraid of them.

40th. Never let the question of your popularity with your people influence your preaching.

41st. Never let the question of salary deter you from "declaring the whole counsel of God, whether men will hear or forbear."

42nd. Do not temporize, lest you lose the confidence of your people, and thus fail to save them. They cannot thoroughly respect you, as an ambassador of Christ, if they see that you dare not do your duty.

43rd. Be sure to "commend yourself to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

44th. Be "not a lover of filthy lucre."

45th. Avoid every appearance of vanity.

46th. Compel your people to respect your sincerity and your spiritual wisdom.

47th. Let them not for one moment suppose that you can be influenced in your preaching by any considerations of salary, more or less, or none at all.

48th. Do not make the impression that you are fond of good dinners, and like to be invited out to dine; for this will be a snare to you, and a stumbling-block to them.

49th. Keep your body under, lest after having preached to others, yourself should be a castaway.

50th. "Watch for souls as one who must give an account to God."

51st. Be a diligent student, and thoroughly instruct your people in all that is essential to their salvation.

52nd. Never flatter the rich.

53rd. Be especially attentive to the wants and instruction of the poor.

54th. Suffer not yourself to be bribed into a compromise with sin by donation parties.

55th. Suffer not yourself to be publicly treated as a mendicant, or you will come to be despised by a large class of your hearers.

56th. Repel every attempt to close your mouth against whatever is extravagant, wrong, or injurious amongst your people.

57th. Maintain your pastoral integrity and independence, lest you sear your conscience, quench the Holy Spirit, forfeit the confidence of your people, and lose the favour of God.

58th. Be an example to the flock, and let your life illustrate your teaching. Remember that your actions

and spirit will teach even more impressively than your sermons.

59th. If you preach that men should offer to God and their neighbour a love service, see that you do this yourself, and avoid all that tends to the belief that you are working for pay.

60th. Give to your people a love service, and encourage them to render to you, not a money equivalent for your labour, but a love reward that will refresh both you and them.

61st. Repel every proposal to get money for you or for Church purposes that will naturally disgust and excite the contempt of worldly but thoughtful men.

62nd. Resist the introduction of tea-parties, amusing lectures, and dissipating sociables, especially at those seasons most favourable for united efforts to convert souls to Christ. Be sure the devil will try to head you off in this direction. When you are praying and planning for a revival of God's work, some of your worldly Church members will invite you to a party. Go not, or you are in for a circle of them, that will defeat your prayers.

63rd. Do not be deceived. Your spiritual power with your people will never be increased by accepting such invitations at such times. If it is a good time to have parties, because the people have leisure, it is also a good time for religious meetings, and your influence should be used to draw the people to the house of God.

64th. See that you personally know and daily live upon Christ.

## CHAPTER 9 - November 7, 1872

### INNOCENT AMUSEMENTS

We hear much said, and read much, in these days, of indulging in innocent amusements. I heard a minister, some time since, in addressing a large company of young people, say that he had spent much time in devising innocent amusements for the young. Within a few years I have read several sermons and numerous articles pleading for more amusements than have been customary with religious people. With your consent, I wish to suggest a few thoughts upon this subject--first, what are not, and, secondly, what are innocent amusements.

1st. This is a question of morals.

2nd. All intelligent acts of a moral agent must be either right or wrong. Nothing is innocent in a moral agent that is not in accordance with the law and gospel of God.

3rd. The moral character of any and every act of a moral agent resides in the motive or the ultimate reason for the act. This I take to be self-evident and universally admitted.

4th. Now, what is the rule of judgment in this case? How are we to decide whether any given act of amusement is right or wrong, innocent or sinful?

I answer:

1st. By the moral law, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," etc., "and thy neighbour as thyself." No intelligent act of a moral agent is innocent or right unless it proceeds from and is an expression of supreme love to God and equal love to man--in other words, unless it is benevolent.

2nd. The Gospel. This requires the same: "Therefore, whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God." "Do all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

3rd. Right reason affirms the same thing. Now, in the light of this rule, it is plain that it is not innocent to engage in amusements merely to gratify the desire for amusement. We may not innocently eat or drink to gratify the desire for food or drink. To eat or drink merely to gratify appetite is innocent enough in a mere animal, but in a moral agent it is a sin. A moral agent is bound to have a higher ultimate motive--to eat and drink--that he may be strong and healthy for the service of God. God has made eating and drinking pleasant to us; but this pleasure ought not to be our ultimate reason for eating and drinking. So amusements are pleasant, but this does not justify us in seeking amusements to gratify desire. Mere animals may do this innocently, because they are incapable of any higher motive. But moral



agents are under a higher law, and are bound to have another and a higher aim than merely to gratify the desire for amusements. Therefore, no amusement is innocent which is engaged in for the pleasure of the amusement, any more than it would be innocent to eat and drink for the pleasure of it. Again, no amusement is innocent that is engaged in because we need amusements. We need food and drink; but this does not justify us in eating and drinking simply because we need it. The law of God does not say, "Seek whatever ye need because ye need it"; but, "Do all from love to God and man." A wicked man might eat and drink selfishly--that is, to make his body strong to execute his selfish plans--but this eating and drinking would be sin, notwithstanding he needed food and drink.

Nothing is innocent unless it proceeds from supreme love to God and equal love to man, unless the supreme and ultimate motive be to please and honour God. In other words, to be innocent, any amusement must be engaged in because it is believed to be at the time most pleasing to God, and is intended to be a service rendered to Him, as that which, upon the whole, will honour Him more than anything else that we can engage in for the time being. I take this to be self-evident. What then? It follows:

1st. That none but benevolent amusements can be innocent. Fishing and shooting for amusement are not innocent. We may fish and hunt for the same reason that we are allowed to eat and drink--to supply nature with aliment, that we may be strong in the service of God. We may hunt to destroy noxious animals, for the glory of God and the interests of His kingdom. But fishing and hunting to gratify a passion for these sports is not innocent. Again, no amusement can be innocent that involves the squandering of precious time, that might be better employed to the glory of God and the good of man. Life is short. Time is precious. We have but one life to live. Much is to be done. The world is in darkness. A world of sinners are to be enlightened, and, if possible, saved. We are required to work while the day lasteth. Our commission and work require dispatch. No time is to be lost. If our hearts are right, our work is pleasant. If rightly performed it affords the highest enjoyment and is itself the highest amusement. No turning aside for amusement can be innocent that involves any unnecessary loss of time. No man that realizes the greatness of the work to be done, and loves to do it, can turn aside for any amusement involving an unnecessary waste of time. Again, no amusement can be innocent that involves an unnecessary expenditure of the Lord's money. All our time and all our money are the Lord's. We are the Lord's. We may innocently use both

time and money to promote the Lord's interests and the highest interests of man, which are the Lord's interests. But we may not innocently use either for our own pleasure and gratification. Expensive journeys for our own pleasure and amusement, and not indulged in with a single eye to the glory of God, are not innocent amusements, but sinful. Again, in the light of the above rule of judgment, we see that no form of amusement is lawful for an unconverted sinner. Nothing in him is innocent. While he remains impenitent and unbelieving, does not love God and his neighbour according to God's command, there is for him no innocent employment or amusement; all is sin.

And right here I fear that many are acting under a great delusion. The loose manner in which this subject is viewed by many professors of religion, and even ministers, is surprising and alarming. Some time since, in a sermon, I remarked that there were no lawful employments or innocent amusements for sinners. An aged clergyman who was present said, after service, that it was ridiculous to hold that nothing was lawful or innocent in an impenitent sinner. I replied: "I thought you were orthodox. Do you not believe in the universal necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit?" He replied: "Yes." I added: "Do you believe that an unregenerate soul does anything acceptable to God? Before his heart is changed, does he ever act from a motive that God can accept, in anything whatever? Is he not totally depraved, in the sense that his heart is all wrong, and therefore his actions must be all wrong?" He appeared embarrassed, saw the point, and subsided.

Whatever is lawful in a moral agent or according to the law of God is right. If anyone, therefore, engages lawfully in any employment or in any amusement, he must do so from supreme love to God and equal love to his neighbour; and is, therefore, not an impenitent sinner, but a Christian. It is simply absurd and a contradiction to say that an impenitent soul does, or says, or omits anything with a right heart. If impenitent, his ultimate motive must necessarily be wrong; and, consequently, nothing in him is innocent, but all must be sinful. What, then, is an innocent amusement? It must be that and that only which not only might be but actually is engaged in with a single eye to God's glory and the interests of His kingdom. If this be not the ultimate and supreme design, it is not an innocent, but a sinful amusement. Now, right here is the delusion of many persons, I fear. When speaking of amusements, they say: "What harm is there in them?" In answering to themselves and others this question, they do not penetrate to the bottom of it. If on the surface they see nothing contrary to morality, they judge that the

amusement is innocent. They fail to inquire into the supreme and ultimate motive in which the innocence or sinfulness of the act is found. But apart from the motive no course of action is either innocent or sinful, any more than the motions of a machine or the acts of a mere animal are innocent or sinful. No act or course of action should, therefore, be adjudged as either innocent or sinful without ascertaining the supreme motive of the person who acts.

To teach, either directly or by implication, that any amusement of an impenitent sinner or of a backslider is innocent is to teach a gross and ruinous heresy. Parents should remember this in regard to the amusements of their unconverted children. Sabbath school teachers and superintendents who are planning amusements for their Sabbath schools, preachers who spend their time in planning amusements for the young, who lead their flocks to picnics, in pleasure excursions, and justify various games, should certainly remember that, unless they are in a holy state of heart, and do all this from supreme love to God and a design in the highest degree to glorify God thereby, these ways of spending time are by no means innocent, but highly criminal, and those who teach people to walk in these ways are simply directing the channels in which their depravity shall run. For be it ever remembered that, unless these things are indulged in from supreme love to God and designed to glorify Him, unless they are, in fact, engaged in with a single eye to the glory of God, they are not innocent, but sinful amusements. I must say again, and, if possible, still more emphatically, that it is not enough that they might be engaged in as the best way, for the time being, to honour and please God; but they must be actually engaged in from supreme love to God, with the ultimate design to glorify Him. If such, then, is the true doctrine of innocent amusements, let no impenitent sinner and no backslidden Christian suppose for a moment that it is possible for him to engage in any innocent amusement. If it were true, as the aged minister to whom I have referred and many others seem to believe, that impenitent sinners or backsliders can and do engage in innocent amusements, the very engaging in such amusements, being lawfully right and innocent in them, would involve a change of heart in the unconverted, and a return to God in the backslider. For no amusement is lawful unless it be engaged in as a love-service rendered to God and with design to please and glorify Him. It must not only be a love service, but, in the judgment of the one who renders it, it must be the best service that, for the time being, he can render to God--a service that will be more pleasing to Him and more useful to His kingdom than any other that can be

engaged in at the time. Let these facts be borne in mind when the question of engaging in amusements comes up for decision. And remember, the question in all such cases is not, "What harm is there in this proposed amusement?" but, "What good can it do?" "Is it the best way in which I can spend my time?" "Will it be more pleasing to God and more for the interest of His kingdom than anything else at present possible to me?" "If not, it is not an innocent amusement, and I cannot engage in it without sin." The question often arises: "Are we never to seek such amusements?" I answer: It is our privilege and our duty to live above a desire for such things. All that class of desires should be so subdued by living so much in the light of God, and having so deep a communion with Him as to have no relish for such amusements whatever. It certainly is the privilege of every child of God to walk so closely with Him, and maintain so divine a communion with Him, as not to feel the necessity of worldly excitements, sports, pastimes, and entertainments to make his enjoyment satisfactory. If a Christian avails himself of his privilege of communion with God, he will naturally and by an instinct of his new nature repel solicitations to go after worldly amusements. To him such pastimes will appear low, unsatisfactory, and even repulsive. If he is of a heavenly mind, as he ought to be, he will feel as if he could not afford to come down and seek enjoyment in worldly amusements. Surely, a Christian must be fallen from his first love, he must have turned back into the world, before he can feel the necessity or have the desire of seeking enjoyment in worldly sports and pastimes. A spiritual mind cannot seek enjoyment in worldly society. To such a mind that society is necessarily repulsive. Worldly society is insincere, hollow, and to a great extent a sham. What relish can a spiritual mind have for the gossip of a worldly party of pleasure? None whatever. To a mind in communion with God their worldly spirit and ways, conversation and folly is repulsive and painful, as it is so strongly suggestive of the downward tendency of their souls, and of the destiny that awaits them. I have had so marked an experience of both sides of this question that I think I cannot be mistaken. Probably but few persons enjoy worldly pleasure more intensely than I did before I was converted; but my conversion, and the spiritual baptism which immediately followed it, completely extinguished all desire for worldly sports and amusements. I was lifted at once into entirely another plane of life and another kind of enjoyment. From that hour to the present the mode of life, the pastimes, sports, amusements, and worldly ways that so much delighted me before have not only failed to interest me, but I have had a positive aversion to them. I have never felt them

necessary to, or even compatible with, a truly rational enjoyment. I do not speak boastingly; but for the honour of Christ and His religion, I must say that my Christian life has been a happy one. I have had as much enjoyment as is probably best for men to have in this life, and never for an hour have I had the desire to turn back and seek enjoyment from anything the world can give. But some may ask: "Suppose we do not find sufficient enjoyment in religion, and really desire to go after worldly amusements. If we have the disposition, is it not as well to gratify it?" "Is there any more sin in seeking amusements than in entertaining a longing for them?" I reply that a longing for them should never be entertained. It is the privilege and therefore the duty of everyone to rise, through grace, above a hungering and thirsting for the fleshpots of Egypt, worldly pastimes and time-wasting amusements. The indulgence of such longings is not innocent. One should not ask whether the longing should be gratified, but whether it should not be displaced by a longing for the glory of God and His kingdom.

Professed Christians are bound to maintain a life consistent with their profession. For the honour of religion, they ought to deny worldly lusts; and not, by seeking to gratify them, give occasion to the world to scoff and say that Christians love the world as well as they do. If professors of religion are backslidden in heart, and entertain a longing for worldly sports and amusements, they are bound by every consideration of duty and decency to abstain from all outward manifestation of such inward lustings. Some have maintained that we should conform to the ways of the world somewhat—at least, enough to show that we can enjoy the world and religion too; and that we make religion appear repulsive to unconverted souls by turning our backs upon what they call their innocent amusements. But we should represent religion as it really is—as living above the world, as consisting in a heavenly mind, as that which affords an enjoyment so spiritual and heavenly as to render the low pursuits and joys of worldly men disagreeable and repulsive. It is a sad stumbling-block to the unconverted to see professed Christians seeking pleasure or happiness from this world. Such seeking is a misrepresentation of the religion of Jesus. It misleads, bewilders, and confounds the observing outsider. If he ever reads his Bible, he cannot but wonder that souls who are born of God and have communion with Him should have any relish for worldly ways and pleasures. The fact is that thoughtful unconverted men have little or no confidence in that class of professing Christians who seek enjoyment from this world. They may profess to have,

and may loosely think of such as being liberal and good Christians. They may flatter them, and commend their religion as being the opposite of fanaticism and bigotry, and as being such a religion as they like to see; but there is no real sincerity in such professions on the part of the impenitent.

In my early Christian life I heard a Methodist bishop from the South report a case that made a deep impression on my mind. He said there was in his neighbourhood a slave holder, a gentleman of fortune, who was a gay and agreeable man, and gave himself much to various field sports and amusements. He used to associate much with his pastor, often invite him to dinner, and to accompany him in his sports and pleasure-seeking excursions of various kinds. The minister cheerfully complied with these requests, and a friendship grew up between the pastor and his parishioner that continued till the last sickness of this gay and wealthy man. When the wife of this worldling was apprised that her husband could live but a short time she was much alarmed for his soul, and tenderly inquired if she should not call in their minister to converse and pray with him. He feelingly replied: "No, my dear; he is not the man for me to see now. He was my companion, as you know, in worldly sports and pleasure-seeking; he loved good dinners and a jolly time. I then enjoyed his society and found him a pleasant companion. But I see now that I never had any real confidence in his piety, and have now no confidence in the efficacy of his prayers. I am now a dying man, and need the instruction and prayers of somebody that can prevail with God. We have been much together, but our pastor has never been in serious earnest with me about the salvation of my soul, and he is not the man to help me now." The wife was greatly affected, and said: "What shall I do, then?" He replied: "My coachman, Tom, is a pious man. I have confidence in his prayers. I have often overheard him pray, when about the barn or stables, and his prayers have always struck me as being quite sincere and earnest. I never heard any foolishness from him. He has always been honest and earnest as a Christian man. Call him." Tom was called, and came within the door, dropping his hat and looking tenderly and compassionately at his dying master. The dying man put forth his hand, saying: "Come here, Tom. Take my hand. Tom, can you pray for your dying master?" Tom poured out his soul in earnest prayer. I cannot remember the name of this bishop, it was so long ago; but the story I well remember as an illustration of the mistake into which many professors and some ministers fall, supposing that we recommend religion to the unconverted by mingling with



them in their pleasures and their running after amusements. I have seen many illustrations of this mistake. Christians should live so far above the world as not to need or seek its pleasures, and thus recommend religion to the world as a source of the highest and purest happiness. The peaceful look, the joyful countenance, the spiritual serenity and cheerfulness of a living Christian recommend religion to the unconverted. Their satisfaction in God, their holy joy, their living above and shunning the ways and amusements of worldly minds, impress the unconverted with a sense of the necessity and desirableness of a Christian life. But let no man think to gain a really Christian influence over another by manifesting a sympathy with his worldly aspirations.

Now, is this rule a yoke of bondage? I do not wonder that it has created in some minds not a little disturbance. The pleasure-loving and pleasure-seeking members of the Church regard the rule as impracticable, as a strait-jacket, as a bondage. But to whom is it a straitjacket and a bondage? To whom is it impracticable? Surely it is not and cannot be to any who love God with all their heart and their neighbour as themselves. It certainly cannot be so regarded by a real Christian, for all real Christians love God supremely. Their own interests and their own pleasure are regarded as nothing as compared with the interests and good pleasure of God. They, therefore, cannot seek amusements unless they believe themselves called of God to do so. By a law of our nature we seek to please those whom we supremely love. Also, by a law of our nature, we find our highest happiness in pleasing those whom we supremely love; and we supremely please ourselves when we seek not at all to please ourselves, but to please the object of our supreme affection. Therefore, Christians find their highest enjoyment and their truest pleasure in pleasing God and in seeking the good of their fellow-men; and they enjoy this service all the more because enjoyment is not what they seek, but what they inevitably experience by a law of their nature.

This is a fact of Christian consciousness. The highest and purest of all amusements is found in doing the will of God. Mere worldly amusements are cold and insipid and not worthy of naming in comparison with the enjoyment we find in doing the will of God. To one who loves God supremely it is natural to seek amusements, and everything else that we do seek, with supreme reference to the glory of God. Why, then, should this rule be regarded as too strict, as placing the standard too high, and as being a strait-jacket and a bondage? How, then, are we to understand those who plead so much for worldly amusements?

From what I have heard and read upon this subject within the last few years, I have gathered that these pleaders for amusements have thought that there was more enjoyment to be gained from these amusements than from the service of God. They remind me of a sentence that I used to have as a copy when a school-boy: "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." They seem to assume that the service of God is work in the sense of being a task and a burden; that to labour and pray and preach to win souls to Christ, to commune with God and perform the duties of religion is so wearisome, not to say irksome, that we need a good many playdays; that the love of Christ is not satisfactory; that we must have frequent resort to worldly amusements to make life tolerable. Christ on one occasion said to His disciples: "Come aside and rest awhile." This is not wonderful when we consider that they were often so thronged as not to have time even to eat their ordinary meals. But it was not amusement that they sought; simply rest from their labours of love, in which labours they must have had the greatest enjoyment.

I often ask myself: "What can it mean that so many of our highly-fed and most popular preachers are pleading so much for amusements?" They seem to be leading the Church off in a direction in which she is the most in danger. It is no wonder that lay-men and women are easily led in that direction, for such teaching exactly accords with the innumerable temptations to worldliness which are presented to the Church on every side. The Bible is replete with instruction upon this subject, which is the direct opposite of these pleas for worldly amusements. These teachers plead for fun, hilarity, jesting, plays, and games, and such things as worldly minds love and enjoy; but the Bible exhorts to sobriety, heavenly-mindedness, unceasing prayer, and a close and perpetual walk with God. The Bible everywhere assumes that all real enjoyment is found in this course of life, that all true peace of mind is found in communion with God and in being given up to seek His glory as the constant and supreme end of life. It exhorts us to watchfulness, and informs us that for every idle word we must give account in the Day of Judgment. It nowhere informs us that fun and hilarity are the source of rational enjoyment; it nowhere encourages us to expect to maintain a close walk with God, to have peace of mind and joy in the Holy Ghost, if we gad about to seek amusements. And is not the teaching of the Bible on this subject in exact accordance with human experience? Do we need to have the pulpit turn advocate of worldly amusements? Is not human depravity strong enough in that direction, without being stimulated by the voice of the preacher? Has the Church worked so hard for God

and souls, are Christians so overdone with their exhausting efforts to pull sinners out of the fire, that they are in danger of becoming insane with religious fervour and need that the pulpit and the press should join in urging them to turn aside and seek amusements and have a little fun?

What can it mean? Why, is it not true that nearly all our dangers are on this side? Is not human nature in its present state so strongly tending in these directions that we need to be on our guard, and constantly to exhort the Church not to be led away after amusements and fun, to the destruction of their souls? But to come back to the question: To whom is it a bondage, to be required to have a single eye to the good pleasure and glory of God in all that we do? Who finds it hard to do so? Christ says His yoke is easy and His burden is light. The requirement to do all for the glory of God is surely none other than the yoke of Christ. It is His expressed will. Who finds this a hard yoke and a heavy burden? It is not hard or heavy to a willing, loving mind.

Just the thing here required is natural and inevitable to everyone that truly loves God and is truly devoted to the Saviour. What is devotion to Jesus but a heart set upon rendering Him a loving obedience in all things? What is Christian liberty but the privilege of doing that which Christians most love to do—that is, in all things to fulfil the good pleasure of their blessed Lord? Turn aside from saving souls to seek amusements! As if there could be a higher and diviner pleasure than is found in labouring for the salvation of souls. It cannot be. There can be no higher enjoyment found in this world than is found in pulling souls out of the fire and bringing them to Christ. I am filled with amazement when I read and hear the appeals to the Church to seek more worldly amusements. Do we need, can we have any fuller and higher satisfaction than is found in a close, serious, loving walk with God and co-operation with Him in fitting souls for heaven?

All that I hear said to encourage the people of God in seeking amusements appears to me to proceed from a worldly, instead of a spiritual state of mind. Can it be possible that a soul in communion with God and, of course, yearning with compassion over dying men, struggling from day to day in agonizing prayer for their salvation, should entertain the thought of turning aside to seek amusement? Can a pastor in whose congregation are numbers of unsaved souls, and amongst whose membership are many worldly-minded professors of religion, turn aside and lead or accompany his Church in a backsliding movement to gain worldly pleasure? There are always enough in every Church who are easily led astray in that direction. But who are

they that most readily fall in with such a movement? Who are ready to come to the front when a picnic, a pleasure excursion, a worldly party, or other pleasure-seeking movements are proposed? Are they, in fact, the class that always attend prayer-meetings, that are always in a revival state of mind? Do they belong to the class whose faces shine from day to day with the peace of God pervading their souls? Are they the Aarons and Hurs that stay up the hands of their pastor with continual and prevailing prayer? Are they spiritual members, whose conversation is in heaven and who mind not earthly things? Who does not know that it is the worldly members in the Church who are always ready for any movement in the direction of worldly pleasure or amusement, and that the truly spiritual, prayerful, heavenly-minded members are shy of all such movements? They are not led into them without urging, and weep in secret places when they see their pastor giving encouragement to that which is likely to be so great a stumbling-block to both the Church and to the world.

Pres. Finney, in forwarding his revision of the above tract for publication by the Willard Tract Repository, accompanied it with a note to Dr. Cullis, in which he said:

"The previous pages contain a condensation of three short articles that I published in the Independent. I recollect that the editor of the Advance, and one of the editors of the Independent, both of whom had published what I regard as very loose views, approving and recommending the worldly amusements of Christians, criticized those articles with an asperity that seemed to indicate that they were nettled by them. They so far perverted them as to assert that they taught asceticism, and the prohibition of rest, recreation, and all amusements. I regard the doctrine of this tract as strictly Biblical and true. But, to avoid all such unjust inferences and cavils, add the following lines.

"Let no one say that the doctrine of this tract prohibits all rest, recreation, and amusement whatever. It does not. It freely admits all rest, recreation, and amusement that is regarded, by the person who resorts to it, as a condition and means of securing health and vigour of body and mind with which to promote the cause of God. This tract only insists, as the Bible does, that 'whether we eat or drink,' rest, recreate, or amuse ourselves, all must be done as a service rendered to God. God must be our end. To please Him must be our aim in everything, or we sin."

**CHAPTER 10** - January 1, 1874**HOW TO OVERCOME SIN**

In every period of my ministerial life I have found many professed Christians in a miserable state of bondage, either to the world, the flesh, or the Devil. But surely this is no Christian state, for the apostle has distinctly said: "Sin shall not have dominion over you, because ye are not under the law, but under grace." In all my Christian life I have been pained to find so many Christians living in the legal bondage described in the seventh Chapter of Romans--a life of sinning, and resolving to reform and falling again. And what is particularly saddening, and even agonizing, is that many ministers and leading Christians give perfectly false instruction upon the subject of how to overcome sin. The directions that are generally given on this subject, I am sorry to say, amount to about this: "Take your sins in detail, resolve to abstain from them, and fight against them, if need be with prayer and fasting, until you have overcome them. Set your will firmly against a relapse into sin, pray and struggle, and resolve that you will not fall, and persist in this until you form the habit of obedience and break up all your sinful habits." To be sure it is generally added: "In this conflict you must not depend upon your own strength, but pray for the help of God." In a word, much of the teaching, both of the pulpit and the press, really amounts to this: Sanctification is by works, and not by faith. I notice that Dr. Chalmers, in his lectures on Romans, expressly maintains that justification is by faith, but sanctification is by works. Some twenty-five years ago, I think, a prominent professor of theology in New England maintained in substance the same doctrine. In my early Christian life I was very nearly misled by one of President Edwards's resolutions, which was, in substance, that when he had fallen into any sin he would trace it back to its source, and then fight and pray against it with all his might until he subdued it. This, it will be perceived, is directing the attention to the overt act of sin, its source or occasions. Resolving and fighting against it fastens the attention on the sin and its source, and diverts it entirely from Christ.

Now it is important to say right here that all such efforts are worse than useless, and not infrequently result in delusion. First, it is losing sight of what really constitutes sin; and, secondly, of the only practicable way to avoid it. In this way the outward act or habit may be overcome and avoided, while that which really constitutes the sin is left untouched. Sin is not external, but internal. It is not a muscular act, it is not the volition that causes muscular action, it is not an involuntary feeling or desire; it must be a voluntary act or state of mind. Sin is nothing else than that voluntary, ultimate preference or state of

committal to self-pleasing out of which the volitions, the outward actions, purposes, intentions, and all the things that are commonly called sin proceed. Now, what is resolved against in this religion of resolutions and efforts to suppress sinful and form holy habits? "Love is the fulfilling of the law." But do we produce love by resolution? Do we eradicate selfishness by resolution? No, indeed. We may suppress this or that expression or manifestation of selfishness by resolving not to do this or that, and praying and struggling against it. We may resolve upon an outward obedience, and work ourselves up to the letter of an obedience to God's commandments. But to eradicate selfishness from the breast by resolution is an absurdity. So the effort to obey the commandments of God in spirit--in other words, to attempt to love as the law of God requires by force of resolution--is an absurdity. There are many who maintain that sin consists in the desires. Be it so. Do we control our desires by force of resolution? We may abstain from the gratification of a particular desire by the force of resolution. We may go further, and abstain from the gratification of desire generally in the outward life. But this is not to secure the love of God, which constitutes obedience. Should we become anchorites, immure ourselves in a cell, and crucify all our desires and appetites, so far as their indulgence is concerned, we have only avoided certain forms of sin; but the root that really constitutes sin is not touched. Our resolution has not secured love, which is the only real obedience to God. All our battling with sin in the outward life, by the force of resolution, only ends in making us whited sepulchres. All our battling with desire by the force of resolution is of no avail; for in all this, however successful the effort to suppress sin may be, in the outward life or in the inward desire, it will only end in delusion, for by force of resolution we cannot love.

All such efforts to overcome sin are utterly futile, and as unscriptural as they are futile. The Bible expressly teaches us that sin is overcome by faith in Christ. "He is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." "He is the way, the truth, and the life." Christians are said to "purify their hearts by faith" (Acts xv:9). And in Acts xxvi:18 it is affirmed that the saints are sanctified by faith in Christ. In Romans ix:31,32 it is affirmed that the Jews attained not to righteousness "because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law." The doctrine of the Bible is that Christ saves His people from sin through faith; that Christ's Spirit is received by faith to dwell in the heart. It is faith that works by love. Love is wrought and sustained by faith. By faith Christians "overcome the world, the flesh, and the Devil." It is by faith that they



"quench the fiery darts of the wicked." It is by faith that they "put on the Lord Jesus Christ and put off the old man, with his deeds." It is by faith that we fight "the good fight," and not by resolution. It is by faith that we "stand," by resolution we fall. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. It is by faith that the flesh is kept under and carnal desires subdued. The fact is that it is simply by faith that we receive the Spirit of Christ to work in us to will and to do, according to His good pleasure. He sheds abroad His own love in our hearts, and thereby enkindles ours. Every victory over sin is by faith in Christ; and whenever the mind is diverted from Christ, by resolving and fighting against sin, whether we are aware of it or not, we are acting in our own strength, rejecting the help of Christ, and are under a specious delusion. Nothing but the life and energy of the Spirit of Christ within us can save us from sin, and trust is the uniform and universal condition of the working of this saving energy within us. How long shall this fact be at least practically overlooked by the teachers of religion? How deeply rooted in the heart of man is self-righteousness and self-dependence? So deeply that one of the hardest lessons for the human heart to learn is to renounce self-dependence and trust wholly in Christ. When we open the door by implicit trust He enters in and takes up His abode with us and in us. By shedding abroad His love He quickens our whole souls into sympathy with Himself, and in this way, and in this way alone, He purifies our hearts through faith. He sustains our will in the attitude of devotion. He quickens and regulates our affections, desires, appetites and passions, and becomes our sanctification. Very much of the teaching that we hear in prayer and conference meetings, from the pulpit and the press, is so misleading as to render the hearing or reading of such instruction almost too painful to be endured. Such instruction is calculated to beget delusion, discouragement, and a practical rejection of Christ as He is presented in the Gospel.

Alas! for the blindness that "leads to bewilder" the soul that is longing after deliverance from the power of sin. I have sometimes listened to legal teaching upon this subject until I felt as if I should scream. It is astonishing sometimes to hear Christian men object to the teaching which I have here inculcated that it leaves us in a passive state, to be saved without our own activity. What darkness is involved in this objection! The Bible teaches that by trusting in Christ we receive an inward influence that stimulates and directs our activity; that by faith we receive His purifying influence into the very centre of our being; that through and by His truth revealed directly to the soul He quickens our whole

inward being into the attitude of a loving obedience; and this is the way, and the only practicable way, to overcome sin. But someone may say: "Does not the Apostle exhort as follows: Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure"? And is not this an exhortation to do what in this article you condemn?" By no means. In the 12th verse of the second Chapter of Philippians Paul says: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure." There is no exhortation to work by force of resolution, but through and by the inworking of God. Paul had taught them, while he was present with them; but now, in his absence, he exhorts them to work out their own salvation, not by resolution but by the inward operation of God. This is precisely the doctrine of this tract. Paul had too often taught the Church that Christ in the heart is our sanctification, and that this influence is to be received by faith, to be guilty in this passage of teaching that our sanctification is to be wrought out by resolution and efforts to suppress sinful and form holy habits. This passage of Scripture happily recognizes both the divine and human agency in the work of sanctification. God works in us to will and to do; and we, accepting by faith His inworking, will and do according to His good pleasure. Faith itself is an active and not a passive state. A passive holiness is impossible and absurd. Let no one say that when we exhort people to trust wholly in Christ we teach that anyone should be or can be passive in receiving and co-operating with the divine influence within. This influence is moral, and not physical. It is persuasion, and not force. It influences the free will, and consequently does this by truth, and not by force. Oh! that it could be understood that the whole of spiritual life that is in any man is received direct from the Spirit of Christ by faith, as the branch receives its life from the vine. Away with this religion of resolutions! It is a snare of death. Away with this effort to make the life holy while the heart has not in it the love of God. Oh! that men would learn to look directly at Christ through the Gospel and so close in with Him by an act of loving trust as to involve a universal sympathy with His state of mind. This, and this alone, is sanctification.

**CHAPTER 11 - December 4, 1873****THE DECAY OF CONSCIENCE**

I believe it is a fact generally admitted that there is much less conscience manifested by men and women in nearly all the walks of life than there was forty years ago. There is justly much complaint of this, and there seems to be but little prospect of reformation. The rings and frauds and villainies in high and low places, among all ranks of men, are most alarming, and one is almost compelled to ask: "Can nobody be safely trusted?" Now, what is the cause of this degeneracy? Doubtless there are many causes that contribute more or less directly to it, but I am persuaded that the fault is more in the ministry and public press than in any and all things else. It has been fashionable now for many years to ridicule and decry Puritanism. Ministers have ceased, in a great measure, to probe the consciences of men with the spiritual law of God. So far as my knowledge extends, there has been a great letting down and ignoring the searching claims of God's law, as revealed in His Word. This law is the only standard of true morality. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." The law is the quickener of the human conscience. Just in proportion as the spirituality of the law of God is kept out of view will there be manifest a decay of conscience. This must be the inevitable result. Let ministers ridicule Puritanism, attempt to preach the Gospel without thoroughly probing the conscience with the divine law, and this must result in, at least, a partial paralysis of the moral sense. The error that lies at the foundation of this decay of individual and public conscience originates, no doubt, in the pulpit. The proper guardians of the public conscience have, I fear, very much neglected to expound and insist upon obedience to the moral law. It is plain that some of our most popular preachers are phrenologists. Phrenology has no organ of free will. Hence, it has no moral agency, no moral law and moral obligation in any proper sense of these terms. A consistent phrenologist can have no proper ideas of moral obligation, of moral guilt, blameworthiness, and retribution. Some years since a brother of one of our most popular preachers heard me preach on the text "Be ye reconciled to God." I went on to show, among other things, that being reconciled to God implied being reconciled to the execution of His law. He called on me the next morning, and among other things said that neither himself nor two of his brothers, whom he named, all preachers, had naturally any conscience. "We have," said he, "no such ideas in our minds of sin, guilt, justice and retribution as you and Father have." "We cannot preach as you do on those subjects." He continued: "I am striving to cultivate a conscience, and I think I begin

to understand what it is. But, naturally, neither I nor the two brothers I have named have any conscience." Now, these three ministers have repeatedly appeared in their writings before the public. I have read much that they have written, and not infrequently the sermons of one of them, and have been struck with the manifest want of conscience in his sermons and writings. He is a phrenologist, and, hence, he has in his theological views no free will, no moral agency, and nothing that is really a logical result of free will and moral agency. He can ridicule Puritanism and the great doctrines of the Orthodox faith; and, indeed, his whole teaching, so far as it has fallen under my eye, most lamentably shows the want of moral discrimination. I should judge from his writings that the true ideas of moral depravity, guilt, and ill-desert, in the true acceptance of those terms, have no place in his mind. Indeed, as a consistent phrenologist, such ideas have no right in his mind. They are necessarily excluded by his philosophy. I do not know how extensively phrenology has poisoned the minds of ministers of different denominations, but I have observed with pain that many ministers who write for the public press fail to reach the consciences of men. They fail to go to the bottom of the matter and insist upon obedience to the moral law as alone acceptable to God. They seem to me to "make void the law through faith." They seem to hold up a different standard from that which is inculcated in Christ's Sermon on the Mount, which was Christ's exposition of the moral law. Christ expressly taught in that sermon that there was no salvation without conformity to the rule of life laid down in that sermon. True faith in Christ will always and inevitably beget a holy life. But I fear it has become fashionable to preach what amounts to an antinomian gospel. The rule of life promulgated in the Gospel is precisely that of the moral law. These four things are expressly affirmed of true faith--of the faith of the Gospel:

1st. "It establishes the law."

2nd. "It works by love."

3rd. "It purifies the heart."

4th. "It overcomes the world."

These are but different forms of affirming that true faith does, as a matter of fact, produce a holy life. If it did not, it would "make void the law." The true Gospel is not preached where obedience to the moral law as the only rule of life is not insisted upon. Wherever there is a failure to do this in the instructions of any pulpit, it will inevitably be seen that the hearers of such a mutilated Gospel will have very little conscience. We need more Boanerges or sons of thunder in the pulpit. We need

men that will flash forth the law of God like livid lightning and arouse the consciences of men. We need more Puritanism in the pulpit. To be sure, some of the Puritans were extremists. But still under their teaching there was a very different state of the individual and public conscience from what exists in these days. Those old, stern, grand vindicators of the government of God would have thundered and lightened till they had almost demolished their pulpits, if any such immoralities had shown themselves under their instructions as are common in these days. In a great measure the periodical press takes its tone from the pulpit. The universal literature of the present day shows conclusively that the moral sense of the people needs toning up, and some of our most fascinating preachers have become the favourites of infidels, sceptics of every grade, Universalists, and the most abandoned characters. And has the offence of the Cross ceased, or is the Cross kept out of view? Has the holy law of God, with its stringent precept and its awful penalty, become popular with unconverted men and women? Or is it ignored in the pulpit, and the preacher praised for that neglect of duty for which he should be despised? I believe the only possible way to arrest this downward tendency in private and public morals is the holding up from the pulpits in this land, with unsparing faithfulness, the whole Gospel of God, including as the only rule of life the perfect and holy law of God.

The holding up of this law will reveal the moral depravity of the heart, and the holding forth of the cleansing blood of Christ will cleanse the heart from sin. My beloved brethren in the ministry, is there not a great want in the public inculcations of the pulpit upon this subject? We are set for the defence of the blessed Gospel and for the vindication of God's holy law. I pray you let us probe the consciences of our hearers, let us thunder forth the law and Gospel of God until our voices reach the capital of this nation, through our representatives in Congress. It is now very common for the secular papers even to publish extracts of sermons. Let us give the reporters of the press such work to do as will make their ears and the ears of their readers tingle. Let our railroad rings, our stock gamblers, our officials of every grade, hear from its pulpit, if they come within the sound, such wholesome Puritanical preaching as will arouse them to better thoughts and a better life. Away with this milk-and-water preaching of a love of Christ that has no holiness or moral discrimination in it. Away with preaching a love of God that is not angry with sinners every day. Away with preaching a Christ not crucified for sin.

Christ crucified for the sins of the world is the Christ that the people need. Let us rid ourselves of the just imputation of neglecting to preach the law of God until the consciences of men are asleep. Such a collapse of conscience in this land could never have existed if the Puritan element in our preaching had not in great measure fallen out.

Some years ago I was preaching in a congregation whose pastor had died some months before. He seemed to have been almost universally popular with his Church and the community. His Church seemed to have nearly idolized him. Everybody was speaking in his praise and holding him up as an example; and yet both the Church and the community clearly demonstrated that they had had an unfaithful minister, a man who loved and sought the applause of his people. I heard so much of his inculcation and saw so much of the legitimate fruits of his teachings that I felt constrained to tell the people from the pulpit that they had had an unfaithful minister; that such fruits as were apparent on every side, both within and without the Church, could never have resulted from a faithful presentation of the Gospel. This assertion would, doubtless, have greatly shocked them had it been made under other circumstances; but, as the way had been prepared, they did not seem disposed to gainsay it.

Brethren, our preaching will bear its legitimate fruits. If immorality prevails in the land, the fault is ours in a great degree. If there is a decay of conscience, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the public press lacks moral discrimination, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the Church is degenerate and worldly, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the world loses its interest in religion, the pulpit is responsible for it. If Satan rules in our halls of legislation, the pulpit is responsible for it. If our politics become so corrupt that the very foundations of our government are ready to fall away, the pulpit is responsible for it. Let us not ignore this fact, my dear brethren; but let us lay it to heart, and be thoroughly awake to our responsibility in respect to the morals of this nation.



**CHAPTER 12 - April 30, 1874****THE PSYCHOLOGY OF FAITH**

I have heretofore endeavored to show that sanctification is wrought in the soul by the Spirit of Christ, through faith, with and not without the concurrence of our own activity. I now wish to call attention to the nature or psychology of faith as a mental act or state. My theological teacher held that faith was an intellectual act or state, a conviction or firm persuasion that the doctrines of the Bible are true. So far as I can recollect, this was the view of faith which I heard everywhere advanced.

When it was objected to this that the intellectual convictions and states are involuntary, and could not be produced by any effort of the will, and, consequently, we cannot be under obligations to exercise faith; and, furthermore, that faith, being an intellectual act or state, could not be virtue, it was replied that we control the attention of the mind by an effort of the will, and that our responsibility lay in searching for that degree of evidence that would convince the intellect; that unbelief was a sin, because it was the inevitable result of a failure to search for and accept the evidence of the truths of revelation; that faith was virtue, because it involved the consent and effort of the will to search out the truth.

I have met with this erroneous notion of the nature of Christian faith almost everywhere since I was first licensed to preach. Especially in my early ministry I found that great stress was laid on believing "the articles of faith," and it was held that faith consisted in believing with an unwavering conviction the doctrines about Christ. Hence, an acceptance of the doctrines, the doctrines, the DOCTRINES of the Gospel was very much insisted upon as constituting faith. These doctrines I had been brought to accept intellectually and firmly before I was converted. And, when told to believe, I replied that I did believe, and no argument or assertion could convince me that I did not believe the Gospel. And up to the very moment of my conversion I was not and could not be convinced of my error.

At the moment of my conversion, or when I first exercised faith, I saw my ruinous error. I found that faith consisted not in an intellectual conviction that the things affirmed in the Bible about Christ are true, but in the heart's trust in the person of Christ. I learned that God's testimony concerning Christ was designed to lead me to trust Christ, to confide in His person as my Saviour; that to stop short in merely believing about Christ was a fatal mistake and inevitably left me in my sins. It was as if I were sick almost unto death, and someone should

recommend to me a physician who was surely able and willing to save my life, and I should listen to the testimony concerning him until fully convinced that he was both able and willing to save my life, and then should be told to believe in him, and my life was secure. Now, if I understood this to mean nothing more than to credit the testimony with the firmest conviction, I should reply: "I do believe in him with an undoubting faith. I believe every word you have told me regarding him." If I stopped here I should, of course, lose my life. In addition to this firm intellectual conviction of his willingness and ability, it were essential to apply to him, to come to him, to trust his person, to accept his treatment. When I had intellectually accepted the testimony concerning him with an unwavering belief, the next and the indispensable thing would be a voluntary act of trust or confidence in his person, a committal of my life to him, and his sovereign treatment in the cure of my disease.

Now this illustrates the true nature or psychology of faith as it actually exists in consciousness. It does not consist in any degree of intellectual knowledge, or acceptance of the doctrines of the Bible. The firmest possible persuasion that every word said in the Bible respecting God and Christ is true, is not faith. These truths and doctrines reveal God in Christ only so far as they point to God in Christ, and teach the soul how to find Him by an act of trust in His person.

When we firmly trust in His person, and commit our souls to Him by an unwavering act of confidence in Him for all that He is affirmed to be to us in the Bible, this is faith. We trust Him upon the testimony of God. We trust Him for what the doctrines and facts of the Bible declare Him to be to us. This act of trust unites our spirit to Him in a union so close that we directly receive from Him a current of eternal life. Faith, in consciousness, seems to complete the divine galvanic circle, and the life of God is instantly imparted to our souls. God's life, and light, and love, and peace, and joy seem to flow to us as naturally and spontaneously as the galvanic current from the battery. We then for the first time understand what Christ meant by our being united to Him by faith, as the branch is united to the vine. Christ is then and thus revealed to us as God. We are conscious of direct communion with Him, and know Him as we know ourselves, by His direct activity within us. We then know directly, in consciousness, that He is our life, and that we receive from Him, moment by moment, as it were, an impartation of eternal life.

With some the mind is comparatively dark, and the faith, therefore, comparatively weak in its first exercise. They may hold a great breadth of opinion, and yet

intellectually believe but little with a realizing conviction. Hence, their trust in Him will be as narrow as their realizing convictions. When faith is weak, the current of the divine life will flow so mildly that we are scarcely conscious of it. But when faith is strong and all-embracing, it lets a current of the divine life of love into our souls so strong that it seems to permeate both soul and body. We then know in consciousness what it is to have Christ's Spirit within us as a power to save us from sin and stay up our feet in the path of loving obedience.

From personal conversation with hundreds--and I may say thousands--of Christian people, I have been struck with the application of Christ's words, as recorded in the fifth Chapter of John, to their experience. Christ said to the Jews: "Ye do search the Scriptures [for so it should be rendered]; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me; and ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life." They stopped short in the Scriptures. They satisfied themselves with ascertaining what the Scriptures said about Christ, but did not avail themselves of the light thus received to come to Him by an act of loving trust in His person. I fear it is true in these days, as it has been in the days that are past, that multitudes stop short in the facts and doctrines of the Gospel, and do not by any act of trust in His person come to Him, concerning whom all this testimony is given. Thus the Bible is misunderstood and abused.

Many, understanding the "Confession of Faith" as summarizing the doctrines of the Bible, very much neglect the Bible and rest in a belief of the articles of faith. Others, more cautious and more in earnest, search the Scriptures to see what they say about Christ, but stop short and rest in the formation of correct theological opinions; while others, and they are the only saved class, love the Scriptures intensely because they testify of Jesus. They search and devour the Scriptures because they tell them who Jesus is and what they may trust Him for. They do not stop short and rest in this testimony; but by an act of loving trust go directly to Him, to His person, thus joining their souls to Him in a union that receives from Him, by a direct divine communication, the things for which they are led to trust Him. This is certainly Christian experience. This is receiving from Christ the eternal life which God has given us in Him. This is saving faith.

There are many degrees in the strength of faith, from that of which we are hardly conscious to that which lets such a flood of eternal life into the soul as to quite overcome the strength of the body. In the strongest exercise of faith the nerves of the body seem to give way for the time being under the overwhelming exercise

of the mind. This great strength of mental exercise is perhaps not very common. We can endure but little of God's light and love in our souls and yet remain in the body. I have sometimes felt that a little clearer vision would draw my soul entirely away from the body, and I have met with many Christian people to whom these strong gales of spiritual influence were familiar. But my object in writing thus is to illustrate the nature or psychology and results of saving faith.

The contemplation of the attitude and experience of numbers of professed Christians in regard to Christ is truly lamentable and wonderful, considering that the Bible is in their hands. Many of them appear to have stopped short in theological opinions more or less firmly held. This they understand to be faith. Others are more in earnest, and stop not short of a more or less realizing conviction of the truths of the Bible concerning Christ. Others have strong impressions of the obligations of the law, which move them to set about an earnest life of works which leads them into bondage. They pray from a sense of duty; they are dutiful, but not loving, not confiding. They have no peace and no rest, except in cases where they persuade themselves that they have done their duty. They are in a restless agonizing state.

"Reason they hear, her counsels weigh,

And all her words approve,

And yet they find it hard to obey,

And harder still to love."

They read and perhaps search the Scriptures to learn their duty and to learn about Christ. They intellectually believe all that they understand the Scriptures to say about Him; but when Christ is thus commended to their confidence, they do not by an act of personal loving trust in and committal to Him so join their souls to Him as to receive from Him the influx of His life, and light and love. They do not by a simple act of personal loving trust in His person receive the current of His divine life and power into their own souls. They do not thus take hold of His strength and interlock their being with His. In other words, they do not truly believe. Hence, they are not saved. Oh! what a mistake is this. I fear it is very common. Nay, it seems to be certain that it is appallingly common, else how can the state of the Church be accounted for? Is that which we see in the great mass of professors of religion all that Christ does for and in His people, when they truly believe? No, no! There is a great error here. The psychology of faith is mistaken, and an intellectual conviction of the truth of the Gospel is supposed to be faith. And some whose opinions seem to be right in regard to the nature of faith rest in their philosophy and fall short of exercising faith.

Let no one suppose that I under-estimate the value of the facts and doctrines of the Gospel. I regard a knowledge and belief of them as of fundamental importance. I have no sympathy with those who undervalue them and treat doctrinal discussion and preaching as of minor importance, nor can I assent to the teaching of those who would have us preach Christ and not the doctrines respecting Him. It is the facts and doctrines of the Bible that teach us who Christ is, why He is to be trusted, and for what. How can we preach Christ without preaching about Him? And how can we trust Him without being informed why and for what we are to trust Him?

The error to which I call attention does not consist in laying too much stress in teaching and believing the facts and doctrines of the Gospel; but it consists in stopping short of trusting the personal Christ for what those facts and doctrines teach us to trust Him, and satisfying ourselves with believing the testimony concerning Him, thus resting in the belief of what God has said about Him, instead of committing our souls to Him by an act of loving trust.

The testimony of God respecting Him is designed to secure our confidence in Him. If it fails to secure the uniting of our souls to Him by an act and state of implicit trust in Him--such an act of trust as unites us to Him as the branch is united to the vine--we have heard the Gospel in vain. We are not saved. We have failed to receive from Him that impartation of eternal life which can be conveyed to us through no other channel than that of implicit trust.

## CHAPTER 13 - December 31, 1874

### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

During my Christian life I have been asked a great many times, in substance, by thoughtful and anxious souls: "What is the mental act or acts and states that God requires of me?" I have found it profitable, and even indispensable, with the commands of God before me, to question consciousness for a satisfactory answer to this question. I have satisfied myself, and, by the help of God, I trust I have aided many others to their satisfaction. Be it understood, then, that by the psychology of righteousness I mean to designate the mental act and state that constitutes righteousness. I will endeavour to develop this in the following order by showing:

I. What righteousness is not.

II. What it is.

III. How we know what righteousness is.

IV. How a sinner may attain to righteousness.

I. [What Righteousness Is Not.]

1. Righteousness does not consist in the outward life or in any physical or bodily act whatever. All of these acts belong to the category of cause and effect. They are necessitated by an act of the will and have in themselves no moral character whatever.

2. Righteousness does not consist in volition. Volition is an act of will, but necessitated by choice. It is an executive act, and is the product of a purpose or choice. It is designed as a means to an end. It is put forth to control either the attention of the intellect, the states of the sensibility, or the movements of the outward life by force. Volition is both an effect and a cause. It is the effect of a choice, purpose, intention. It is the cause of the outward life and of many of the changes both of the intellect and sensibility. Volition is a doing. Whatever we do we accomplish by the exercise of volition. Volition is not, in the highest sense, a free act, because it is an effect. It is itself caused. Hence, it has no moral character in itself, and moral quality can be predicated of it only as it partakes of the character of its primary cause.

3. Righteousness does not consist in proximate or subordinate choice. I choose an ultimate, supreme end, for its own sake. This choice is not executive. It is not put forth to secure the end, but is simply the choice of an object for its own sake. This is ultimate choice. I purpose, or choose, if possible, to secure this end. This is proximate or subordinate choice. Strictly speaking, this choice belongs also to the category of cause and effect. It results by necessity from the ultimate choice. In the strictest sense, it is not a free act, since it is itself caused. Hence, it has no moral character in itself, but, like volition, derives whatever moral quality it has from its primary cause, or the ultimate choice.

4. Righteousness does not consist in any of the states or activities of the sensibility. By the sensibility I mean that department of the mind that feels, desires, suffers, enjoys. All the states of the sensibility are involuntary, and belong to the category of cause and effect. The will cannot control them directly, nor always indirectly. This we know by consciousness. Since they are caused, and not free, they can have no moral character in themselves, and, like thoughts, volitions, subordinate choices, have no moral quality except that which is derived from their primary cause.

II. What Righteousness Is.



Righteousness is moral rightness, moral rectitude, moral uprightness, conformity to moral law. But what mental act or state is that which the moral law or law of God requires? Law is a rule of action. Moral law requires action--mental action, responsible action, therefore free action. But what particular form of action does moral law require?

Free action is a certain form of action of the will, and this is the only strictly free action. Christ has taught us by His own teaching and through His inspired Prophets and Apostles that the moral law requires love, and that this is the sum of its requirements. But what is this love? It cannot be the involuntary love of the sensibility, either in the form of emotion or affection; for these states of the mind, belonging as they do to the category of cause and effect, cannot be the form of love demanded by the law of God. The moral law is the law of God's activity, the rule in conformity to which He always acts. We are created in God's image. His rule of life is therefore ours. The moral law requires of Him the same kind of love that it does of us. If God had no law or rule of action, He could have no moral character. As our Creator and Lawgiver, He requires of us the same love in kind and the same perfection in degree that He Himself exercises. "God is love." He loves with all the strength of His infinite nature. He requires us to love with all the strength of our finite nature. This is being perfect as God is perfect. But what is this love of God as a mental exercise? It must be benevolence or good will. God is a moral agent. The good of universal being is infinitely valuable in itself. God must infinitely well appreciate this. He must see and feel the moral propriety of choosing this for its own sake. He has chosen it from eternity. By His executive volitions He is endeavouring to realize it. The law which He has promulgated to govern our activity requires us to sympathize with His choice, His benevolence, to choose the same end that He does, for the same reason--that is, for its own sake. God's infinite choice of the good of universal being is righteousness in Him, because it is the choice of the intrinsically and infinitely valuable for its own sake. It is a choice in conformity with His nature and the relations He has constituted. It must be a choice in conformity with His infinitely clear conscience or moral sense. Righteousness in God, then, is conformity to the laws of universal love or good will. It must be an ultimate, supreme, immanent, efficient preference or choice of the highest good of universal being, including His own. It must be ultimate, in that this good of being is chosen for its own sake. It must be supreme, because it is preferred to everything else. It must be immanent, because it is innate and at the very foundation of all His

moral activity. It must be efficient, because, from its very nature, it must energize to secure that which is thus preferred or chosen with the whole strength of his infinite nature. This is right choice, right moral action. The moral quality, then, of unselfish benevolence is righteousness or moral rightness. All subordinate choices, volitions and actions, and states of the sensibility which proceed from this immanent, ultimate, supreme preference or choice, have moral character in the sense and only for the reason that they proceed from or are the natural product of unselfish benevolence. This ultimate, immanent, supreme preference is the holy heart of a moral agent. Out of it proceeds, directly or indirectly, the whole moral or spiritual life of the individual.

### III. How We Know What Righteousness Is.

I answer: By consciousness.

(a) By consciousness we know that our whole life proceeds from ultimate choice or preference. (b) By consciousness we know that conscience demands perfect, universal love or unselfish benevolence; and, by consequence, it demands all those acts and states of mind and outward courses of life that by a law of our nature proceed from unselfish benevolence. (c) By consciousness we know that conscience is satisfied with this, demands nothing more, and accepts nothing less. (d) By consciousness we know that conscience pronounces this to be right, or righteousness. (e) By consciousness we know that this is obedience to the law of God as revealed in our nature, and that when we render this obedience we are so adjusted in the will of God that we have perfect peace. We are in sympathy with God. We are at peace with God and with ourselves. Short of this we cannot be so. This I understand to be the teaching both of our nature and the Bible. My limits will not allow me to quote Scripture to sustain this view.

### IV. Lastly, how a sinner may attain to righteousness.

A sinner is a selfish moral agent. Being selfish, he will, of course, make no other than selfish efforts to become righteous. Selfishness is a state of voluntary committal to the indulgence of the sensibility. While the will is in this state of committal to self-indulgence, the soul will not and cannot put forth any righteous act. The first righteous act possible to an unregenerate sinner is to change his heart, or the supreme ultimate preference of his soul. Without this he may outwardly conform to the letter of God's law; but this is not righteousness. Without this he may have many exercises and states of mind which he may suppose to be Christian experience; but these are not righteousness. Without a change of heart he may live a perfectly outwardly moral and religious

life. All this he may do for selfish reasons; but this is not righteousness. I say again his first righteous act must be to change his heart. To say that he will change this for any selfish reason is simply a contradiction, for the change of heart involves the renunciation of selfishness. How, then, can a sinner change his heart or attain to righteousness? I answer: Only by taking such a view of the character and claims of God as to induce him to renounce his self-seeking spirit and come into sympathy with God. To say nothing here of possibility, the Bible reveals the fact and human consciousness attests the truth that a sinner will never attain to such a view of the claims of God as will induce him to renounce selfishness and sympathize with God without the illuminations of the Holy Spirit. A sinner attains, then, to righteousness only through the teachings and inspirations of the Holy Spirit.

But what is involved in this change from sin to righteousness?

- (1) It must involve confidence in God, or faith. Without confidence a soul could not be persuaded to change his heart, to renounce self, and sympathize with God.
- (2) It must involve repentance. By repentance I mean that change of mind which consists in a renunciation of self-seeking and a coming into sympathy with God.
- (3) It involves a radical change of moral attitude in respect to God and our neighbour.

All these are involved in a change of heart. They occur simultaneously, and the presence of one implies the existence and presence of the others. It is by the truths of the Gospel that the Holy Spirit induces this change in sinful man. This revelation of divine love, when powerfully sent home by the Holy Spirit, is an effectual calling. From the above it will be seen that, while a sinner may live a perfectly outwardly moral and religious life, a truly regenerated soul cannot live a sinful life. The new heart does not, cannot sin. This John in his first Epistle expressly affirms. A benevolent, supreme, ultimate choice cannot produce selfish, subordinate choices or volitions. It is possible for a Christian to backslide. If it were not, perseverance would be no virtue. If the change were a physical one, or a change of the very nature of the sinner, backsliding would be impossible and perseverance no virtue. It is objected to this view that backsliding must consist in going back to a selfish, ultimate preference, and, therefore, involve an adverse change of heart. What if it does? Must this not be, indeed, true? Did not Adam and Eve change their hearts from holy to sinful ones? But may a man change his heart back and forth? I answer: Yes; or a sinner could not be required to make to himself a new heart,

nor could a Christian sin after regeneration. The idea that the same person can have at the same time both a holy and a sinful heart is absurd in true philosophy, contrary to the Bible, and of most pernicious tendency. When a soul is backslidden, Christ calls upon him to repent and do his first work over again.

Righteousness is sustained in the human soul by the indwelling of Christ through faith and in no other way. It cannot be sustained by purposes or resolutions self-originated and not wrought by the Spirit of Christ. Through faith Christ first gains ascendancy in the human heart, and through faith He maintains this ascendancy and reigns as king in the soul.

There can be no righteousness in man back of his heart, for nothing back of this can be voluntary; therefore, there can be no righteousness in the nature of man in the sense that implies praiseworthiness or virtue.

All outward conformity to the law and commandments of God that does not proceed from Christ, working in the soul by His Holy Spirit, is self-righteousness. All true righteousness, then, is the righteousness of faith, or a righteousness secured by Christ through faith in Him.

**HINDRANCES TO REVIVALS.****[Part 1]****BY PRESIDENT CHARLES G. FINNEY.**

THE INDEPENDENT.

NEW YORK, MARCH 26, 1874

I address this article to those who believe that regeneration is a moral and not a physical change; that it is a voluntary, intelligent, and intelligible change; that it is a change in the moral attitude of the soul toward God--a radical change of moral action, and consequently a radical change of moral character. I address those who believe that regeneration is induced by the Holy Spirit in the use of appropriate truth--that truth which reveals the nature and guilt of sin, the character, law, and Gospel of God. I address those who believe that there are appropriate means of regeneration and sanctification. Some hindrances of revivals amount to preventives, others retard the progress of revivals, while others still bring them to a close. As revivals are induced by the Holy Spirit, in the use of appropriate truth, it follows that whatever so grieves and offends the Holy Spirit as to necessitate his withholding of his divine illumination and co-operation will prevent a revival. Among the preventives are such as the following:

1. A belligerent, sectarian pulpit. Preaching which is of this character always begets in a church a spirit of bigotry, fanaticism, and uncharitableness. These are the opposite of true religion. A church fed with such food will not be in a state to prevail with God in prayer. It will not be in a state with which the Holy Spirit can have any sympathy. It is not in accordance with the character and revealed designs of the Holy Spirit to convert souls to such a spirit and temper as that. By such pulpit teaching, illustrated by such a spirit, and by such lives as will result from it, the outside world will not come to an understanding of what true religion is; and, hence, no revival can be expected under such circumstances. I believe the history of the Church will justify this conclusion.

2. The habitual inculcation from the pulpit of what are called the hyper-Calvinistic doctrines will prevent a revival. Some men who have occasionally preached those doctrines, and at other times have laid them aside and poured forth the doctrines of free salvation, have been blessed with powerful revivals under their ministry. But the revivals occur not in connection with their dwelling upon those abstract hyper-Calvinistic doctrines, but as a result of their practical preaching of a practical Gospel. In my younger days I often heard it admitted

that it would not do to preach the "doctrines" in revivals of religion.

3. The habitual ignoring or withholding of any truth the belief of which is essential to and implied in a sound conversion will prevent a revival; such, for example, as the doctrine of moral depravity, the divinity and atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, the necessity of regeneration, the divine authority of the Bible, the spirituality and binding nature of the moral law, justification by Christ, through faith, and, in short, whatever must be believed as a condition and means of our sanctification and preparedness for Heaven.

4. Diverting excitements, if strong and permanent, will prevent a revival. Hence, it has always been the policy of Satan to keep the church and, if possible, the ministry in a state of worldly excitement. It is not very material what particular form these excitements take on -- whether a pressure of business, of politics, of worldly amusements, of balls, or parties, or theaters, or games, or clubs. Whatever strongly excites the masses to the extent of diverting their attention will prevent a revival of religion. A revival of religion necessarily occupies the attention of those who are the subjects of it, whether they are in the church or out of it. The Holy Spirit converts people by teaching them; hence, he must have their attention. He does not gain or hold their attention by force; hence, whatever exciting topic comes to absorb the public attention and divert it from the great truths of salvation will prevent a revival. It is astonishing to see how careless professors of religion and sometimes ministers are in regard to the promotion and existence of those excitements that will effectually prevent a revival. We often see communities that perishingly need a revival of religion deliberately planning and carrying into execution at those seasons of the year most favorable to revivals the very means of preventing them. They will commit themselves to attend a series of lectures on purely worldly subjects, or engage in a round of parties, perhaps dances, and any number of worldly amusements and entertainments, which are calculated, if not deliberately designed, to keep the people in a giddy whirl until the opening business season demands the attention of business men, and leaves the pleasure-seeker in a state of mind which is anything but favorable to a revival of religion. I am sorry to say that ministers sometimes are drawn into this snare, and give their influence to a course of action which they ought to know will divert their people from the promotion of the revival of religion so much needed. Such ministers may render themselves popular for a time with the worldly professors and ungodly sinners; but the day of judgment will undoubtedly show that they



were a nuisance in the community where they exercised their influence. Such cases are, I trust, comparatively rare. It is generally true that such worldly movements originate with the worldly spirits in the church, combining their influence with worldly, pleasure-loving outsiders. They plan and lead off in the execution of those diverting and exciting pastimes, to the great grief of their pastor, in spite of what he is able or rather dares to do to prevent it. He has looked forward to the period when the excursionists should return to their homes, the business world get relief from its great pressure, and long evenings be favorable to occupying the attention of the whole people with the great question of salvation. Then he has promised himself that he will lead off, and persuade his church to follow, and gather a harvest of souls for Christ. This has been his hope and his comfort. But lo! before he is aware of it the leading members of his church are committed, with the leaders of the outside world, to go in for a course of pleasure-seeking, that will effectually prevent a revival. Thus his hopes are dashed, his hands are tied, and it is charged upon him that his labors are not blessed. Sinners are left unconverted, the mass of churchmembers become a stumbling-block to the world, Christ's religion is misrepresented. He is grieved and dishonored, the masses are unsaved and lost, and their blood is required at the hands of those who have stood in the way of a revival.

5. A spirit of division and controversy in the church and community will effectually prevent a revival of religion. Much has been said and justly said of the evil influence of balls and dancing parties. These are bad enough, and, if persisted in, will no doubt effectually prevent revivals. But they are not half so sinful or so dangerous or so sure to prevent a revival as a quarrel. There are men, and women too, who would be horror-stricken if a ball were to be gotten up in their neighborhood, who will not hesitate to originate and perpetuate neighborhood and church bickerings and quarrels. They would consider it a mortal sin to dance; and are yet the stirrers up of strife, jealousies, animosities, and bad feeling, as far as their influence extends. They will not dance; but they will do much worse. Dancing is bad enough; but bitter words and a divisive spirit are much worse.

Of all the mischief-makers in a church, of all the nuisances in society, of all the anti-Christian influences that obstruct and prevent revivals of religion, a divisive spirit and bitter tongue are the most to be dreaded. Sometimes a single self-willed, influential man or woman may for years effectually prevent a revival of religion. Two or three such men or women may counteract all the influence of a most faithful pastor,

keep a church in a state of bitterness and turmoil, prevent a revival of religion, and ruin a generation of souls.

6. Church pride and ambition will some times effectually prevent a revival. A proud, ambitious people will build and furnish extravagant churches, lay themselves out to exceed all their neighbors in this respect, get up everything on an extravagant and worldly scale, endeavor to draw in the wealthy and aristocratic classes, and make a congregation of the élite of the town. They must have a minister that will flatter their vanity, indulge them in their pride and ambition, without rebuke, apologize for their extravagance, justify their grasping after wealth, and, in short, politely meet their wishes. What comes of all this but spiritual death and the absence of revivals of religion?

7. A penurious church will prevent a revival of religion. A penurious spirit is an abomination to God. It is dishonest, selfish, a misrepresentation of Christ's religion, the opposite of his spirit. Where a church is niggardly and parsimonious in their treatment of a minister, inattentive to his wants, tardy in paying his salary, planning to avoid all expense, close-fisted in regard to supporting the Sabbath-school, missionary societies, and the cause of Christ generally, they may expect that God will withhold from them his sympathy; that he will do nothing to manifest his approbation of such a course; that, since they tenaciously withhold from him, he is constrained to withhold from them. I beseech those churches that are not favored with revivals of religion to inquire into the reasons. They may rest assured that the fault is at their own door. God never withholds his Spirit when he can honorably bestow it.

8. Opposition to or neglect of needed reforms will often prevent revivals of religion. The Holy Spirit is a reformer, and where churches will not co-operate in the promotion of greatly needed reforms, especially if they set their faces against them, they need not expect a revival of religion.

But I must notice several things that will retard and oftentimes bring a revival of religion to a close.

1. The want of consecutiveness and logical consistency and connection in the pulpit teaching. Ministers sometimes seem to have no plan in their teaching. They will preach one thing in the morning, and in the afternoon something that will divert attention from the morning's discourse, and in the evening something entirely irrelevant to both. This is tempting God. It is a violation of the laws of Nature. It is embarrassing the Spirit's teaching. To carry forward a revival successfully,

the preaching should be consecutive as to the order of subjects, logical in form, so as to leave no loophole through which a sinner can escape, and the sermons should follow one another in such a manner as to hedge the sinner and the backslider in on every side and shut him up to immediate repentance and faith in Christ. Instead of this, we sometimes hear a minister preach, perhaps, one sermon that seems to be a good beginning for a revival. The hopes of the church are excited, the spirit of prayer stimulated; but lo! perhaps the very next sermon or the very next Sabbath will introduce something wholly irrelevant, not in the least degree following up what was so hopefully begun. Thus the praying ones are disappointed, their hearts grieved, and they cannot help feeling that the minister lacks steadiness of aim, also unction and common sense.

2. Irrelevant exhortations and prayer in prayer and conference meetings will much retard and often effectually destroy an existing revival. Often has my soul been agonized in prayer and conference meetings by hearing some brother, whose heart, it was evident, was not at all in the work, introduce some altogether irrelevant topic, and draw the attention and prayer and feeling of the meeting into a channel not at all connected with the matter in hand--the conversion of the persons present or in the immediate neighborhood. Of course, that meeting is a failure, so far as the interests of the revival are concerned. If I had room, I should like to illustrate each of these particulars by facts that have come under my own observation. By doing so, I could easily expand each of these articles into a volume of considerable size. But, of necessity, I study to be as brief as is possibly consistent with perspicuity. It often pains me to leave out the illustrative facts.

3. The development of a sectarian spirit in a revival will always retard and often effectually arrest it. If the churches of different denominations begin never so secretly to proselyte, it will be seen by those who are spiritually minded in the falling off of the spirit of prayer. The praying, wakeful people will feel that something is the matter; that the Spirit of God is grieved. Conversions are less frequent, the work is partially if not altogether suspended. If the sectarian spirit becomes general, the work must come to a close; and yet each denomination is but "earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints," as they think. Yet it is almost never a jealousy for the truth, but a desire to build up their own particular denomination, that is at the bottom of their efforts.

4. The introduction of a controversial spirit will retard and greatly and, if persisted in, will ruin a revival.

5. Uncharitableness on the part of Christians will destroy their spirit of prayer, retard and, if persisted in, destroy a revival of religion.

6. The breaking out of a fanatical spirit in a revival will retard or destroy it. I use the term fanatical here in the sense of a bitter, denunciatory, and fault-finding spirit. This needs to be closely watched. I have seldom seen a revival in which it did not make its appearance sooner or later and to a considerable extent. It is the policy of Satan to pour himself stealthily into the hearts of Christians and introduce a spirit of censoriousness and bitterness that will ruin the work. Not only is the Spirit of God poured out in revivals of religion; but often Satan will pour himself out into the hearts of the people. He needs to be closely watched; and, if his agency is detected, private reproof and expostulation should be resorted to.

7. Any falling off of prevailing prayer will immediately manifest itself in the manifest partial relief of convicted sinners and less frequent conversions.

8. The creeping in of a spirit of unbelief with regard to the continuation of the work will retard it and often effectually destroy it.

9. A revival of religion will be greatly retarded if a spirit of gallantry, gossip, and flirtation amongst the young is suffered to prevail.

10. Whatever relieves the pressure upon the consciences of the ungodly and upon the hearts of the praying ones will retard a revival. A revival will not cease while the travail of soul continues among God's people and the pressure of obligation upon the hearts of the unconverted.

11. Mistaking presumption for faith will often effectually destroy a revival. Instead of lying low and walking softly before God, instead of feeling intense anxiety and travail of soul for the salvation of sinners, Christians will sometimes begin prematurely to rejoice over the converts, while they throw off the pressure and neglect the persistent use of means. In this way revivals are often brought to a sudden close.

**HINDRANCES TO REVIVALS.****[Part 2]****BY PRESIDENT C. G. FINNEY.**

THE INDEPENDENT.

NEW YORK, APRIL 16, 1874

My former article upon this subject was too long, and yet I did not say half that needs to be said upon this particular point. If you think this article worth publishing, please give it a place. My experience has taught me that revivals of religion are not prevented by the wickedness of the outside world, who make no pretensions to religion. I have found that, so far as human instrumentality is concerned, it required much less preaching and labor to promote revivals where there were few professed Christians and where outbreking wickedness was rampant than it does to wake up a sleepy church and convert a mass of gospel-hardened moralists. I have also observed that the combinations of wicked men to resist a revival when it is in progress, cannot long materially stay its course. If the Christian people are awake, united, and lie low before God; if they continue humble and prayerful and filled with the Holy Ghost, the wickedness of the unconverted cannot stay the progress of a revival, and in several very striking instances that have come under my observation God has silenced opposition and broken through the ranks of rebels combined against him by the very marked and sudden death of one or more of the leaders of the opposition.

But the danger to revivals is to be apprehended from the wickedness of the church or some of its members. I have several times been reminded of God's dealing in the case of Achan. In revivals of religion the same principle upon which God acted in that case will be revealed in his treatment of a church whose membership are allowed to cover up their sins. I have witnessed many illustrations of this principle. I once labored in a church from which a member had been excommunicated for accusing one of the elders of the church of gross immorality, of which she was personally cognizant. The Spirit of God was poured out freely upon the unconverted and upon the members of other churches that came in large numbers to the meetings. I soon became convinced that there was some "accursed thing" covered up in that church that grieved and offended the Holy Spirit. Some of the members were greatly exercised in mind, and from past experience I was led to believe that there was something covered up among the leaders of the church. After a few weeks' labor under those circumstances, the excommunicated

woman to whom I have referred was terribly searched and apparently most soundly converted. She came back to the church; but was not received with confidence by the membership, because she refused to confess that she had slandered the elder in question. She still insisted that what she had said of him was true. She requested to meet the eldership and pastor, that she might confront the accused elder fact to face. The meeting took place. She told her story as at first. The elder flatly denied it; and the pastor, believing him, set at naught her pretensions to conversion. But a few days elapsed till the convicted elder was broken down, and obliged to confess that the woman's story was true. But here they made a fatal mistake--or perhaps I should say committed a great sin. Instead of requiring the elder to make public confession to the church, and receiving the woman back again to the fold, they covered the matter up, discarded her, and allowed the offending elder to remain in the confidence of the church and the world. This was the ruin of the revival, so far as that church was concerned. Hundreds united with the other churches, but scarcely any with this one. The pastor was soon after dismissed. The church had to be reconstructed before they could enjoy the favor of God. I have seen several cases where it was evident there was an "Achan" in the camp, and the blessing of God was withheld until the "Achan" was searched out and either made public confession or was expelled from the church. Sometimes, in the midst of a powerful revival, all at once there would be a manifest suspension of Divine influence. The wakeful members would feel in their deepest hearts that some prominent member or members of the church had sinned and grieved the Holy Spirit. After a mighty struggle in prayer, the "Achan" would be discovered, the sin confessed, and then the work would go on again with power. In a state of feeble health, I was once spending a few weeks in a neighborhood where there was a church without a pastor, and who, when they had preaching, drew upon the funds of the Home Missionary Society for a part of the minister's support. While I was there they obtained the labors of an evangelist, who preached to them from day to day and from week to week without success. He saw and I saw that there was some iniquity in the church that forbade the effectual pouring out of the Spirit upon them. I made inquiry; but could not learn that there was any division in the church or any particular form of known sin covered up among them. But I observed that the meetinghouse was becoming unendurably filthy with tobacco spittle. One day, after sermon, I rose and called the attention of the church to that fact. On inquiry and calculation, I found that that church expended more for tobacco than they did for the support of the Gospel.



After dealing with them thoroughly upon this point, a covenant was drawn up, which pledged the signers thereto to abstain wholly from the use of tobacco, and to pay the amount hitherto expended for that article wholly into the treasury of the Lord for the support of the Gospel. The tobacco users, I believe, almost to a man signed this covenant; and thereupon a new spirit immediately pervaded their meetings. There was liberty and power in prayer and preaching, and it was a striking contrast to what had gone before. The Spirit was poured out, and there was every indication of the coming on of a powerful and widespread revival. The floor of the house was cleansed and God was evidently in our midst. This hopeful state of things continued, I should think, for more than a week; when it became apparent that the Spirit was grieved that his agency was withheld. Fears began to be entertained by many of the most wakeful of the church that the brethren were breaking their covenant to abstain from the use of tobacco. The floor of the house continued clean, and, of course, did not justify the fear and suspicion that the covenant was broken. But soon it became so unmistakably evident that there was some "accursed thing" that prevented the work of the Spirit that the question was publicly asked if the brethren were not breaking their covenant with each other and with God. It was soon ascertained that they were, and that they were unwilling to repent and renew their covenant. This was decisive. All hopeful appearances almost immediately vanished, the evangelist left the ground for another field, and the meetings were entirely suspended.

Sometimes the half-heartedness of a pastor and his jealousy of the influence of an evangelist will either prevent a revival, or suspend and break it up after it has commenced. In such cases this want of honest earnestness in a pastor will be perceived by the church, and will greatly if not wholly destroy their confidence in him as a pastor and lead to his dismissal. The enemies of revivals will charge this dismissal of the pastor, oftentimes, upon the evangelist. So far as my observation has gone, the honest earnestness of a pastor in promoting a revival, in connection with the labors of an evangelist, greatly increase the confidence of the church in him and enhances his influence. I have said that sometimes God will rebuke opposition and break through the rank of opposers by some manifest rebuke of the opposition. In one instance an elderly and well-known man set up a most determined opposition to the meetings, and became so outrageous and blasphemous in his opposition as to excite the attention of the whole community. Of course, he became the leader of the opposition. But in the midst of the revival,

whilst sitting at breakfast, he suddenly fell from his chair in a fit. A physician was called, who said to him: "If you have anything to say, lose no time, for you can live but a short time." He replied, "Don't let Finney pray over my corpse," and expired immediately. I could relate other cases in which God has rebuked opposition in a similar manner. In one city where I was laboring in the midst of a powerful revival of religion the presbytery met to transact their usual business. Among them was an aged minister, who was opposed to revivals. The city was greatly moved by the revival influence, so that everywhere the conversation was about the great work of God that was progressing in their midst. The ministers of the presbytery became very much interested, and the subject was much alluded to by the members of the presbytery at every session. This old minister was so annoyed that just before the close of presbytery he rose to bear his testimony against the revival. I was not present, but was informed that he made a very bitter speech, that greatly distressed the praying people. They felt that his speech would do great injury--would embolden opposers and stir up opposition. Much agonizing prayer was offered that evening that God would interpose and avert the threatened mischief. The next morning the old minister was found dead in his bed. This counteracted the influence of his speech and in a great measure silenced the opposition. I forbear to give names and places, because I would not wound the feelings of relatives and friends of those deceased persons. I would give other illustrations, but this article is long enough.

**PREACHING SO AS TO CONVERT NOBODY.****BY PRESIDENT CHAS. G. FINNEY.**

THE INDEPENDENT.

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 7, 1871

The design of this article is to propound several rules by a steady conformity to any one of which a man may preach so as not to convert anybody. It is generally conceded at the present day that the Holy Spirit converts souls to Christ by means of truth adapted to that end. It follows that a selfish preacher will not skillfully adapt means to convert souls to Christ, for this is not his end.

Rule 1st. Let your supreme motive be to secure your own popularity; then, of course, your preaching will be adapted to that end, and not to convert souls to Christ.

2d. Aim at pleasing, rather than at converting your hearers.

3d. Aim at securing for yourself the reputation of a beautiful writer.

4th. Let your sermons be written with a high degree of literary finish.

5th. Let them be short, occupying in the reading not to exceed from twenty to thirty minutes.

6th. Let your style be flowery, ornate, and quite above the comprehension of the common people.

7th. Be sparing of thought, lest your sermon contain truth enough to convert a soul.

8th. Lest your sermon should make a saving impression, announce no distinct propositions or heads, that will be remembered, to disturb the consciences of your hearers.

9th. Make no distinct points, and take no disturbing issues with the consciences of your hearers, lest they remember these issues, and become alarmed about their souls.

10th. Avoid a logical division and subdivision of your subject, lest you should too thoroughly instruct your people.

11th. Give your sermon the form and substance of a flowing, beautifully written, but never-to-be-remembered essay; so that your hearers will say "it was a beautiful sermon," but can give no further account of it.

12th. Avoid preaching doctrines that are offensive to the carnal mind, lest they should say of you, as they did of

Christ, "This is a hard saying. Who can hear it?" and that you are injuring your influence.

13th. Denounce sin in the abstract, but make no allusion to the sins of your present audience.

14th. Keep the spirituality of God's holy law, by which is the knowledge of sin, out of sight, lest the sinner should see his lost condition and flee from the wrath to come.

15th. Preach the Gospel as a remedy, but conceal or ignore the fatal disease of the sinner.

16th. Preach salvation by grace; but ignore the condemned and lost condition of the sinner, lest he should understand what you mean by grace, and feel his need of it.

17th. Preach Christ as an infinitely amiable and good-natured being; but ignore those scathing rebukes of sinners and hypocrites which so often made his hearers tremble.

18th. Avoid especially preaching to those who are present. Preach about sinners, and not to them. Say they, and not you, lest any one should make a personal and saving application of your subject.

19th. Aim to make your hearers pleased with themselves and pleased with you, and be careful not to wound the feelings of any one.

20th. Preach no searching sermons, lest you convict and convert the worldly members of your church.

21st. Avoid awakening uncomfortable memories by reminding your hearers of their past sins.

22d. Do not make the impression that God commands your hearers now and here to obey the truth.

23d. Do not make the impression that you expect your hearers to commit themselves upon the spot and give their hearts to God.

24th. Leave the impression that they are expected to go away in their sins, and to consider the matter at their convenience.

25th. Dwell much upon their inability to obey, and leave the impression that they must wait for God to change their natures.

26th. Make no appeals to the fears of sinners; but leave the impression that they have no reason to fear.

27th. Say so little of Hell that your people will infer that you do not believe in its existence.

28th. Make the impression that, if God is as good as you are, He will send no one to Hell.

29th. Preach the love of God, but ignore the holiness of His love, that will by no means clear the impenitent sinner.

30th. Often present God in his parental love and relations; but ignore His governmental and legal relations to His subjects, lest the sinner should find himself condemned already and the wrath of God abiding on him.

31st. Preach God as all mercy, lest a fuller representation of His character should alarm the consciences of your hearers.

32d. Try to convert sinners to Christ without producing any uncomfortable convictions of sin.

33d. Flatter the rich, so as to repel the poor, and you will convert none of either class.

34th. Make no disagreeable allusions to the doctrines of self-denial, cross-bearing, and crucifixion to the world, lest you should convict and convert some of your churchmembers.

35th. Admit, either expressly or impliedly, that all men have some moral goodness in them; lest sinners should understand that they need a radical change of heart, from sin to holiness.

36th. Avoid pressing the doctrine of total moral depravity; lest you should offend, or even convict and convert, the moralist.

37th. Do not rebuke the worldly tendencies of the church, lest you should hurt their feelings, and finally convert some of them.

38th. Should any express anxiety about their souls, do not probe them by any uncomfortable allusion to their sin and ill-desert; but encourage them to join the church at once, and exhort them to assume their perfect safety within the fold.

39th. Preach the love of Christ not as enlightened benevolence, that is holy, just, and sin-hating; but as a sentiment, an involuntary and indiscriminating fondness.

40th. Be sure not to represent religion as a state of loving self-sacrifice for God and souls; but rather as a free and easy state of self-indulgence. By thus doing you will prevent sound conversions to Christ, and convert your hearers to yourself.

41st. So select your themes and so present them as to attract and flatter the wealthy, aristocratic, self-indulgent extravagant, pleasure-seeking classes, and you will not convert any of them to the cross-bearing religion of Christ.

42d. Be time-serving, or you will endanger your salary; and, besides, if you speak out and are faithful, you may convert somebody.

43d. Do not preach with a divine unction, lest your preaching make a saving impression.

44th. To avoid this, do not maintain a close walk with God, but rely upon your learning and study.

45th. Lest you should pray too much, engage in light reading and worldly amusements.

46th. That your people may not think you in earnest to save their souls, and, as a consequence, heed your preaching, encourage church-fairs, lotteries, and other gambling and worldly expedients to raise money for church purposes.

47th. If you do not approve of such things, make no public mention of your disapprobation, lest your church should give them up, and turn their attention to saving souls and be saved themselves.

48th. Do not rebuke extravagance in dress, lest you should uncomfortably impress your vain and worldly churchmembers.

49th. Lest you should be troubled with revival scenes and labors, encourage parties, pic-nics, excursions, and worldly amusements, so as to divert attention from the serious work of saving souls.

50th. Ridicule solemn earnestness in pulling sinners out of the fire, and recommend, by precept and example, it jovial, fun-loving religion, and sinners will have little respect for your serious preaching.

51st. Cultivate a fastidious taste in your people, by avoiding all disagreeable allusions to the last judgment and final retribution.

52d. Treat such uncomfortable doctrines as obsolete and out of place in these days of Christian refinement.

53d. Do not commit yourself to much-needed reforms, lest you should compromise your popularity and injure your influence. Or you may make some branch of outward reform a hobby, and dwell so much upon it as to divert attention from the great work of converting souls to Christ.

54th. So exhibit religion as to encourage the selfish pursuit of it. Make the impression upon sinners that their own safety and happiness is the supreme motive for being religious.

55th. Do not lay much stress upon the efficacy and necessity of prayer, lest the Holy Spirit should be poured out upon you and the congregation, and sinners should be converted.

56th. Make little or no impression upon your hearers, so that you can repeat your old sermons often without its being noticed.



57th. If your text suggest any alarming thought, pass lightly over it, and by no means dwell upon and enforce it.

58th. Avoid all illustrations, repetitions, and emphatic sentences, that may compel your people to remember what you say.

59th. Avoid all heat and earnestness in your delivery, lest you make the impression that you really believe what you say.

60th. Address the imagination, and not the conscience, of your hearers.

61st. Make it your great aim to be personally popular with all classes of your hearers.

62d. Be tame and timid in presenting the claims of God, as would become you in presenting your own claims,

63d. Be careful not to testify from your own personal experience of the power of the Gospel, lest you should produce the conviction upon your hearers that you have something which they need.

64th. See that you say nothing that will appear to any of your hearers to mean him or her, unless it be something flattering.

65th. Encourage church sociables, and attend them yourself, because they tend so strongly to levity as to compromise Christian dignity and sobriety, and thus paralyze the power of your preaching.

66th. Encourage the cultivation of the social in so many ways as to divert the attention of yourself and your churchmembers from the infinite guilt and danger of the unconverted among you.

67th. In those sociables talk a little about religion, but avoid any serious appeal to the heart and conscience of those who attend, lest you should discourage their attendance, always remembering that they do not go to socials to be earnestly dealt with in regard to their relations to God. In this way you will effectually so employ yourself and churchmembers as that your preaching will not convert anybody.

The experience of ministers who have steadily adhered to any of the above rules will attest the soul-destroying efficacy of such a course, and churches whose ministers have steadily conformed to any of these rules can testify that such preaching does not convert souls to Christ.

## ENDLESS PUNISHMENT - WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

BY PRESIDENT CHARLES G. FINNEY.

THE INDEPENDENT.

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 6, 1873

In a series of lectures to the theological students in Yale College the speaker criticised unfavorably a sermon that I preached to his people, some years ago, relating to endless punishment. In this article I cannot enter into a defense of that sermon, or notice the unfairness of the criticism; but will state as briefly as possible my views upon that subject. I shall take it for granted that Orthodox or Evangelical Christians believe in the endless happiness of the righteous and the endless misery of the wicked. This, of course, implies their endless existence. Now, what follows from this? 1st. That they will forever be gaining, at least, in the knowledge obtained by experience, and consequently in their capacity for enjoyment or suffering. But suppose this be denied. it will follow, 2d, from their endless existence, that their happiness or misery is an endlessly growing quantity in its aggregate amount. Hence, it must follow, 3d, that a period will arrive in the future existence of every soul at which each one can truly say that it has enjoyed or suffered more than the whole universe of creatures had enjoyed or suffered before it began to exist. Yes, indefinitely more. Yes, all but infinitely more. This follows irresistibly, from the fact of the immortality of the soul and the endlessness of rewards and punishments. 4th. It matters not at all, as to the final result, what the degree of suffering may be--how rapidly or how slowly the aggregate amount may accumulate. It is only a question of time, or rather of eternity. For, if the increase be but as a drop in a thousand years, still it must follow that a period must arrive in the history of each in which it can truly say: "I have enjoyed or suffered more than the whole universe of creatures had enjoyed or suffered before I began to be." This conclusion must be admitted, or the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and the endlessness of future rewards and punishments must be abandoned. I never taught or believed that God could have complacency in the misery of lost souls. But he must have complacency in sustaining the authority of his government, at any cost. The cost he must deplore; but the good resulting must reconcile him to the loss. This must be so, or the whole question of his government is only a fiction. Now, sinners are totally indisposed to consider this question, and in these days of greatly increased worldly excitement it must be the duty of ministers of the Gospel to more frequently than ever press the consideration of

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this subject upon the attention of both saints and sinners—to lift up their voices like a trumpet, and show the careless, prayerless, inconsiderate ones what is their inevitable doom. To fail to do this is cowardly and cruel beyond expression. Are ministers who neglect to do this insane? At a meeting of ministers, not long since, a leading Congregational minister advised that ministers should not preach on the subject of endless punishments more than once to where they formerly did ten times. I fear this is the practice of ministers of the present day. The reason assigned for such neglect is that people will not bear it, that times are changed, that in these days of pleasure seeking and money seeking men do not like to consider the question of endless punishment. But are not these the very reasons why ministers should all the more frequently and pungently instruct and warn them? What can be more insane, cruel, and hypocritical than the neglect to press this subject upon the consideration of all classes of hearers on the part of the ministry? Do ministers really believe in endless rewards and punishments? If they do not, let them say so and be honest; if they do, how is it possible that they can justify such neglect? It should be remarked that, so far as the amount of suffering to be endured is concerned, it matters not at all under what law the suffering is inflicted or endured. Some insist that the suffering is the natural consequence of dying and remaining in sin. Others insist that the suffering is mostly or, at least, partly a penal infliction, or the execution of the penalty of the divine law. But let it be distinctly understood that, whatever is the cause or the occasion of the suffering, however slight the degree from moment to moment, the aggregate amount, at some period of the future, must be as great as I have above stated. And it should be added and it is dreadful to say that when the period shall have arrived at which any and every soul in the world of suffering shall be able to say that he has suffered more in amount than the whole universe of creatures had suffered before he began to suffer—indefinitely more, incalculably more, still his sufferings are but begun. An eternity of suffering is still before him. I do not wonder that sinners recoil from the consideration of such facts as these. But facts they are, if the doctrine of endless suffering is true, which all orthodox men profess to believe. How immeasurable, then, and damning is the guilt of those Christians, and especially ministers, who fail to compassionately, earnestly, and frequently press this subject upon all classes of men.

It is more pleasant, but, I think, not more profitable to consider the application of this truth to the endless happiness of the righteous. The period must arrive in

the future existence of each one of them when he will be able to say that he has enjoyed a greater amount of happiness than had been enjoyed by the whole universe of creatures before he began to enjoy. Yes, unspeakably more. And yet his enjoyment has but begun. An eternity of enjoyment is still before him. Why should truths like these be so sparingly dealt out to men. Why should not the Christian have the full benefit of this view of the subject? Why should not the sinner also have the benefit of considering what is offered to his acceptance? And why should not he also be made to consider, if possible, the supremely dreadful consequences of his dying in sin? And why should not the compassions of the Church be stirred to their deepest foundations by considering what is before the hasty steps of the impenitent? Has the time come that the apostle foretold, when the people "will not bear sound doctrine; but heap to themselves teachers having itching ears."? Then, for the love of God and man, let the whole Church, and especially the ministers, persistently lift up the loud, the long note of warning, that the blood of the lost be not found in their skirts.

OBERLIN, OHIO, OCT. 25th, 1873

### **THE PROCESS OF SALVATION – PREVENTING BACKSLIDING – A MORE EXCELLENT WAY**

**BY PRESIDENT CHARLES G. FINNEY.**

THE INDEPENDENT.

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 20, 1873

It has been loosely assumed and often asserted that play, glee, fun, hilarious sports are as truly essential to our existence as food and drink, and that to teach men to rise above the desire for such things is to teach them to annihilate or, at least, to mutilate a part of their very nature; that a piety conformed to such teaching is superficial, one-sided, fanatical, and greatly defective. But, if play and hilarious sports are as necessary to us as our food, how happens it that hundreds and thousands do, indeed, rise and live above a felt necessity for any such thing?—that they live entirely above a desire for such things, and are conscious of living a higher, healthier, holier, and altogether happier life than when they lusted after worldly pleasures and amusements? This has been the living and dying testimony of thousands of God's children. The fact is,

we have a double nature--a physical and a moral or spiritual nature. One side of our nature, so to speak, is allied to the physical universe; and another allied to the spiritual or moral universe. Hence, we have many classes of appetites, propensities, desires terminating upon physical objects; another and a higher class of desires, affections, and propensities terminating upon spiritual objects. These two classes of objects really exist, and we are conscious of having desires and affections terminating upon both these classes of objects. The desires, affections, and propensities of our lower nature naturally begin their development at birth. The light we receive from our physical relations to the world around us stimulates into activity the desires and propensities that terminate upon these objects. At first these desires are very few and simple, terminating on food and drink. As we grow older, our sensibility is more and more developed in its relations to the multitudinous physical objects with which we become acquainted. If unenlightened by the spirit of God at an early age, the development is altogether on the natural or physical side of our nature. We begin with desiring to play with a rattle, then with a doll or a hammer and whip; and then we desire pictures and music and books, and physical science and art, sports, pastimes, and rise from step to step in our desires. As the higher ones are developed, the mind naturally drops out, and ceases to exercise the lower ones. The rattle and the doll are exchanged for higher amusements, and the lower are suppressed by the development of the higher, until we lose ourselves in reveling in the higher walks of science. Does any one think of this process as an annihilation or mutilation of our nature? Or do we regard it as a higher and nobler development of our nature? If a scientist loses an interest in what he regards as the insipid pleasures of youth, has his mind become unsound, is he fanatical or insane? All this may take place, and often does, under the simple light of Nature, while the darkness of night broods over our moral Nature. The conscience may hardly have asserted its existence; and, hence, the true idea of guilt and sin has hardly dawned upon the soul. The sensibility has not been aroused to feel its relations to spiritual and eternal realities. The soul is a stranger to conviction of sin; and the desire for emancipation, the hungering and thirsting after righteousness, the feeling after God, Christ, and eternal life have not been awakened. But the Spirit of God sheds his light upon the soul; we immediately become aware of a nature, or, at least, of a department of our nature of which we had not been apprised. The holy law of love comes home upon us. Our sinful indulgences can no longer satisfy or please us. Our self-pleasing spirit is seen to be sinful. Self-indulgence reacts upon us and pains us. We are bowed

under a sense of condemnation and lose all interest in worldly amusements. The world looks dark, the heavens frown; we even lose our appetite for necessary food; we try to pray, but our heart will not pray; we are driven to extremity; we find ourselves lost, and are about to conclude that it is all over with us, that we have played the fool and lost our souls. At last the troubled spirit smites upon its breast and cries: "God be merciful to me, a sinner." Whereupon the "star of Bethlehem" arises, the glory of God in the face of Jesus is seen. He is embraced in the arms of faith; self is renounced and our whole being given to him. His love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, and now we are conscious of a new and heavenly life stirring within us. Now our Bible, our hymn-book, and our Jesus fill our thoughts and arouse the deepest and holiest activities of our souls. And now, after that we have believed, if this our first love is confirmed, enlarged, and deepened by a powerful baptism of the Holy Ghost, if the Spirit continue to descend as a dew, or come with a mighty outpouring like a shower, just in proportion as we are visited with heavenly illuminations and walk in the light of the Lord will our thoughts, desires, and affections and whole spiritual being be engrossed with these revelations. This is a new and higher life. Our lower desires, affections and propensities have ceased their play, and a higher and more spiritual class have been developed. We have been born again. We have come to live, as it were, in a new world. A new set of truths, realities, and facts have been revealed to us; and our moral nature is engrossed with them, and we naturally lose our interest in the pleasures, the fun, and play of this world. We have an entirely new and higher source of enjoyment. In communion with God we lose all desire for communion with worldly minds, and can consent to associate with them only for the purpose of doing them good. We have neither annihilated nor mutilated any part of our nature. Under divine illumination the faculties of our higher nature have been unfolded, our spiritual nature has been developed; and, as an inevitable consequence, our desire for worldly sports, glee, fun, pastime, play is no longer present in consciousness. This is only a higher development, and no annihilation or mutilation. It is only the inevitable consequence of divine illumination. That exactly this state of facts does exist, where the baptism of God's Spirit has been received, hundreds of thousands of God's children can attest. From this standpoint it is easy to see how Christians may be and are enabled to live above the world whilst they are in it; how and when it ceases to be a snare to their souls; and by what means both the aged and the young Christians of all ages may be permanently so interested in Christ and his religion as to



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be full of spiritual cheerfulness, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost, and effectually rid of the clamor of their lower propensities for fun, glee, merriment, and hilarious sports. Pleasure parties, pic-nics, pleasure excursions, theaters, balls, and all like amusements cease to be desired. I know that this has been the case with me, as well as I know my existence; and, if human testimony is to be relied upon at all, I know that the same has been true of multitudes of persons with whom I have conversed and whose biographies have come down to us. And who cannot see that this is the inevitable result of divine illumination? It is spiritual darkness that leaves the mind in so low a state as to be hungering and thirsting after worldly pleasures and amusements. Under these illuminations the spiritual desires and affections become thoroughly aroused and fastened upon their correlated objects, divine and heavenly things, and lower and earthly aspirations fall away. This process is not peculiar to peculiar temperaments or to persons of peculiar employments. It is the universal effect of high and permanent divine illumination. Let ministers, then, insist upon the privilege and necessity of a powerful baptism of the Holy Ghost as a gift to be received after conversion. If the pastor himself is not enjoying this divine illumination, let him not rest till he does. Let him live it before and preach it to his church as essential to their daily walk with God. Let it be constantly impressed upon all classes that they are not emancipated, that they are not fully alive from the dead, until they are sealed with this divine baptism. Let new converts be universally assured that they will lose their first love, and fall into a restless legal bondage, unless they receive this baptism of the Holy Ghost, this flooding of the water of life, this "well of water which shall spring up in them to eternal life," this "anointing that abideth, this divine light that shall permanently interest them in the Word of God, and make the Bible forever their book of books. Let all classes of God's children understand that this baptism may be renewed to meet their highest and every possible want; then teach their faith to work, and to work by love, to do everything for the Lord, to have a single eye to his glory, not only on Sabbath days, but on all days; not only in some things, but in all things. Under a powerful divine illumination this can be easily and effectually taught them, and this will secure their permanent satisfaction with the love of Christ. Their "peace will become as a river and their righteousness as the waves of the sea." They will not feel the need of worldly amusements, so great and high will be their joy in the Lord. Let the pastor, his wife, the elders or deacons, with their wives, the elder members of the church, be imbued with this spirit and live under the influence of this divine illumination, and rely upon it they

will not leave the young people who are members of the church behind. Let the pastor teach judiciously and constantly with a divine unction; let him lay out the spiritual work of the church. Let him lead off, and the anointed one will surely follow. If any lag behind and begin to clamor for worldly indulgences, let him understand that they are not of a heavenly mind, that they are falling or have fallen into spiritual death. Let the whole church be formed into Bible classes, taught by the more able and spiritual members of the church, either male or female. Let the church be divided into sections or classes, and every member held responsible to attend his particular sectional meeting as often as it occurs. Let the church select, yearly or oftener, and ordain leaders of these sections, and let it be the duty of these leaders to know from week to week the spiritual state and labors of every member of their section.

Let these leaders report to their pastor weekly the state, progress, wants, and prospects of their different sections. Let these leaders employ such members of their sections as they please, to help them in the oversight of the other members. Let their sectional meetings be free and open for prayer and remarks from every member. Let spiritual questions be freely asked and answered and spiritual experience freely related. Let these meetings abound in prayer and praise, and Jesus ever be the central object to which all their aspirations tend. Let these leaders be changed as often as need be, the exercises varied, and any amount of new measures introduced that are necessary to keep up a lively and powerful interest among the members. Stereotype nothing, but exercise a spiritual and common-sense discretion in presenting spiritual things in every way to interest. Let these leaders see that every member has some spiritual work on hand from day to day. Let him ascertain that they are laboring with and praying for some souls in an especial manner. Encourage them to invite inquirers to their sectional meetings from week to week, that they may be instructed and prayed for. Let the whole church be a missionary band; and let their labors, successes, discouragements, triumphs, joys, sorrows be reported by the leaders to the pastor every week. This will teach him what he ought to preach. Let him come before the church and congregation in all his public ministrations with unction and power. Especially encourage the young to be free in all the meetings for prayer, conference, and social worship. Do not allow the coldness, formality, the dignity, aristocracy, or fastidiousness of the older members to create a distance between them and the younger members. Let the church be one family, and the older members nursing fathers and mothers to the

younger. let the greatest cordiality and affection be manifested by the older toward the younger members; and let the pastor be the confidential friend and spiritual adviser of every member of the flock. Let every member be a responsible working member, and let every church be fully equipped with its elder or elders and deacons and helpers, so that the whole church may be kept in a state of permanent interest. Let every member, on joining, be required to take his or her place; let them be pledged to give of their substance, according to their ability, for the support of religious institutions; and let it be seen that these dues are punctually paid.

Let the preaching be as frequent and abundant as the pastor is able to perform; and let religious meetings be varied and multiplied to meet the full necessities of the case and keep up a perpetual interest. Let this course, or its equivalent, be pursued by any number of persons thoroughly baptized with the Holy Ghost, and you will witness, not a whirlwind of excitement, such as we now see in places where the church has been for years asleep, and is suddenly and powerfully awakened to their state and the state of sinners around them; but you will see a steady and powerful development of the religious life, conversions occurring from week to week and from day to day, Christians abounding in zeal, full of faith, love, and every good work. Christians will become well acquainted with each other, and their social intercourse will take on a spiritual type, and not be a snare to them. They will meet to plan their work and for prayer and praise. The women will meet for every benevolent purpose, and the men to organize new enterprises for God; and they will have so sweet and divine a satisfaction in all this as not to hunger or thirst for fun, glee, hilarious sports, or pastimes. This is the scriptural and rational remedy for a clamor after worldly amusements. Only let the Holy Spirit, with all his quickening and enlightening influences, bathe the soul in heavenly light from day to day, and the lower and worldly aspirations of the soul will be effectually suppressed. And this, I say again, is neither annihilation nor mutilation; but simply a resurrection to a higher life. I have seen enough of pastoral life to have full faith in the practicability of the course I have marked out. Especially may we calculate with certainty that the young, if rightly dealt with when first converted, will not only in their first love, but will abound in love and joy and hope and every grace, more and more, instead of falling back into a clamor for worldly amusements. The fundamental error lies in failing to effectually urge them to secure the powerful and continuous baptism of the Holy Ghost. If this is neglected, they will live in so much spiritual obscurity as to lose their first love and hanker after

worldly indulgences. Does any one say that in theory this is well enough, but that it is impracticable? But does not God require that Christians should not only abide in their first love, but continue to grow in every grace? Does not God hold out to all his children the baptism and en sealing of the Holy Ghost? Let no one say that what has usually been the course of the Christian life has been so of necessity. Is no better thing promised than we usually witness? Does Christ blame Christians for leaving their first love if they cannot help it? After the Day of Pentecost did Christians think backsliding a necessity? Did the apostles ever assume or teach any such thing? Did they not assume and teach the direct opposite?

To be sure, many of the churches backslid through unbelief, as they do now; but, as God is true, there is no necessity for this. Since Oberlin was first founded there has been almost without interruption what in other places would be called a revival. As pastor, I have been much absent from my people, in evangelistic labors. Until the church was divided, because of its overgrown dimensions; until the place has been filled up by strangers; until new congregations have been organized under diverse religious teachers, it can truly be said that the religious interest was almost universal and permanent. I have always had a great deal more than pastoral labor to perform; but, with all this labor, with the help of my brethren and the powerful baptism of the Holy Ghost, the work of God has gone on and still goes on, and the work, especially among the young, has never ceased. The work among our numerous students has prevailed from year to year, and among no class has there been so steady and prevailing an influence as among the young. While pastor in New York, we had no difficulty in interesting the young members of the church permanently, and I never heard the inquiry raised there: "What shall we do to interest the young members of our church in religion?" We have never realized my full ideal of what ought to be: but from the day I was converted I have experienced and seen enough to convince me of the practicability of keeping the church and especially young Christians from clamoring for worldly amusements.

But, in conclusion, let me say again, and, if possible, more emphatically, that no multiplication of meetings or means will long prevent Christians from backsliding in heart unless they secure the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Let this be insisted on, as a universal necessity and an unalterable condition of a permanent, all-pervading satisfaction with the love of Christ--a satisfaction that shall rule out of the mind all that class of desires that clamor for worldly indulgences.

**BREAK UP YOUR FALLOW GROUND****BY PRESIDENT C. G. FINNEY.**

THE INDEPENDENT.

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 5, 1874

Seasons of commercial and business depression are peculiarly favorable to the promotion of revivals of religion. Viewed in this light, they are often the greatest of blessings in disguise. The business world dreads them before they come and regrets them when they come. In a business point of view, they are a source of general lamentation. But the spiritual watchmen and women who are waiting prayerfully to reap down the fields as soon as they are white for the harvest see in these so-called calamities the hand of God for good, and hear, as it were within, a voiced saying: "Arise and reap, for the fields are white unto the harvest."

Such is the state of things in this country at present, and, with your leave, Mr. Editor, I will make some suggestions to the churches on the subject of revivals. If the articles interest your readers, I may, if my health holds out, write more than one. This one I wish to devote to some remarks on the necessity of reviving the churches.

My experience has taught me that the value of a revival to any community depends upon the thoroughness with which the fallow ground is broken up in the hearts of Christians. When the hearts of the membership of the church are hard and blind and they are in a great measure conformed to this world the preacher sows among thorns. They must be revived. Their hearts must be broken up. They must confess their backsliding. They must repent, have their faith renewed, and put on the Lord Jesus Christ, as a condition of their prevailing either with God or man. If the church is not revived, it will constantly present a false standard to the eyes of the world, and the converts, if conversions there are, can hardly be recognized as such. They will be weak and doubtful and timid, and with the worldliness of the church before them they will not see the necessity of a thorough reformation in all their habits and ways of life. If such converts are gathered into the church, they will be a weakness, instead of a power. They will only swell the number of those over whom the pastor and wakeful members are obliged to weep and groan, and for whom they must travail in birth till Christ be formed in them. The thoroughness with which the church is quickened and reformed will decide the type of the revival, as it regards the conversion of the impenitent. Sometimes but little pains are taken to break up the fallow ground in members of the church. Many professed Christians

seem not to know what it is to be in a truly revived spirit. They know not what it is to travail in birth for souls in prayer, with strong crying and tears; and if a revival begins they are apt to get up in their sleep and bustle about, and do more harm than good. Without manifesting any brokenness of heart, they will begin to exhort the impenitent around them, who have known their worldly-mindedness, and produce repellant and disgust, instead of making a saving impression upon them. If they have manifested worldly mindedness, have been in a great measure blind and conformed to the world, they perishingly need, for their own sake, to be thoroughly broken up in heart and reformed in life. The great deep of their affectional and emotional nature needs to be broken up and thawed out, and their whole mind rendered mellow and yielding to the will of God, before they can truly represent the religion of Christ and be safely recognized as Christians by the world around them. For the laborers to strike in for the conversion of the impenitent before the church is quickened and brought to hold up the right standard in their lives is always a dangerous and often a useless experiment. Frequently converts are counted by scores and hundreds: but in such cases it often happens, as it did in the days of Christ, when he said: "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made ye make him two-fold more the child of Hell than yourselves." In a few short weeks or months, as a general thing, such converts will be found even more conformed to the world than were the members of the church when the converts first indulged a hope. The very idea of a revival implies the quickening and reviving of the church. And a revival that fails to secure this will almost invariably make the pastor a great deal of trouble and in the end deeply wound the cause of Christ.

A worldly-minded church is the greatest hindrance to the success of the Gospel in any place. The more numerous the membership the greater the hindrance. An awakening (I can scarcely call it a revival) that adds to a worldly church a large number of professed converts will inevitably be to the pastor, sooner or later, a great mortification and distress and to the world a great stumbling-block. Hence, it is of indispensable importance that means should be unsparingly used and pressed until a thorough waking up of the church is secured. After this is done the work among the impenitent may be expected to be extensive, rapid, thorough; and the converts will almost universally unite with the church in which this wakefulness and revival exists. I have sometimes labored in churches where it seemed impossible to revive the great mass of the church; and if several churches in the same locality or



the same city were making revival efforts at the same time, and Christians enough from the different churches would take hold and enter into the work to secure sound conversions, the Spirit of God would incline the sound converts to unite with the church or churches where the fallow ground had been most thoroughly broken up.

But I must say something upon the manner, as well as the necessity, of breaking up the fallow ground. The first thing to be done is to secure conviction of sin in the church. A revival implies a declension. If a church needs a revival, it is because religion has declined in their lives and hearts. They are backsliders in heart and filled with their own ways. They have fallen into sin. They have grieved the Holy Spirit. They have disobeyed the Golden Rule. They have dishonored and wounded Christ in the house of his friends. They have betrayed the son of man with a kiss. They have held up a false light. They have been a stumbling-block to the world. All this should be dwelt upon and held up before them; and they should be besought to take these points into their closets, and on their knees before God bring their hearts and lives face to face with the Golden Rule, with their professions and church covenants, and in the light of these to look at their misrepresentations of the religion of Jesus, the many instances in which their lives have been a stumbling-block to those around them, and let them also consider what Christ had a right to expect of them, what the church had a right to expect of them, what unsaved sinners had a right to expect of them, and consider upon their knees before God their dreadful shortcomings, and in how many instances they have really betrayed the cause of Christ and given occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme. Let business men consider prayerfully on their knees whether they have obeyed the Golden Rule; let employers consider whether they have obeyed this rule in dealing with the employed; let the employed consider whether they have obeyed the Golden Rule in being faithful to their employers. Let masters and mistresses and servants bring themselves respectively before God at a throne of grace, and inquire whether they have in all respects obeyed the Golden Rule. Let parents inquire into the spirit and manner of their treatment of their children. Let children inquire solemnly, on their knees at the throne of grace, in what temper and manner they have borne themselves in their relation to their parents. Let husbands and wives also examine themselves in the light of the Golden Rule and in the light of their marriage vows and conjugal relations. Let ministers pray and narrowly look over the spirit and manner in which they have discharged their duties to their churches and congregations. Let them inquire whether Christ is

satisfied with their ministry; let them inquire whether there is any person in their congregation to whom they have not done their duty. Let ministers' wives inquire of Christ whether he is satisfied with the influence they have exercised and the example they have set before the church and the world. Let magistrates inquire whether they have met the just expectations of the public and of Christ; whether they have conscientiously obey and enforced the laws of their country. Let all persons in places of public trust carefully and prayerfully face the question, on their knees before God: Have you, in the light of the Gospel, especially of the Golden Rule, done your duty? Let all classes and persons, in all the relations of life, take all these questions solemnly upon their knees before God, and there, in the light of the great law of Christ, settle these questions as in view of the solemn judgment. Let them push these questions to a thorough repentance and breaking down before God. Let them not stop short of a thorough sense of forgiveness and reconciliation with God.

#### THE GOLDEN RULE:

Matthew 7:12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

#### WHEN IS THE FALLOW GROUND OF THE SOUL BROKEN UP?

##### THE INDEPENDENT.

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First. Not until there is thorough brokenness of heart and contrition of spirit.

2d. Not until sin is crushed out of the heart and it has become thoroughly honest with God and man.

3d. Not until it is disposed to make a clean breast of wrong-doing; to make thorough confession and restitution to God and all injured parties, who, of course, have a right to our confession and restitution. This confession and restitution, to the extent of our ability, is implied in becoming honest or penitent for sin.

There is never genuine repentance where this disposition to confess and make restitution, to the extent of ability, is wanting. Nothing short of this disposition is honesty, either with God or man. God knows this.

Hence, he cannot forgive until he see a voluntary disposition in the soul to set itself right with God and with men; a disposition that sets itself humbly and resolutely to make confession and restitution, to the extent of ability, thoroughly and without delay.

If one has stolen, can he expect to be forgiven while he retains the stolen property? If one has slandered, can he expect to be forgiven while the calumny remains uncorrected? If one has committed a wrong of any kind, against God or against a neighbor, can he expect to be forgiven, while he neglects or refuses to make reparation, to the extent of his ability? In the presence of the universe, could God ever justify the forgiveness of such a dishonest soul? Has he not said, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper"? "But whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy."

But what is it to cover sin?

1st. To justify wrong-doing.

2d. To excuse or palliate it.

3d. to endeavor to conceal it.

4th. In anywise to play the hypocrite respecting it. Such, for example,

a, as denying selfish intention;

b, professing benevolent intention;

c, claiming that it was a mistake;

d, resorting to any subterfuge whatever.

This covering sin was strikingly illustrated in the Garden of Eden. The sinning pair first hid themselves among the trees of the Garden when they heard the voice of God. This was an endeavor to conceal. When questioned, Adam replied: "The woman which thou gavest me, to be with me, she gave me and I did eat." Here was an excuse that virtually reflected upon God. When the woman was questioned, she said: "The serpent beguiled me." She attempted palliation by professing to have been deceived. Here was no genuine repentance. All was evasion and dishonesty from beginning to end. This was a covering of sin, and no wonder that they were turned out of the Garden and not forgiven and the tree of life guarded by a flaming sword. No tree of life accessible to them while they covered their sin. This case was a solemn admonition. No one may approach and eat the fruit of the tree of life while covering his sin.

How often sinners are invited and urged to come to Jesus whilst they cover their sins. This is a ruinous mistake. Jesus is the tree of life, and let no one think to avail himself of his intercession and righteousness until he is heartily disposed to make a clean breast of it, confess, and forsake every form and degree of sin.

But what is implied in acceptable confession?

a. Thorough repentance or brokenness of heart.

b. Confessing to the injured parties.

c. A thorough owning up and making a clean breast of the whole affair, without apology, excuse, or extenuation.

d. Restitution, to the extent of ability.

e. An honest recognition of the ill desert of sin and a hearty acceptance of the denunciations of God against it.

f. Consent to the justice of the divine law that has been violated, both in regard to its precept and its penalty.

g. An honest acceptance of the justice of the sentence of death which God has pronounced against sin.

h. A state of mind that honestly justifies both the law and the lawgiver, and takes a decided stand with God against self and subscribes to the justice of its own condemnation. It is easy to see that this state of mind must be a condition of forgiveness. If God should forgive while his justice in condemning is not heartily recognized, he would thereby and therein condemn himself.

Again, it is plain that confession and restitution to injured parties must be a condition of forgiveness, else the injured parties would have cause of complaint. If one should steal your money or filch from you your good name, and God should forgive him, while he retains the wrong, would this be right? Would you not have cause of complaint against God? Could an intelligent universe justify such a proceeding? It should always be remembered that God is honest; that he is always disposed to do right; that he will do so, not only for his own sake, but for the sake of his intelligent universe; that he has a character to sustain for integrity and impartiality; that he never will or can forgive sin where there is not such a genuine and honest repentance as will justify the act, when all the facts are revealed, in the solemn judgment. Let no one, therefore, think that he is forgiven or expect to be forgiven who has not honestly complied with the conditions of forgiveness.

Again, an acceptable confession implies the forsaking of sin. "Whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy." But forsaking sin implies confession and restitution. Let no one suppose the fallow ground of his soul is thoroughly broken up until he has humbled himself and fully complied with the conditions of forgiveness.

In laboring in revivals of religion, I have always insisted upon confession and restitution, to the extent of ability,

as a condition of pardon. I have found that putting the probe to the bottom of the heart on this subject was essential to securing sound conversions and living converts. Unless this is done the soul cannot appreciate the Gospel method of salvation by grace through faith in the blood of Jesus. But I have often been told that this doctrine of confession and restitution as a condition of salvation was a new doctrine, and that repentance and faith were the only conditions of Gospel salvation.

I have always replied that confession and restitution, to the extent of ability, are implied in true repentance; that faith in the atoning blood of Christ always implies a heart acceptance of the justice of the penalty denounced against sin and an utter rejection of all dishonest evasion, self-justification, or covering of sin whatever. But if this doctrine of confession and restitution to injured parties is an unheard-of doctrine in any quarter, there is dangerous and unfaithful teaching. There is withholding fundamental truth. And here it is in point to inquire: Is there not a failure in public teaching on this subject? Could there be so much dishonesty in business, so many frauds and rings, such unscrupulous methods of getting rich, such lies, such slanders in politics, and so much wrong in the business and political world, such detraction, such sham, and hypocrisy in the social world, if the doctrine of confession to injured parties and restitution were faithfully insisted upon by Christians and Christian teachers? Could men use such dishonest means to obtain wealth if they were constantly reminded that they could not keep it without losing their souls? that if they get property dishonestly it must be restored to the injured parties or they can never be forgiven? If they get an office or anything else, that of right belongs to another, by dishonest means, it will cost them their souls unless they make confession and restitution, to the extent of their ability.

Is it not plain that the doctrine of salvation through faith in Christ is misunderstood and abused? Is there not some force in the objection of Universalists, Unitarians, and skeptics that the doctrine of salvation through faith in Christ is demoralizing in its influence and tends to embolden men in sin? Surely, there is danger of failing to make a just impression upon this subject. It should be ever insisted upon that Christ, the tree of life, is forever inaccessible to a dishonest soul; that Christ is not the minister of sin; that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord": that men cannot get rich by dishonest means, retain these riches, and still go to Heaven; that men cannot obtain wealth by selfish speculations, stock and other gambling, and find favor with God, without confession and restitution. That men cannot lie their way into an office, that they cannot in any way filch from a

neighbor that which belongs to him, whether it be property or good name, retain the wrong, refuse to make confession and restitution, and still find favor with God through Jesus Christ. This would be to make Christ the minister of sin. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper."

In view of this doctrine, is it any wonder that there is so little real spiritual prosperity, so little true peace of mind, so little power in prayer, so little Christian enjoyment, so little unction and power in laboring for souls, among the great mass of professed Christians? But can we not well afford to break up our fallow ground? Is it not dangerous to neglect it? Is it not disgraceful to neglect it? Is it not an inconsistency of which professors of religion ought to be ashamed? Is it not injurious and discouraging to the ministry? While the fallow ground is not broken up, the seed is sown among thorns, and it is easy to see why so much labor is expended in vain upon a worldly church.

The fact is, we cannot afford to be hard-hearted. While hard-hearted we are inappreciative. In this state of mind we cannot understand and appreciate the love of God in Christ. The Gospel falls upon dull ears and inappreciative minds, nothing is well understood, and infinitely the most interesting truths in the universe do not appear to be real. We go on dreamily, blindly, and in false security. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, the end whereof is the way of death."

Brethren, we can well afford to break up our fallow ground, to repent and forsake our sins, make due confession and restitution, for God has promised that if we do this we shall find mercy, we shall be forgiven, we shall have peace of mind, we shall have joy in the Holy Ghost, we shall be justified by Christ through faith, we shall have power with God in prayer, we shall have power with men in labor for their souls, we shall prepare the way of the Lord, and see revivals spreading among the impenitent. If the churches in this land will take this matter in hand and do up this work thoroughly in and among themselves, by the Holy Ghost, they will be prepared to offer prevailing prayer, and see a real and great revival spreading over the land, soundly converting thousands of souls to Christ. But let not this work be done superficially. Let it not be at all neglected in any part. Brethren in the ministry, let us press this subject till the churches have thoroughly broken up their fallow ground. There is no safety in promoting what we call a revival, and receiving thousands of converts into the churches, where the fallow ground in the heart of the church is not broken up.



## REPENTANCE

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### ACTS iii.19.

**"Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."**

There is nothing I need say explanatory of the connection in which these words occur. They are part of the chapter which I have just read in your hearing. I shall content myself with simply indicating the train of thought which I design to pursue. I shall,--

I. Inquire, WHAT IS THE TRUE SPIRIT AND MEANING OF THE REQUIREMENT HERE PUT FORTH?

II. NOTICE SOME THINGS WHICH ARE ASSUMED BY THE APOSTLE.

III. SHOW WHAT IS IMPLIED IN TRULY OBEYING THE REQUIREMENT?

IV. SHOW REASONS WHY IT SHOULD BE OBEYED.

"Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." The term rendered "repent" here means, in its primary signification, "to think again," or to "reconsider," and take up the subject anew. It also implies a change of mind,--such a change as would be the result of reconsidering a subject. It implies a taking back of what we have done with reference to a certain subject, and a corresponding change of mind, purpose, and intention.

The word rendered "converted" in this text, refers to the change in the outward life,--that is, the change corresponding with repentance. To repent, reform, and thoroughly change your course of conduct, is the literal meaning. It also implies a turning of the mind: the fact that the term was added in this connection, shows that it refers to an outward turning as a manifestation of an inward turning; as if he had said, "Repent,--change your whole life;" or, "Turn from your sins." The Apostle did not mean to insinuate that there might be repentance without a change of life. He adds, "and be converted,"--as if reformation followed as a matter of course from repentance; as if there was a natural and invariable connection between them. This is true: the real meaning of the words, is, to turn both heart and life to God. Let this suffice for the spirit and meaning of the text,--I will now notice some things which are plainly assumed by the Apostle in giving this command.

First: he assumed that it is not only our present duty, but that we have the ability to comply with this requirement. The very fact of the command being given, implies the assumption of our ability to obey it: for we nowhere find the Apostles ordering men to do things which they are unable to do, and the Bible everywhere assumes that man can comply with all God's requirements; and wherever promises are made of Divine aid, it is not to afford the ability, but to induce a willingness to do what he commands them.

Again: the Apostle assumes that they had sufficient conviction,--that they knew they ought to repent, to repent now, and what they ought to repent of. God does not require them to be convicted; he assumes that they knew themselves to be sinners, and that they were as fully convinced of it as they were of the fact of their own existence. There is not a sinner in the universe who does not know himself to be a sinner. The Apostle, therefore, does not say, "Try to be convicted;" or tell them to "pray to God for conviction, and then for repentance:" there is no such teaching in the Bible. Nor did he tell them to "try to repent:" there is no such thing as "try" in connection with these things, in the word of God. He never says "Try to believe," "Try to repent;" he always comes right out with the assumption of their knowledge of sin, and of the duty of immediate repentance.

The Apostle, also, plainly assumes that whatever of Divine influence was requisite of these results was, in such a sense, present, and at their disposal; and that, therefore, they need not wait for it a moment;--present in such a sense that he never once thinks it necessary even to suggest the idea that they needed any more Divine influence than they already possessed. How remarkable are the teachings of God to men! How different from the teachings we often hear! The Bible everywhere assumes that the sinner, instead of needing to wait for Divine influence, has all that he needs to render him not only able, but infinitely to blame if he does not instantly repent. The Bible represents the Spirit as already striving with man, and man as resisting. God charges men with continually resisting his Spirit; and, instead of telling them they must wait for some Divine influence, and try to move God by something they can do towards their conversion, it rebukes that whole train of thinking as strongly and emphatically as possible. It represents the sinner as resisting the very influence which he is often called upon to pray for: "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye." (Acts vii. 51.) Not called upon in the Bible, but from pulpits--the very last place in which such a thing should be heard.

Again: the Apostle in this commandment assumes that repentance is a condition of forgiveness. He assumes this, though he does not say it. He says, "Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out,"--which is assuming that they cannot be blotted out without repentance, and a change of life; nay, he assumes that they understand this themselves. He simply comes right out, and requires them to repent, assuming that this was a condition of their being forgiven.

I shall now notice some things which are implied in obeying this command. Many persons, from imperfect views of this subject, almost universally endeavour to work themselves up into such a state of feeling--to excite such emotions of sorrow for sin--they set to work to force themselves into a state of feeling which they suppose to be repentance. They try to feel very sorry; and when they find they cannot force these feelings into existence by a direct act of their will, they say, they "cannot repent." This arises out of the fact that they misconceive what repentance is; they do not understand that it is an act of the will--an act as free and as voluntary as they ever performed in their lives. In fact, with a sinner, it is the first rational act of his whole existence. While in sin he acts madly; and to repent is simply to renounce the false and wicked ways to which he has committed himself,--to cease to live only to please himself, and living to please and obey his Maker. Now, sinners should understand that their sin consists in this very state of committal to their own interests and gratification, which is the great end of their lives, and to this they cleave with the grasp of death: the whole of their lives is devoted to securing something for themselves.

God is engaged in the great work of promoting the interests of his kingdom--in securing the salvation of the world. He calls on sinners to renounce their selfish ways, and sympathize and unite with him in promoting his great object; assuring them that, by so doing, they will at the same time secure their own interests. To abandon his present course, which he himself knows to be unreasonable, is what God requires him to do; and this is the first thing implied in obeying this command--consecration to God, the abandonment of the spirit of self-pleasing, yielding the mind up to God at once, and devotion to pleasing and obeying him. It implies, also, going over to God's side, taking part with him against our own and everybody's sin, renouncing all excuses for not doing just as God requires us to do, renouncing the spirit of procrastination and all dishonesty of mind towards God, coming into a spirit of justice, and being willing to do what is just to our neighbour, and to consider his good as well as our own.

Faith in God is also implied; for, observe, where persons look at Christ, and understand what he has done, the plan of salvation, turning or repentance, implies a reconsideration of the subject, and the renunciation of self-seeking, and the committal of themselves to Christ and to God. It also implies love to God; a universal reformation of life; confession, and, as far as possible, restitution to those whom we have injured,--not to a priest, according to the Roman Catholic idea, in the confessional,--but confessing all to God, and so much as they have a right to know to those whom we have wronged. As repentance implies coming into a state of justice, it implies the confession of all our sins to God, as it is he, above all, whom we have injured; and to men, as I have said, as far as they are concerned.

But my principal object, is, to insist on reasons for obeying this requirement.

First: it is right to do so. How remarkable it is, that sinners have so little regard to what is right as to need commanding to repent! They make it a mere matter of loss and gain. "What will be the consequences," say they, "if I do? and what will be the result if I do not? I shall lose my soul if I do not, and be forgiven if I do." They argue in this way, instead of renouncing their present course for the mere intrinsic propriety and rightness of doing so. Suppose some individual had greatly injured you, and persisted in injuring you, and you expostulated with him for resisting, and you found that he did not regard at all the intrinsic wickedness of his conduct, and had no disposition to cease from it because of the intrinsic rightness of ceasing, but set himself to ask whether you had the power and were likely to injure him by way of reprisals, or what you would give him for ceasing to abuse you? so that it was evident to all that the affair was entirely a question of gain? Why, you would say, "He's a wretch!" That's what you would say. Now, apply this to yourself, and fancy any one treating you as you are treating God, sinner! Find a man with whom the intrinsic wickedness of wrong-doing has no weight,--who confesses that he ought not to do it, but cares not about the right, calculating only as to the profit or loss of consenting or refusing. Now, I do insist upon it that sinners ought always to put themselves in God's position, and try and fancy any one treating them so.

Suppose, now, you had a child whom you greatly loved, and that you expostulated with him with regard to his conduct. Suppose he admits the wrong,--for he would belie his own conscience, and shame his own face to blushing, should he deny it,--but, if you insist on his ceasing from his rebellion, he casts about to know whether he is likely to be disinherited or not. Perhaps he

asks his brothers, or sisters, "Does father say anything about disinheriting me?" He inquires among the servants, "What does the old man say? Does he hint anything about disinheriting me, if I don't change my conduct?" Perhaps he gets his brothers or sisters to suggest to the father the propriety of giving him some extra allowance if he will reform.

Now, suppose yourself in that position! You have none of you, however, such a claim on your children as God has on you; and yet you are pursuing just the same course! See that aged father! His large, hard, crippled hands show how long he has wrought. He has risen early, sat up late, and eaten the bread of carefulness. He has wrought days and hours when you were asleep. How his hands are worn! He cannot straighten his fingers; they are stiffened by toiling to make his children comfortable! His back is bowed down: his hair is whitened by the frosts of seventy winters! See that son, spending his money as fast as he can get it, setting his father's commands at naught. He knows his conduct is wrong; but he does not care whether it is right or wrong: his only anxiety is, "Shall I lose my inheritance if I do not repent?" Now, suppose yourself in that condition,—what would you think? Would it not deeply grieve you? And have you never thought how deeply you are grieving Him? Christ has done more for you. He has given his hands to the nails, and his soul to death, for your sins; and yet, when he asks you to repent, "What can you gain by it?" you want to know! Now, sinner, if there were not any other reason in the universe, you ought to be ashamed to refuse; for it is unutterable injustice. I bring no railing accusation against you: every impenitent sinner amongst you treats God in the manner which I have represented. Ought you to ask for any other reason, when you are so powerfully convinced that it is right? If you had a right spirit, you ought not even to ask whether he would forgive you or not. Whichever it may be, it is right for you to repent.

An individual once told me, when I visited him in sickness, that he thought it was now "too late" for him to repent.

"Too late! why?"

"God won't forgive me."

"Well, what of that? Do you think God wants to punish you for his own gratification?"

"No."

"Then if he sees that he cannot forgive you consistently with the highest good of the universe, but finds himself obliged to punish you for your past sins, he does you no injustice; and is this a reason why you should continue to abuse him, and not repent?"

Then God will forgive you, if he sees he can forgive you consistently with the arrangements of his government. How, therefore, can you urge that as an excuse for not repenting? Even if you were in hell, although it would be then too late to be forgiven, it would still be intrinsically right for you to repent. Has God done you any injustice? No, Indeed! Can it then be right for you to sin against him? No; it can never be right. But shall you continue to abuse God, even when you have placed yourself in such a position that he cannot forgive you? It is clear, therefore, that when sinners demand any other reason than that it is right, they manifest unutterable wickedness.

Another reason for repentance, is, that God commands it. This is not an arbitrary command: the sinner is bound in nature and reason to do it, and God can never discharge the sinner from this obligation: the sinner's repentance and submission is God's intrinsic and eternal right. There is a controversy between the sinner and God. God is not wrong,—he cannot repent; and this controversy ought not to exist. God commands the sinner to cease; and the sinner must cease, for God cannot yield his rights: if, however, it were proper for him to yield, he is great-hearted enough to do so; nay, he would never need to be exhorted to do it, if he were in the wrong. But he is infinitely right, and the sinner is infinitely wrong; and, therefore, what he commands, he must insist on being performed, or punish the offenders.

Sinners ought to repent now, because to neglect it is to refuse to do it. It should always be understood that there is no neutral ground in religion; there is not an inch of it in all God's government. If the sinner holds on to his course of sin, what is this but refusing to repent? And to refuse to repent is to set God at defiance; virtually to say, "I won't repent." I know that sinners feel shocked to hear the language of their conduct thus put into words; they deem it blasphemy. But whose is the blasphemy—those who speak it by actions, or to those who put the language of such conduct into words? You tell your child to do something; he goes away, and does not do it: he does not tell you in words that he will not do it, but you understand his conduct as meaning that. You tell him, if he does not do so and so, you will be obliged to punish him; but he goes away, and does not do it. Now, what is this but defying you, and virtually saying, "You may punish me if you can, and if you dare?" How horrible, then, is it for the sinner to act thus towards God! Suppose, sinner, you should meet the Lord Jesus Christ, and he should tell you to your face to repent,—dare you reply, "I won't?" Yet your lives say this.

A young man of my acquaintance, some years since, of great talents—in fact, of the greatest ability I ever saw in



so young a man--was terribly convicted of sin, in a revival of religion which commenced in the city. He was pursuing his studies at a college some few miles from his home, but had returned on a visit. He was much disturbed by the influence of the revival, and went back to college with his mind by no means at ease on the subject, although he was greatly opposed to it. Now, before this period his disposition had been remarkably amiable. He lived with an old aunt, who hoped that when he left college he would become a minister. He used to pray in her family; but the enmity of his heart became greatly stirred up. After he had been back a few days, they sent for him home again, hoping that he would be converted. His college companion had been converted before he came back. But this young man, before he went home, called several of the students together, and informed them that he was going home,--that there was a revival there, and requested them to see if he was not proof against its influences.

He went back, and the Lord laid hold of him. I cannot enter into the details,--it would take me too long: I shall therefore come at once to the point. After returning from meeting one evening, his aunt asked him, as usual, to pray in the family, hoping that it would do him good; but his heart was full of bitterness, and his prayer was full of blasphemy. He went to such lengths that his aunt was compelled to beg him to desist, but he would not; and, at last, he jumped up and ran away to his bedroom, and, casting himself down, declared he would not repent. He walked the room, writhing in terrible agony, till at length the morning dawned, and the sun arose and shone through the window which looked towards the east. He seemed to realize the actual and personal presence of the Almighty, as if a living voice addressing him thus,--"Young man, the sun rises on you, and you are indebted to God for every ray of light you possess." Such was his anguish now, that he felt so stubborn that he would sooner go to hell than be indebted to God for anything! God seemed to appeal to him to repent, and he fell down overcome with emotion. His aunt, as the morning drew on, finding that he did not come down to breakfast, went up to his room, and found him on the floor, calling himself ten thousand fools and wretches for his past enmity against God, and yet praising God for having spared him in spite of all his resistance.

This is a remarkable instance of the boiling over of the carnal mind. But, mark; every sinner, although not so impetuously and recklessly, but coolly and deliberately says in his heart and life, "I will not repent!" You see what a horribly wicked young man that was; yet he had been the admiration of the whole place in which he lived. He had for a long time felt deeply on the subject,

but had said silently with himself, "I won't repent;" but when the power of God roused him up, as he could no longer be silent, he did not hesitate to blaspheme. But was this the first time he had blasphemed? With all his praying, he had hitherto refused to repent up to that hour; it was not, therefore, his first blasphemy. I know that sinners are much shocked when a man says right out, what they act out every day. And whose is the blasphemy? you who act it out in your lives, or those who tell you in words what your actions mean? It is yours, not mine: I only put your lives into words. Sinners should repent immediately, and be converted, because to refuse to do so is to wrong God. Shall a man absolutely make up his mind to do the greatest wrong to his Maker? Is it not enough that men should wrong one another?--will they wrong God too?

Once more: sinners should repent, because they do their own souls the greatest injury. You are as far from doing justice to yourself, as you are from doing justice to God,--as far from considering your own best interests, as from considering his claims.

You injure everybody else. All the universe has a right to expect that you will act according to the law of God. You have no right to refuse to do so, and set up yourself and your interests against the whole universe. No man has a right to live in sin for a moment: he wrongs the whole world; because, instead of contributing his part to the well-being of society, and the universe at large, what does he do? He sets up his own interests, opposes the whole of them, and lives to himself. Has any man a right to do this? let me ask, is not the whole of your Government injured, if a single individual refuses to pay his share of the taxes? He wrongs the entire state of so much good. If a man refuses to obey the laws, he rebels, not only against the Government, but against every man in the state. "His hand is against every man, and every man's hand is against his." This is so in a much higher sense under the government of God. Every sinner who persists in his sins is wronging not only himself and the Almighty, but every creature of God: every moral agent has a right to complain of him, rebuke him, and ask him, if he is not ashamed thus to injure the Government of God, and rebel against his Maker?

Again: sinners should repent, because every man has some influence in society; and the greatest influence he possesses is the influence of example. Perhaps he uses all his influence against repentance. Suppose he is a moral man, what then? Why, it is all the worse: for by how much the more moral he is, in the common acceptance of the term, by so much the more influence he will have in society; and, therefore, if he refuses to

repent, he exerts a greater influence to prevent repentance, than if he were an open profligate.

In a certain town in America, where I once was preaching, during a series of revival services, there was in the congregation a simple, moral business man, who was one of the most influential persons in the place. I found, in visiting the people, and conversing with them, that a great many of the young men would point to this individual as the best man in the town. "Now," they said, "here's Deacon W---- considered so excellent by the Church, and we venture to say Mr. B---- is not converted, and does not pretend to have been." Indeed, I was astonished to find this man was considered quite as good as the deacon of the Church. He was set up as an example; and, therefore, because he did not repent, they could not see that repentance was necessary. At length, I went to Mr. B----, and entered into conversation with him on the subject. I asked him, if he was aware of the character and extent of the influence he was exerting? showing him that he was quite a stumbling-block in the way of many. "What! am I doing harm?" said he,--"Why, I did not know that." He gave as much money as the deacon, was regular at the means of grace,--so moral, industrious, and steady in every respect; in fact, he was such a man, outwardly, that the young men who were impenitent were almost universally of opinion, that it was quite unnecessary that they should be any better than Mr. B----. I told him this, and ask him, "Mr. B----, how good are you? Are you not an impenitent sinner? Are you not, in fact, a Pharisee?" He was too sensible a man to deny what I said. He became quite shocked to see the position he sustained; for the people actually sometimes went so far as to say, "Ah! well, let us be as good as Mr. B----, and we'll risk it." He knew himself that he needed to repent; for, although he had regularly contributed liberally, he had been all the while shaking his purse, as it were, in the face of Christ, saying, virtually, "Here's the money," while he kept back his heart.

Great numbers of sinners are thus not only neglecting their own souls, but using all their influence to keep their families from being converted. They do not say, "Don't repent," in words; but they say it clearly enough in their lives. "Ah!" said a little girl to her father one day, "Father, why don't you pray? How is it we don't have family prayer?" She had been staying on a visit a few days in a house where the family altar was erected: this prompted her inquiry why her father did not pray. What did he say? I have frequently known such questions from children to be instrumental in the conversion of parents. It is no use for a parent to say "GO!" to his child, if he does not go himself: for, in most cases, they

follow his example, and not his advice; and if they don't, no thanks to him. If you yourselves go on in your sins--if you don't drag them down to hell with you,--no thanks to you; and you will be held responsible for all the evil influence you have exerted in the way of hindrance to them. As far as sinners themselves are concerned, if universal damnation is not the result of their daring rebellion against God's government, no thanks to them. As far as they exert any influence, it is all against Christ. He is trying to save them; and they are scattering abroad firebrands, arrows, and death. "He that is not with me," saith the Lord, "is against me." The sinner says, he is "not opposed to religion. He goes to meeting." Suppose you do. So did Mr. B----. The people all said, he was "a good man." (I should have said, that Mr. B---- did not hesitate at once to remove the stumbling-block out of the way of the community; indeed, he seemed quite astonished, grieved, and frightened, that so many should be hiding behind him.) There is probably not a sinner in all this house who is not thus standing in some one's way. "Who are you?" No matter who you are, you have some acquaintances--some who sympathize with you--some who, if you were out of the way, would, in all probability, at once take the alarm and lay hold on eternal life.

I can recollect very well when this thought oppressed me. The circumstance is curious. The Church, in the neighbourhood in which I then resided, held a church meeting, at which the question was brought up as to what measures should be adopted to secure a revival of religion among them. At the time this was quite unknown to me,--some proposed one thing, and others another. At length they came to the conclusion, that it would be best, to pray for the conversion of certain individuals. Several persons were named whom it was thought desirable for them first to pray for, and I was among the number. But the minister ventured to suggest that it would be of little use to pray for me, as he had no faith, seeing that he had so often conversed with me; and he remarked that he had never known a young man, knowing so much about religion, who was so hardened. Now, I had led the singing in that church for a considerable time before I was converted; and he told them that he did not believe they could reach the young people,--for if anything were said to offend me, I should sit below, and that the rest would not sing without me. There it was. I was doubtless a great obstacle in the way of reaching those young people; but, as the Lord would have it, I was the first among them on whom he laid his hand. "Repent," said the Spirit of the Lord to my soul; and when that was done, it was found that the young people actually were under my influence as much

as the minister had supposed,--for the whole mass of them rose up, and inquired what they should do to be saved.

I do not make this a matter of boast. It is to me a matter of unutterable shame that I should have stood in the way of their conversion so long. I used to teach them music, was with them a great deal, and exerted that kind of influence over them which was a snare of death to their souls! It was wonderful, indeed, that God did not take my life, and hurl me to the depths of hell, for exerting an influence so pernicious. How is it, sinner, with you? Perhaps you can look right round you, and behold a number who are more or less under your influence in this way,--individuals of whom, you feel convinced, that if you repent, they will follow you.

Another reason why you should repent, is, that the day is coming when, if you draw off these souls to the bottomless pit, they will surround you, and require at your hands an account of why you have done this unutterable injury to them. Take, for example, the case of a parent living in sin,--perhaps neither a praying father, nor a praying mother,--doing nothing, effectually, to secure their conversion. As you float along the stream of life, the curtain of eternity hangs just before you, and its lowermost verge sweeps the surface of the dark waters on which you float. At length you bow, pass under, disappear. Your children follow you,--and where are you then? Oh! where are you then?

Here is a father, or a mother, coming up to the judgment-seat of Christ: but, instead of saying, "Here are the children thou hast given us, Lord; we have trained them up to fear thy name;" what do they do? They hang down their heads, the father, or mother, or both; and the children follow them,--and depart with them to eternal torments, in consequence of the fatal influence of their ungodly example! Oh! look around on your children, parents! Can you look them in the face? To be sure, they will be punished for their own sins; but you have laid before them a stumbling-block. Can you bear that look, mothers? Can you bear to see your child lift up its dying blood-shot eye, and say, "Oh, mother! mother! mother! why have you not repented, and led me to Christ? Oh! my destroyer! my destroyer! the murderess of my soul! why have you thus been standing in my way?"

Is it not reasonable to believe, that where families find themselves thus ruined, they will regard themselves as the greatest enemies of each other? "You who had the greatest influence over me, more than all the world beside, what did you do? You neglected to repent, and thereby preached to me, 'Let repentance alone!' You

neglected it yourself, and were consequently a stumbling-block in my way. I saw you go on in sin, and I followed your example, and now my soul is lost! The family is lost!" Oh, sinner! ought not this consideration to shock you? Are you a parent? Are your children here? Where are they? Have you a friend? Where is he? Have you not some one whose eye is on you? Although your influence may be small, it is enough, perhaps, to shut the gate against somebody, who might otherwise be persuaded to lay hold on eternal life,--they are waiting on you.

But, once more: another reason for repentance, is, the infinite goodness of God to you. Notwithstanding all your abuse of him, he is still benevolent towards you. He returns love for your opposition; and though you continue to oppose him, he perseveres in endeavouring to overcome evil with his good, that he may lead you to repentance.

Now, let me suppose the case of some individual who is very kind to you, heaping favours upon you; in fact, you are entirely dependent upon him. Is not this a good reason why you should cease to abuse him, or in any way displease him? If it is not a sufficient reason, there cannot be one at all; and ought this not to affect you? But, mark, he offers to forgive you; but, if he would not, it would still be your duty to repent.

This, however, is not all. How much has it cost him to put himself and the universe in a position in which he can make you this offer?--in which he can forgive you consistently with his relation to the rest of the universe? He has give his "only-begotten Son" to die for you, that he might be just to all his creatures, and yet make you an offer of pardon; and is this no reason why you should give up your sins? One would think that the very thought of sin having murdered Christ would make you avoid it, as you would avoid the fate of hell.

It is essential to your own happiness that you repent; and until you do, you are standing out, before the whole universe, right in the way of the Car of Salvation. God is disposed to spare you, and continues to do so, notwithstanding the evil influence you are exerting. But, mark; by and by, sinner, you will come into some relation in which God will see that to spare you any longer will do so much more hurt than good, that he will not spare you any longer. Whenever this comes to pass, he must remove you; for if he did not, it would be unjust to the universe. Where forbearance would do an injury to others, greater than the good done to you, be assured you must not expect it; you have brought God into a position in which he must act. Ah! if we foreknew the revelations of the judgment-seat, how many sudden



deaths would be explained on this principle?—they have come into such relation with God, and with their fellow-men, that he must wipe them off. It is the very goodness of God that induces him, for the sake of others, to cut them down.

Again: another reason why sinners should repent, is, that then repentance may be of more importance to the universe than the salvation of your soul itself. Your soul is of great importance; but suppose that you should repent, and, by that means, influence multitudes of others to repent,—who does not see that your repentance might be of more value to the universe than your soul? I have spoken of the circumstances under which God converted me, and the effect of it on my companions. Scores of them were converted. Now, mark, was not my repentance, as an instrument in the government of God, of more value than my soul? Yes, indeed! How much more the repentance of Paul was worth to the Church of God than his individual soul! Is not this a good reason why you should repent? Have you no desire to benefit others? Have you no desire to cease to be a stumbling-block in their way? Would you just as soon they should stumble over you into hell, as not? Do you say, "I am not to blame?" Yes, you are to blame; you have no right to be a stumbling-block, and do them harm.

Another reason why you should repent, is, that your procrastination renders the work daily more difficult. You are continually "grieving the Spirit of God," and stupifying conscience, which becomes seared, and less sensitive. Perhaps you can remember when your conscience was very tender,—how is it now? You can remember the time when a sermon would make you feel deeply,—how is it now? You can remember the time when you felt pressed to attend to the subject,—how is it now? Oh, sinner! you are making matters worse. You are hedging up your way to return, and actually going away from God. You are involving yourselves in matters of which you will not be able to repent, without exposing yourself to punishment by human government. You are getting property, perhaps, in such a way as to prevent you from ever making restitution, without exposing yourself to the law of the land, or doing something which hedges up your path to repentance. How many sinners here to-night are in this position?

Once more: you are in danger of dying in your sins every moment; and if you do not die in your sins, you are in danger of sinning away your day of grace. There is such a thing as selling your birthright. Recollect the case of Esau. "Take heed," said the Apostle, "lest there be among you a profane person as Esau, who for a morsel of meat sold his birthright; for ye know, that

when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected, although he sought it carefully and with tears." Yes, he found no "space for repentance." What was this designed to teach? Some do not admit there is such a thing as sinning away the day of grace; but what else could the Apostle mean? Ah, sinner! God says to you, "Now repent, that your sins may be blotted out;" but, mark me, if you say, "I will not," you must take the consequences.

You have no right to ask God to forgive you, until you do repent; and your delay tempts God, and virtually tells him, that because he is so forbearing, you will tempt him a little longer. He has spared you a great while; and because he has done so, you think you will venture to abuse him still. You care nothing for the "right" of the matter: you are only anxious to secure the salvation of your own soul, which you mean to attend to before you die; but you mean to consult your own convenience as to time. You mean to set about it when you have accomplished all your schemes, worn yourself out with sin; and the mere smoking wick of the expiring lamp of life you will throw in the face of your Maker, and leap over the crater of hell, and get into heaven! That is it, you think. The blasphemy, if any, is yours, and not mine.

What do you intend to do? Do you think of getting into heaven in spite of your sins? You have not made up your mind to go to hell. Not you. You do not expect to go there. If now, while I speak, it should be revealed to you, that you were appointed to damnation, you would wail out like a fiend in a moment. As I saw a man on one occasion, who, before the sermon, contended that all men would be saved; and who, although I knew it not, had put a pistol into his pocket, and came with the intention of shooting me: but the truth was so impressed upon him that he fell from his seat, and, with a voice like a lion, roared out, at the top of his voice, that he was "sinking into hell." It broke up the meeting, and he was carried home in the greatest agony. Now, do you think, sinner, your nerves are strong enough to prevent this, if God should speak to you in a like manner? You mean to be saved at last; but you mean, for the present, to continue in sin. You virtually say to God, "Lord, I know that thou art infinitely gracious and merciful, and therefore I will venture to continue to abuse thee."

A few remarks must conclude what I have to say; and the first remark is this,—Sinners need not wait to use means to make God willing to forgive them. All that is necessary is willingness on your part to give up your sins. God is already willing to forgive you,—infinitely willing, slow to anger, and of great mercy,—unwilling that any should perish. Sinner, will you hear? There is nothing wanting on God's part: his great gushing heart

stands open wide to receive you,--and its pulsations of life are beating and throbbing, trying to drive its tides of life into your soul; but you shut yourself up, and hold on to your sins, and then pretend that there must be something done to make God merciful. But, oh sinner! God is merciful, and never, never can be more so. He is only waiting to gain your consent to give up your sins.

Again: sinners are often disposed--and, strange to tell, professors of religion sometimes seem to encourage them--to account for their present impenitence by reason of the sovereignty of God. God has made man free and responsible, and will not over-rule his will by force. He uses means to try to save you; it is he who is using means with you, and not you with him. God has made man in such a sense free, that every sinner stands upon the awful responsibility of rejecting offered mercy. The Apostle said, "Repent, every one of you, that your sins may be blotted out," &c. The text presumes that all who will turn may be saved, and all upon the same conditions.

From what has been said, you will see how it is that sinners on their death-beds often find no access to God. I have often found, as I entered a sick room, that death seemed to be there in more senses than one. A poet has finely observed,--

"The chamber where the good man meets his fate,  
Is privileg's beyond the common walk  
Of virtuous life--quite on the verge of heaven."  
--Young.

How beautiful! Did you ever stand and see the good man die, and that the end of that man was peace? Oh, how often have I been reminded of these words when standing by the bedside of the dying saint! "Glory to God," said one of these, "I am coming, I am coming" (coming, not going, mark). He seemed to have a bright glimpse of the eternal world. Let a man go and pray with such a person; the very air seems breathing prayer. Life is there, though death is present. What do you see there? A struggling, agonizing, dissolving, material body, with a ray of eternal life peering through that languid dying eye. See the smile playing on those dying features! If they can speak, they will inquire, "Do you hear that music? What music! Don't you hear it? I hear music. Ah! what do I see? Are these angels here? Oh! how lovely, how lovely, how lovely! You can always pray in such a chamber. The Spirit seems to fan you. You are "quite on the verge of heaven."

But, ah! go across the way to that ungodly sinner in the pangs of death. Instead of the sweet calm smile on the face, oh, what agony! The brow is knit, and he turns and writhes in a dreadful way. The moment you enter, if you are a spiritually-minded man or woman, you feel that death is there, and in more senses than one. Death is dragging that struggling victim to the grave. But there is another death which awaits it, more dreadful than that,--the second death. You attempt to pray; but you cannot do it. You kneel down to pray; and what does the man say? He turns his head right away. "Oh! what shocking noise is that? What creatures are those? Oh, take them away! take them away! Oh, take away that horrid fiend!"

Dr. Nelson, an acquaintance of mine, who is a converted infidel, mentions some curious and interesting facts with respect to the contrasts of this kind, which came under his own observation while an infidel. The dying saints saw angels, while the perishing sinners exclaimed, "Oh, take that fiend away!" He said, he was satisfied, before his conversion, that there was a point in the process of dying in which the mind had a glimpse of both worlds; it could see the spirit-world on the one hand, and the material-world on the other. This, however, was only when death was actually doing its work. All the dreams of the saints were visions of angels, surrounding him, and smiling on him; while, on the other hand, the sinner held back, struggling hard, groaning, unable to pray.

You see why this is. I tell you, sinner, you are in danger of bringing yourself into such a position as to compel God to commit himself against you. Did you ever think of that? God's conduct is public,--the whole universe must know it; and when sinners tempt God, presuming on his mercy, calculating to go on in sin, and finally be saved,--making God wait their convenience,--they often bring themselves into such a relation, that the whole universe are looking to see what notice he will take of it. Now, do you not see that there is a good reason why God should shut the door in your face, before all the universe, and say, "I'll see whether you will have 'sin and heaven too,' which is your intention, as the language of your conduct so plainly indicates." This it is that renders it necessary for God to take this step. He represents himself as the master of the house, and as having risen up and shut to the door, while you are without, crying, "Lord, Lord, open unto us;" but he will answer, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity!"

Now, sinner, are you not afraid to go on in your sins? If you put it off to-night, to-morrow evening you will not be at the prayer-meeting, but somewhere else; and next Sunday, perhaps, you will not go to a place of worship at all. A father once, in writing to his son about a certain

habit which he had contracted, after expostulating with him at some length, broke suddenly off,--"But enough, enough,--I know I shall not ask you in vain; and I will therefore urge that matter no further, lest my doing so should appear a want of confidence in your love." And shall God appeal to you in vain? Where is your sense of right? of honour? or of duty? Oh, sinner! I am ashamed to be obliged to present so many considerations! Am I surrounded by reasonable beings who know the relations to God? and am I standing here for an hour and a half to persuade you, by an array of motives which would sweep away everything but a rock, to lead you to repentance? Might I not blush that I am a man, if I have thus to plead with you, or, in fact, to suggest any other motive for your repentance beyond the fact that your not doing so is an infinite wrong to the Almighty? Come to Christ, and say, "Oh, Jesus! thou hast bought me,--I will be thine. Thou hast died for me, and purchased my life; and shall the life which thou hast redeemed be given to Satan? No! no! as I am a man. No! as I have an immortal soul. No! as I belong to the government of God. No! as I hope for salvation. No! I dread to displease God, and desire to please my Saviour. Heaven beareth witness that I renounce my sins; and let God write it in heaven." Are you not ready? Why not? Make up your minds now and for ever, right here on the spot, in the house of God where the angels wait to tell the story, where the Holy Spirit breathes upon the people. What say you, sinner,--are you willing to come over from Satan to God? You must decide now, one way or the other; and if we could see what infinite consequences, in respect to persons here, are turning on that decision, methinks the congregation would wail out with agony to see what destinies are trembling on this momentous point! See that needle, trembling on its pivot! It must, when it settles, point either one way or the other--to heaven or to hell. Sinner! such is your destiny. What do you say?



**REVIVALS OF RELIGION****By Charles G. Finney****A Series of Lectures In Outline Form****Delivered to the Senior Ministerial Students at Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio 1874.****1. WHAT IS RELIGION, PSYCHOLOGICALLY?**

- A. Not a substance.
- B. Not an infusion.
- C. Not an involuntary feeling.
- D. It is voluntary love to God and man.
- E. This love has all the attributes of virtue.
- F. God secures it by revealing himself to the soul.
- G. The Spirit's influence is moral.
- H. It is in accord with mental laws.
- I. The following agencies are employed:
  - 1. The Holy Spirit
  - 2. The subject
  - 3. Often a third person.
- J. The instrument is truth, universally. Hence there must be a philosophy in securing revivals.

**2. WHAT IS A REVIVAL?**

- A. It is the quickening of the love and faith that constitutes religion.
- B. It implies a religious declension. Evidences of:
  - 1. Loss of the spirit of prayer.
  - 2. Condemnation revealed in prayer.
  - 3. Praying only for self.
  - 4. Neglecting prayer-meetings.
  - 5. Loss of interest in preaching.
  - 6. Loss of interest in the Bible.
  - 7. Sleeping in meetings.
  - 8. Complaining of long sermons.
  - 9. Loss of interest in spiritual reading.
  - 10. Loss of interest in religious labor.
  - 11. Loss of interest in revivals.
  - 12. A critical spirit regarding revivals.
  - 13. A fear of religious emotion.
  - 14. When deep spiritual feeling repels.
  - 15. When they have left their first love.

- 16. Loss of brotherly love.
- 17. Uncharitableness.
- 18. Censoriousness.
- 19. Worldly-mindedness.
- 20. Selfishness.
- 21. Pleasure seeking.
- 22. Money-loving.
- 23. Penuriousness.
- 24. Pride, vanity, levity.
- 25. Apathy of sinners.

**3. A GREAT PHILOSOPHICAL ERROR.**

- A. That moral depravity is,
  - 1. Physical.
  - 2. Not total.
  - 3. Transmitted by natural generation.
- B. Logical consequences:
  - 1. A great dearth of revivals.
  - 2. Natural inability.
  - 3. Regeneration a physical change
  - 4. the Spirit's influences physical.
  - 5. Subject passive.
  - 6. No means of regeneration.
  - 7. The carnal mind the substance of the soul.
  - 8. The gospel can only excite enmity.
  - 9. Human efforts to regenerate men vain.
  - 10. Sinners must wait for a change of nature.
  - 11. Sinners constantly reminded of inability.
  - 12. Regeneration a miracle.
  - 13. Sinners can only pray and wait. Enmity praying for holiness!!!

**4. TRUE PHILOSOPHY OF MORAL DEPRAVITY.**

- A. Depravity is physical and moral.
- B. Physical, is constitutional degeneracy, abnormal.
- C. It has no moral character.
- D. Moral depravity is selfishness.
- E. Physical depravity is inherited, so acts as temptation.
- F. Moral depravity is voluntary.
- G. It is the wicked heart.

- H. It is an immanent ultimate preference of self-indulgences.
- I. It has no moral character till conscience is developed.
- J. At birth, man is neither sinful nor holy.
- K. Regeneration is a change of the ultimate preference from self to God.
- L. It is the subject's act under divine teaching.
- M. Hence it is a radical change of moral character.
- N. Truth is the universal instrument.
- O. The Spirit's influence moral, teaching.
- P. The Gospel the appropriate means of regeneration.
- Q. The Gospel the appropriate means of sanctification.
- R. There must be a philosophy in adapting those means.
- S. This is the appointed work of the ministry.
- T. He who effectually uses these means is wise.
- U. Unwisdom in the use of these means embarrasses or defeats the work of the Holy Spirit.
- V. The end of theological study is to obtain the wisdom to win souls.
- W. Christ has pledged his effectual help, Mt. 28:19-20.
- X. Biblical efforts to win souls must, as a rule, succeed.
- Y. The sinner's "cannot" is his "will not," hence,
- Z. We should labor to gain his consent.
- AA. Revivals are promoted by the skillful adaptation of appropriate means.
- BB. What are appropriate means depends on all the facts.
- CC. The sovereignty of God is never to be made a stumbling-block.
- DD. The sovereignty of God is only divine benevolence guided by divine discretion.
- EE. No more sovereignty in revivals than in all other things.

#### 5. NECESSITY OF CLEAR CONCEPTIONS OF:

- A. What an unregenerate state is.
- B. What a regenerate state is.
- C. The nature of the change which you seek to produce.
- D. The mental process to this result.
- E. The sinner's moral nature.
- F. The laws of mental action.
- G. The instrument with which you are to work.

- H. The necessity of divine cooperation, its nature.
- I. The validity of Christ's promise.
- J. All the agencies and instrumentalities to be employed.
- K. What then? Your work is before you.

#### 6. CONDITIONS OF SUCCESS.

- A. Faith in Christ's promised help.
- B. Anointing for each occasion.
- C. The spirit of prevailing prayer.
- D. Spiritual discernment.
- E. Skill in teaching.
- F. Intense love of souls.
- G. Intense jealousy for God.
- H. Intense sympathy with Him. False views of depravity compel us to condemn God, illustrated by Mrs. Gilbert.
- I. Pity and indignation duly blended.
- J. A searching spirit.
- K. Moral courage.
- L. Full consecration.
- M. Patience.
- N. Persistence.
- O. Divine co-operation.
- P. Intense prayerfulness.
- Q. Close walk with God.
- R. Complying with the above, begin with backsliders,

#### 7. WORK.

- A. With backsliders, they have left first love.
- B. With the unregenerate.
- C. First work to convict them of sin.
- D. Not of nature, but of voluntary action; of self seeking.

#### 8. EXCITEMENT: USES AND ABUSES

- A. It is inevitable and universal,
- B. It is useful.
- C. Legitimately produced, not injurious.
- D. Produced by clap-trap, most injurious.
- E. Excited feeling is not religion.
- F. It always precedes surrender.
- G. A different kind always follows.
- H. Excited feeling rivets attention.

- I. It counteracts worldly excitement.
- J. If not too intense, helps intellectual apprehension.
- K. If too intense, it favors delusion.
- L. Religious emotion breaks the bondage of the flesh.
- M. It awakens others through the law of sympathy.
- N. Especially important in the teacher.
- O. It should be seen to be rational.
- P. Helps to break the voluntary slavery of the will to worldly desire.
- Q. Strongly favors self-renunciation, and committal to Christ.
- R. The moral sensibility must be quickened.
- S. The spiritual also.

### 9. HOW DONE (HOW ARE PROPER EMOTIONS PRODUCED)?

- A. By strong feeling in the teacher.
- B. By a quickened conscience in the teacher.
- C. By a revival state of the teacher.
- D. By a divine unction of the teacher.
- E. By addressing the conscience of the hearer.
- F. By applying the letter of the law to the outward life.
- G. By applying the Spirit to the inward life.
- H. The law of sympathy should have legitimate scope.
- I. To object to this is absurd.
- J. So is the talk about animal feeling.
- K. So is the objecting to excitement.
- L. Such objections prevent revivals.
- M. Such objections arrest them.
- N. Yet the objectors would not receive an unfeeling convert.

### 10. ABUSES OF EMOTION.

- A. The assumption that excitement is religion.
- B. Resort to clap-trap, what I saw.
- C. Resort to most exciting measures.
- D. Stoking excitement to the extreme.
- E. Appeals to superstition. (Smith)
- F. Want of discrimination in the teacher.
- G. Boisterous and vociferous appeals.
- H. Direct attempts to produce intense weeping, injurious to convicted.

- I. Affecting illustrations.
- J. Inattention to ventilation.
- K. Inattention to consequent nervous prostration.
- L. Inattention to fanatical manifestations.
- M. Inattention to revulsion in correcting them.
- N. Error in denouncing opposition.
- O. Consequent bitterness and censoriousness.
- P. Right feelings sometimes overcome the body, false fire more often.
- Q. But this is not religion.
- R. Nor irreligion; nervous prostration.
- S. The teacher must guard his own spirit.
- T. The teacher must guard against confusion, excesses, and noises that divert attention and embarrass thought.
- U. He must guard against enthusiastic claims to inspiration.
- V. He must guard against enthusiastic claims to the possession of miraculous power.
- W. Against being led by impulse, dreams, etc.
- X. Against the delusions of Satan.
- Y. Against the delusions of the imagination.
- Z. Against yielding the will to mere feeling.
- AA. This is the most common form of delusion.
- BB. It is the result of a false philosophy.
- CC. The will must be yielded to God by an act of trust, consecration and submission, and not to the impulse of excited feeling.
- DD. Deep feeling is a condition but never the motive power of true conversion.
- EE. This is the error of some revivalists, time will reveal the chaff.

### 11. RELIGIOUS SENSIBILITY IMPORTANT.

- A. Unless quickened, converts will not stand.
- B. They will not stand if too much quickened.
- C. Here wisdom is needed but often not possessed.
- D. This results in reaction and scandal.
- E. Preachers and lay laborers should understand and harmonize in this.
- F. If great excitement, the work must be short in that form.
- G. If no excitement, the masses will not attend.



H. Hence revivals are a necessity in every age and country, and always have been.

I. This is proved by the state of every land and church where revivals are not.

J. The necessity may be deplored, but it is likely to be a fact.

## 12. HOW IT (REVIVAL) BEGINS.

A. Always by the Holy Spirit.

B. In answer to some wakeful soul.

C. Often by awakening providence.

D. Often by scandal in the church.

E. Often by something that shocks the pastor.

F. That is, the state of the church, or the state of youth.

G. Some movement of the enemy.

H. Something that awakens, convicts.

I. Humbles and agonizes the pastor.

J. Or church, or individual members.

K. Breaking up the slumbers of one or more, will indicate a work begun.

L. Or, some one or more is baptized with the Spirit of prayer.

M. Or an unusual solemnity and searching in the congregation.

N. A conviction that a revival is needed is a revival begun.

O. Don't fail to understand this.

P. Arise, and buckle on your armor.

## 13. MEANS (TO BE USED IN REVIVAL).

A. Ascertain what the Spirit is doing.

B. Search the church, convict and humble them.

C. Break up the fallow ground and no longer sow among thorns. Secure mutual confession and reconciliation. Restore real harmony and trusting love. Often fasts are necessary.

D. A revival that leaves the church unblessed will almost certainly prove disastrous.

E. Unless the church take hold, it will be but partial and superficial outside.

F. It will be more or less general outside, as it is in the church.

G. Shape your labors to secure the hearty sympathy and co-operation of the church.

H. As fast as they are awake, set them judiciously at work, visiting the members.

I. Get the reclaimed and wakeful members together and agree upon a course of labor and action.

J. Press the necessity of much prevailing prayer.

K. Encourage, in every way, prayer-meetings.

L. Agree upon particular subjects of prayer, and to closet concerts.

M. Call attention to the promises, and encourage faith in prayer; two agreeing, New Lebanon.

N. Gather and relate facts and cases of answers.

O. Encourage requests for prayer, but do not carry this too far. Press the necessity for secret prayer.

P. Give yourself to much prayer.

Q. You must break down and lead on or be a stumbling-block.

R. Every member should come to the front.

S. Remind all who fail of the curse of Meroz, Judg. 5:23.

## 14. PREACHING (IN REVIVALS)

A. Try to ascertain the real wants of the church. Don't neglect them.

B. Are they really revived?

C. Are they prepared to labor for the conversion of sinners.

D. Are they in sympathy with Jesus regarding sinners?

E. Are they well instructed for the work before them?

F. Prepare the rank and file. Don't go to battle alone.

G. The character and extent of the work among sinners depend upon the nature and extent of it among Christians.

H. Pray constantly for divine illumination.

I. Preach awakening sermons, stating dangers.

J. Show the spirituality of the law, that nothing short of perfect obedience is accepted. It claims perfect love.

K. Press this in every form, until you annihilate self-righteousness and convict moralists.

L. Show how unprepared they all are for heaven.

M. Dwell on the holiness of God and of heaven.

N. Show up their sin and its awful guilt; what sin is.

O. Prepare them to appreciate the love that can forgive them. Sin cannot consist in negation but in preference.

P. Prepare them to appreciate and understand the "Glad Tidings."

- Q. Do not be premature in offering mercy.
- R. Lest they come to know Christ after the flesh merely. This is a common error.
- S. Without conviction of sin, the necessity and significance of the Gospel cannot be appreciated.
- T. Nor without this can repentance be secured.
- U. Nor faith that works by love.
- V. Nor humility, nor a broken heart, nor self-loathing, nor true concern for others, nor power in prayer, nor in short, can any Christian virtue be secured.
- W. The law must prepare the way for the Gospel.
- X. John the Baptist must prepare the way for Christ.
- Y. The baptism of Moses, I Cor. 10:2, must precede the baptizing into Christ, by the Holy Spirit.

#### **15. TO MASSES, TO REPRESENTATIVE MEN AND WOMEN--MORAL SKEPTICS, HERETICS, SWATHS.**

- A. Be sure to understand and deal kindly and fairly, but thoroughly, with them.
- B. Preach the holiness of God, that his mercy is holy. This called for atonement.
- C. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord. " This is seldom preached.
- D. That selfishness is enmity against God.
- E. That they (those who are selfish) constantly violate their own standard.
- F. That they are self-condemned.
- G. That God must condemn them or they cannot justify him.
- H. That they trample on God's rights, while they contend for their own.
- I. That their business honesty is selfishness.
- J. That whatever does not precede from faith and love is selfishness.
- K. That nothing is really moral outside or short of entire obedience to the law of God. That is, of love.
- L. That they have never performed any duty acceptable to God, or man.
- M. That they are dead in sin.
- N. That they must become dead to sin or salvation is impossible.
- O. That intellectual belief is not faith.
- P. Their utter unfitness for the employments, or enjoyments, of heaven.

- Q. Such showing will annihilate their heresies, and arraign them at the bar of their own consciences.
- R. When they accept the justice of their sentence, then offer them mercy in Christ.
- S. But not before, for it will only afford them false encouragement.
- T. It is false and ruinous to preach only mercy.
- U. Insist upon the rights of God.

#### **16. GALLIO'S (INDIFFERENT, CARELESS, OR EASY-GOING PERSONS (Word from Acts 18:17, a proconsul who refused to try Paul)**

- A. Study to thoroughly awaken this class.
- B. Give out some subject, if possible, that will excite their curiosity, or, in some way, to get them to meeting.
- C. When there, pour your heart out to them in a manner that will convince them that you believe them to be in danger, with tender earnestness.
- D. It is the apparent insincerity of professed Christians and ministers that allows them to remain careless.
- E. They are generally very ignorant of religious truth and need very thorough and simple instruction.
- F. They are seldom errorists, and when once aroused, are very certain to be soon converted, if well and immediately instructed.
- G. If you can break ground in this Class, You may expect, if you deal wisely, to gain the class. They are not the Gospel--hearing and hardened class.

#### **17. SELF-DECEIVED.**

- A. This is, in many places, a large and influential class--appalling.
- B. Their religion is selfishness, under a religious type.
- C. The law and gospel promise reward to virtue. They conceive that virtue consists in aiming at and laboring for the reward.
- D. This error is fatal and common, and must be corrected.
- E. Many whole churches are self-deceived.
- F. They must be shown that a disinterested love service is that alone to which a reward is offered.
- G. They must be made to see that instead of serving God, they are endeavoring to serve themselves of God, to make God their servant.

### 18. THERE ARE THOSE WHO SUPPOSE RELIGION TO BE AN INTELLECTUAL AFFAIR AND FAITH OPINION.

- A. They lay great stress on a creed. and little on a life of love.
- B. These are hard to reach, and need peculiarly pungent dealing.
- C. Without correct mental philosophy you cannot reach them at all.
- D. They must be made to understand psychologically what religion is.
- E. That without love they are nothing.
- F. The attribute of love, as noticed in the 13th of I Cor. must be pressed upon their attention.
- G. They must be hunted out of their proud refuges of lies.
- H. This is the most pharisaical and difficult class to convict.
- I. They clamor for doctrine, and are generally hyper-Calvinists, antinomians.
- J. They are the people, and wisdom will die with them.
- K. It requires great patience and wisdom to dislodge them.

### 19. OTHER DELUSIONS.

- A. Seeking our own, but so as not to injure others--selfishness. This is not Christian, not benevolence.
- B. Desire mistaken for religion.
- C. Desire mistaken for will.
- D. Loss of conviction mistaken for conversion. Nothing is conversion, short of a radical change of will and life.
- E. Protracted conviction and interest.
- F. Light without love, uncharitableness.
- G. Mistake gifts for graces. Do not fail to discriminate and search the church and converts. It will strengthen the true and convict the false.
- H. An unsanctifying hope, I Jn. 3:3.

### 20. THE AWAKENED.

- A. Need no more of the terrors of the Lord.
- B. Don't mistake this for intelligent conviction, a common mistake.
- C. Convict deeply, and they will love much.
  - 1. Dwell on the loving-kindness of God.
  - 2. They cannot justly infer their own security from this.

- 3. The goodness of God forbids their forgiveness in sin.
- 4. God has loved them, but they have not loved him.
- 5. They have hated God with an enmity of will, opposition.
- 6. Also with mortal hatred.
- 7. With supreme hatred.
- 8. Their heart has been fully set to do evil.
- 9. Suffer them not to take refuge in a sinful nature.
- 10. The more light, the greater guilt.

### 21. CONVICTED SINNERS.

- A. Don't mistake being convinced for conviction of sin.
- B. Conviction is always attended with remorse and shame.
- C. It always produces a sense of condemnation.
- D. It always annihilates self-justification.
- E. It always annihilates excuse-making.
- F. It always annihilates murmuring against God.
- G. It produces an awful sense of nakedness, helplessness, and lostness. If ignorant of the gospel plan, the convicted despair inevitably. Justification annihilates remorse.
- H. When you see these manifestations of conviction, show them that God can forgive and on what conditions.
- I. Point out the objections to the exercise of mercy; dangerous.
- J. Make plain the distinction between Retributive justice and Public justice.
- K. Show that no ruler can set aside the latter.
- L. That Christ's life and death have so honored the law, and so condemned sin, as fully to meet the demands of public justice.
- M. That, as a consequence, where there is true repentance and faith, the execution of retributive justice may be set aside.
- N. That God delights in mercy and has made the atonement by His Son, to leave Him at full liberty to forgive even the chief of sinners.
- O. There uncover the infinite mercy and compassion of God.
- P. Hold these up until you secure repentance and faith.
- Q. These will manifest themselves in the peace of the soul, which their whole appearance will indicate.
- R. Sometimes conviction is so pungent that you cannot remove despair, through unbelief.



S. You will find the sinner fully justifying God, and hardly wishing to be forgiven.

T. He has no faith to ask it, and resigns himself to his fate.

U. This indicates faith in the character of God.

V. It also indicates submission, and yet a want of intelligence in regard to the gospel plan.

W. Make this plain, if you can.

X. But if you cannot, leave him to the teaching of the Spirit. He will enlighten him in due time.

Y. If he cannot trust in mercy, try to reconcile him to justice.

Z. Or to sovereignty. But make him understand that sovereignty is neither caprice nor arbitrary will, but love doing its duty to the public in the administration of law.

AA. Urge him to accept the punishment of his iniquity.

BB. Ask if he wishes God to forgive him, if to do so would dishonor God, and ruin all the rest.

CC. Urge him to leave himself unconditionally in the hands of God. To do this will involve faith.

DD. But if he would be forgiven whilst self is not abandoned, i. e. , though it would dishonor God and ruin others, he is still selfish and cannot be forgiven. Probe him thoroughly.

EE. Whilst self is not abandoned to the discretion of God, do not encourage hope--cruel to do so.

FF. Make thorough work, for looseness has destroyed millions. It is appalling to witness. Do all you can to prevent delusion.

## 22. DESPAIR (OR DESPAIRING SINNERS).

A. Despair has various sources and demands various treatments. The subject demands much consideration and wisdom.

B. Sometimes it is the result of conviction by the law, and ignorance of the gospel. The remedy is at hand.

C. Sometimes from the belief that they have committed the unpardonable sin. (Gillett, Burt). If their conviction of sin is genuine, here is evidence that they are not given up.

D. This persuasion is almost always a temptation of Satan.

E. Sometimes despair results from horrible enmity. (Nash).

F. Sometimes from blasphemous thoughts with which Satan follows them up. Try to make them see this.

G. Sometimes from a peculiar state of nervousness. In all cases of despair there is more or less of this, therefore pay attention to the health.

H. Inquire into their habits of eating, drinking, dress, ventilation, drugging, sleep, exercise.

I. Sometimes despair is due to a misunderstanding of Scripture. Answers set them right, Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26.

J. Sometimes despair is incipient insanity acting up.

K. Despair is almost always a delusion, but is often most difficult to overcome.

L. It is always unbelief and should be treated as a sin.

M. If it cannot be removed by inspiring faith and hope, strive to get the subject to accept his doom. (Philadelphia).

N. Sometimes the absurdity of despair may be shown to cure it, as in the case of Aunt Lucy (Gouverneur).

O. Sometimes it is the result of a deliberate purpose not to accept the conditions of salvation. i. e. , not to confess, not to forsake, not to make restitution.

P. Sometimes the result of experienced weakness and instability.

Q. Sometimes the result of a great fall into sin. Faith in Christ, if it can be Induced, is always an effectual remedy. Your own faith may help them to believe. If you have no faith for them you had better keep out of their way. Your want of hope for them will sink them.

R. Sometimes despair results from protracted but unintelligent efforts to become Christians.

S. Search out, and correct their mistake.

T. Sometimes because their prayers are not answered.

U. Often through constitutional hereditary despondency.

V. Often through a self-accusing spirit, the other extreme of a self-justifying spirit.

W. Both extremes are often a monomanias.

X. Some seem to lack hope almost entirely, on all subjects, and especially on religious subjects. They are apt to commit suicide.

Y. Persons in despair are often tempted to do this. Persistent secretiveness a sign of this temptation.

Z. Relapse into some bondage, from which there is no strength to rally, results in despair--tobacco, opium, drink, licentiousness, gambling, lying, stealing--every form of easily besetting sin.

AA. Despair often results from a belief that they are given up of the Holy Spirit. This is generally a delusion of Satan.

BB. Sometimes the result of a breach of covenant with God.

CC. Sometimes the persuasion that they are reprobates, and have all the characteristics of that doomed class.

DD. Sometimes despair results in horrible rebellion. (Celia)

EE. Sometimes in a general loss of confidence in everybody.

FF. Cases of despair demand much sympathy, consideration and prayer. Often, friends and brethren may be called to fasting and much wrestling.

GG. Study to adapt sermons to cases of despair.

HH. Despair often results from a legal spirit and effort (7th of Romans).

### 23. CHRONIC DESPONDENCY (CASES).

A. Billions of temperaments are subject to this.

B. This subject needs study. The effects of bodily states and habits on the mind, must be investigated by soul directors, or they will be physicians of no value.

C. Cases of chronic unbelief

### 24. MEASURES--RISING FOR PRAYERS.

A. Objections.

1. That it is imposing upon souls a condition not recognized in the gospel. Answer--This is a false conception. The design is to give them a privilege of making it a condition.

2. It operates as a snare, and repels and disgusts. Ans. It detects and exposes pride, and bondage to the world.

3. It encourages dependence on the prayers of others.

a. They should know that no sinner is converted in answer to his own prayer, that the prayers of the righteous prevail.

b. That if converted at all, it will be in answer to the prayers of Christians. They ought to know this.

c. That Christian's prayers cannot save them if they wait passively for an answer to their prayers.

d. That they must cease to resist or delay, and when prayed for, they should yield, submit, believe, repent, come to Christ.

e. The objections often reveal a want of confidence in the power of prayer, especially for others.

B. Advantages.

1. It rolls a burden of souls upon Christians.

2. It stimulates prayer and helps faith.

3. It encourages Christians and helps sinners:

a. To overcome their bondage to the speech of men.

b. It commits them as anxious persons.

c. It is often the condition of offering prevailing prayer for them.

d. Prayer for them is often answered on the spot.

4. Another advantage is, that it increases general confidence in the power of prayer.

5. Also it awakens others and encourages them to ask the prayers of Christians.

6. Facts justify it.

### 25. ANXIOUS SEAT.

A. Objections.

1. It is imposing an unscriptural condition. Ans.--It is not imposing a condition, but a help:

a. To break away from the pride of their hearts.

b. Also from their bondage to companions and friends.

c. From a regard to the speech of the world.

d. It commits them, and breaks the force of the temptation to procrastinate.

e. The invitation often reveals to themselves their great pride of heart and bondage to man.

2. It diverts attention at a critical moment. Ans.

a. Instead of diverting attention, if the request be judiciously made, it helps to decision.

b. In dense crowds, it may divert attention, because of the difficulty of moving. Even then it compels decision.

c. It is better in such cases, to ask them to rise, or, to lift hands. To rise is best, as it better commits them.

3. It disgusts and repels many. Ans.

a. Facts show that it attracts more than it repels and disgusts.

b. It carries conviction, if it does repel.

c. Consideration justifies it, and commends it to the most proud and rebellious. (Judge Gardner).

B. Advantages.

1. want of a test, to secure present action and decision, is often felt and acknowledged. (Hawes?).

2. Man have sinned openly, and should be called to as openly renounce their sins. This is reasonable.

3. They should be encouraged to publicly humble themselves before those who have known their relation.

4. It tends to secure present decision to be the Lord's.
5. The outward action depends on inward decision, and the effort to come, is often a real heart-coming.
6. Of course the invitation should be plainly and judiciously given, It may be to come to the altar for prayers.
7. If to submit, or renounce self and sin or, to come to Christ--or, to consecrate all to God the point to which you seek to gain their consent, should be made irresistibly plain, if possible.
8. The exact point at issue, should not only be held up in sunlight, but the reasons in favor of immediate decision should be urged with all possible force.
9. So state these as to compel assent, if possible, secure consent.
10. Without a test, assent will often be mistaken for consent. The test will expose the delusion.

OBJECTION: The act will afford relief from the struggle of pride, and may delude the soul by its taking this relief as evidence of conversion. Ans.

- a. This may be, but the delusion cannot last long.
- b. Instruction and experience will soon correct the mistake.
11. Experience testifies to the great utility of this measure.
12. It greatly encourages Christians to see them come.
13. It awakens sinners, and draws careless ones to meeting.
14. It alarms backsliders, and increases by a natural law the public interest in the revival.
15. It produces much remark, and keeps the decision before the multitude.
16. It is in multitudes of cases, the turning point. (Gardner).
17. I scarcely ever knew it to fail of securing more or less conversions on the spot.

OBJECTION: If none come forward, or rise, it discourages and does harm. Ans.

- a. Not so. It often convicts sinners and humbles Christians. See Evans Mills.
- b. I have often taken this course to convict sinners.
- c. In such cases, the point, yes or no, should be so stated, that sitting still, will be a refusal to have Christ.

- d. There is nothing unfair in putting them on the horns of this dilemma.
- e. It is a plain duty to insist upon their present decision and declaration of purpose.
- f. It is a failure to hedge them in and compel decision, that accounts for the barrenness of many ministrations.
- g. Ministers often learn this after years of wasted labor.
- h. The utmost pains should be taken to commit both saints and sinners to act upon present conviction.
- i. To fail in this, is to lose your labor.
- j. It is the great error of the ministry, to fail to make the impression, that people must act up to and upon present conviction. All classes are allowed to wait.
- k. Professors often as much need a decisive test as sinners do.
- l. God's method has always been, to bring souls into voluntary covenant with Himself. Joshua.
- m. The Holy Spirit is striving to gain their consent. To urge them to submit, rather commit themselves, is just what we should do if we would cooperate with God.
- n. The theology of natural sinfulness, passivity in regeneration, physical and irresistible divine influence in regeneration, led to discarding God's method of souls, and broke the power of the gospel for generations and for ages.
- o. The reasonableness and necessity of the measures should be clearly shown, so as to make the measure a convicting power. Show that God demands decision.
- p. Have faith in the measure, or you will make the appeal too timidly.--Some never dare to do it.
- q. Be very explicit and honest, in preparing them to make an intelligent decision.
- r. Make the issue to be that of yes, or no, so that they cannot help seeing and feeling the responsibility of deciding yes, or no.
- s. Show them the danger of a negative decision.
- t. The probability of its being final for life or death.
- u. Experience abundantly attests this.
- v. I have known thousands of cases where "yes" proved to be the saving decision.
- w. And many, where "no" proved to be fatal, and in several, their last opportunity. (Lancaster, Brown's Lane, London, and many others. )

## 26. CALLING TO ANOTHER ROOM.



Asking them to remain after the congregation is dismissed, or to go into the vestry or other separate room, for more specific instruction. Dr. Campbell's, London.

A. This will give you a select audience.

B. State clearly the class invited. If need be, request no others to remain, or to go.

C. Then suit your instruction to the class invited.

D. You may invite the class desiring personal conversation

E. Or, the class inquiring and seeking specific instruction.

F. Or, those who think themselves willing to become Christians. These need to be shown their mistake.

G. Or, those who are anxious to decide, and to make their peace with God, before they go home.

H. Or, those who have lost their evidence of acceptance.

I. Or, backsliders, who have lost their first love.

J. Or, who are anxious to return to God.

K. Or, those in spiritual darkness and despondency.

L. Or, those who are convicted of hardness of heart.

M. Or, who have lost their peace and religious enjoyment.

N. Or, their heart interest in the Bible, in prayer, and in religious meetings and conversation.

O. Or, those who fear they have been self-deceived.

P. Or, souls oppressed with a sense of guilt.

Q. Souls in any conscious bondage.

R. Or, souls that have shunned a cross, and grieved the Spirit.

S. Or that have wandered, and can't find the way back.

T. Or who fear they are given up for disobedience.

U. Or souls afflicted with skeptical doubts.

V. Or souls who have not the power to prevail with God.

W. Or who have professed, but never had prevailing power.

X. Or, professors who have never had established peace and hope.

Y. Or who have never been baptized and sealed by the Holy Spirit.

Z. Or who have never known the divinity of Jesus by the Spirit.

AA. Or who do not know Christ as a Savior from sin.

BB. Or who have lost or never had conscious communion with Him.

CC. Or who are convicted of conformity to the world.

DD. Or who are seeking permanent sanctification.

EE. Or who are seeking to be restored to Divine favor.

FF. Or who long to return to their first love, who lament after God.

GG. Or who are seeking the conversion of their children.

HH. Or, of their companions in life, husband or wife.

II. Or, of particular friends.

JJ. Those who seek instruction on the subject of prevailing prayer.

KK. Or, any question of experience and duty which you may discover as a necessity of a class.

LL. Any class that needs to be tided over a bar or shoal.

MM. Or that is disposed to come out from the world.

NN. Or to renew, their covenant with God.

OO. Or who desire instruction on the higher Christian life.

PP. Or who find themselves unstable and weak.

QQ. Or, who are willing to commit themselves to work, or need instruction as to the manner.

RR. The secret of wide-spread revival, so far as our work is concerned, is to get at and call to a decision, all the different classes.

SS. Of course, the different classes should be called out one by one, as they reveal themselves to you.

TT. Revivals are not half complete, unless the various classes are sought out and duly instructed.

UU. Evangelists generally must leave much to be finished up.

VV. If the pastor is ignorant, the evangelist should hold on, and help the work through.

## 27. MEETINGS FOR INQUIRY AND ANXIOUS MEETINGS.

A. Design of.

1. To ascertain their whereabouts or spiritual state.

2. To give opportunity for questions and answers.

3. To ask questions yourself, and draw out an answer.

4. To classify and adapt instruction to all the classes.

5. To correct their errors, to secure their immediate repentance, faith and consecration.

B. Notice of.

1. Be general at first, if you please, and invite who wish to enquire respecting their salvation.
  2. If need be, invite only classes specifically named.
  3. Restrict more or less, from time to time, as seems expedient.
  4. Call different classes from day to day, as seems necessary and expedient.
- C. Conduct of.
1. Explain the design and importance of the meeting.
  2. Urge the necessity of honesty and frankness.
  3. Show how fatal to them concealment or dishonesty will be. Illustrate by a patient concealing his real symptoms, or a client concealing from his counsel.
  4. Then pray, and precede to converse, and search them out.
  5. Aim only to find where they are and what they need, in this personal inquiry, and tell them that you will instruct them in your summing up at the close.
  6. Don't spend too much time with individuals, or many will get tired and go out. The devil will take this course.
  7. You will soon have to learn to distinguish the different classes present.
  8. There is order and unity in the Spirit's work, and hence you will soon learn that He is producing the same convictions and raising the same inquiry in many minds at the same time.
  9. Practice will help you as it does a physician.
  10. You will find one class only partially awakened. Show up their irrational apathy, arouse their fears.
  11. Also those who are thoroughly awakened but lack conviction. Show up the depth of their sin and guilt.
  12. Also the thoroughly convicted.
  13. A bewildered class, through false instruction, but waiting to be converted. Press consecration.
  14. A cavilling class. Don't dispute with them.
  15. Those trying to make themselves better by reformation
  16. Or by reading their Bible and praying.
  17. Or waiting for conversion in the use of means.
  18. Or disposed to do penance, and wait God's time.
  19. Or trying to feel more, and waiting to feel right.
  20. Or making preparation to come to Christ.
  21. Or not convicted enough, and trying to get more.
  22. Or troubled with hardness of heart.
  23. Or need to make confession and restitution.

24. Or have an old and unsanctifying hope.
25. Or have lost their conviction and concern, and incline to hope.
26. Or, who are relapsing into indifference.
27. Those full of error, and far from the kingdom of God.
28. Others on the very verge of the kingdom.
29. Make each class a distinct head, in summing up.
30. Aim at throwing the net around the greatest possible number, and drawing it ashore.
31. Take away every excuse.
32. Correct every error.
33. Hunt them out class by class, and call on all who can see their way, to come over to Christ.
34. Call on all who will come, to kneel and then offer them all up, in a solemn prayer.

## 28. DIRECTIONS TO THE CONVICTED.

- A. Distinguish in summing up, and in all labor with sinners and backsliders, between the merely awakened and the thoroughly convicted.
- B. Remember you are not dealing with skeptics, but with those who profess to believe the Bible.
- C. With this class, to make faith in Christ a present duty, and the condition of acceptance, will be unintelligible. They think they do believe.
- D. Be sure to make them understand that faith is not an intellectual assent, but the confidence or trust of the heart, a committal.
- E. With those of no religion, or of another religion, the question of faith in Christ as the true God and the only Savior, should be pressed and consented to.
- F. With Unitarians and Deists, conviction should be pressed until they feel shut up to Christ, as a Divine Redeemer, or to damnation--atonement, or no mercy.
- G. Different classes need different final texts.
- H. Explain to one class the test of entire consecration.
- I. To another, the coming out of and renouncing the world.
- J. To another, giving up their unlawful business.
- K. To another, giving up their unholy and unlawful connections.
- L. To another, their pride and aristocratic spirit.
- M. To another, their ambitious projects.
- N. To another, their bad habits.
- O. To another, to make confession to all injured.

P. To another, restitution to God and man.

Q. See that the direction, If accepted, is saving.

R. The test must involve will submission, repentance, and faith--a change of heart.

S. The point made, should be judiciously adapted to the issue the sinner is making with God.

T. It may be the holding on to some idol.

U. Or, to some besetting sin, or friend, or lover.

V. It may be self-will, or fear of man, or prejudice.

W. Whatever point the soul is committed not to yield, must be yielded--dress, ornaments. (Mrs. Gillett, Esq. Wright. )

X. Some fear a call to the ministry.

Y. Some to be foreign missionaries.

Z. Some to be poor in this world.

AA. Some know that they must make great and fundamental changes in the manner of conducting their business.

BB. They should be required to abandon themselves--their property, plans, and ambitions to God.

CC. To rub all out, and begin a new life, wholly under the direction of God.

DD. Repentance should be shown to be a radical change of mind, and not any mere feeling.

EE. So, faith should be defined as a personal trust in a personal Savior.

FF. Submission should be defined as a cordial acceptance of God's whole will.

GG. Consecration, as a state of making all we are and have and do, a perpetual offering to God.

HH. Each and every duty, or test, or the point insisted on, should be spiritually explained, and its true psychology stated, and pressed as present duty, and then call for present decision.

II. Search should be made after things kept back, and not fully surrendered to God.

JJ. Some may be consciously or unconsciously influenced by motives that, will defeat them--politics, (Goodell and Andrews. ) it may be some love affair.

KK. Some sin covered up--crime, bad habits.

## 29. DEALING WITH PROFESSED CONVERTS.

A. Importance.

1. Do not give them a hope, except in rare cases.

2. In certain cases, don't allow them to hope. (Mrs. Beman).

3. Where self-indulgence is still manifested.

4. Where their hope is not sanctifying, I Jn. 3:3.

5. Where they will not give up bad habits--drink, tobacco--when shown the sinfulness of such practices.

6. Where they neglect confession and restitution.

7. Where they are loose in business.

8. Neglecting their creditors--small debts, to pay notes, for periodicals.

9. Dishonest and selfish in any relations.

10. Remiss in domestic relations--husband or wife.

11. Or as parents, children, brother, sister, servants.

12. Where they manifest an unforgiving spirit.

13. Or an uncharitable spirit--censorious.

14. When their religion is not love, but fanatical zeal.

15. When the heart is not broken, will unsubdued.

16. When prejudice is unsubdued, not candid.

17. When hard feelings are still indulged.

18. When heretical positions are still maintained.

19. When the soul is not humble, candid, teachable.

20. When not of a child-like spirit, sectarian.

21. Where there is manifest pride and vanity.

22. Or a bitter, fanatical spirit, denunciatory.

23. Or a wild, disorderly spirit, unruly, self-will.

24. Where there is a spirit of levity, absence of holy fear.

25. Or a bondage to appetite, no matter which.

26. Or bondage to the world, fear of man predominant.

27. In proportion to the appearance of the above, care should be taken not to encourage hope.

28. Now is the time, if ever, to cure these defects.

29. Call attention at once to any defect which is discovered.

30. If the Spirit of God is in them, they will amend.

31. Do it kindly, but thoroughly, and show them what are the Scripture evidences for or against them.

32. See if they have accepted their sentence.

33. Whether they know Jesus, and have His Spirit, Rom. 8:9.

34. Whether they are truly prayerful.

35. Whether they have true peace with God.

36. And with all men--all enmities slain.



37. Whether they take and bear the cross.
38. Whether they are living up to their best light.
39. Whether their reformation is universal, or only partial.
40. Whether they are aiming to live wholly, or only partially to the Lord.
41. Whether they loathe their former selves.
42. Whether they are indeed new creatures.
43. Whether old things are passed away, and all things become new.
44. Whether they have really given up all For Christ.
45. Whether body, soul, reputation, possessions, plans of life, and all the future, are fully left at the disposal of God, and this consistently adhered to.
46. Whether pointing out a wrong or a defect will set them at once to correct it.
47. Whether they are striving and longing to live wholly without sin, up to their ideal.
48. Whether the thought of sinning against God is terrible to them.
49. Whether they have renounced the world.
50. Whether their vanity is subdued--ornaments.
51. Whether worldly ambition is renounced. (Bloss).
52. Whether they renounce injurious employments.
53. Whether they trade in injurious articles.
54. Whether they are still selfish and unscrupulous.
55. Whether in all things conscientious, or loose.
56. Whether they love to pray and labor for souls.
57. Or are content to nurse their own hope.
58. Whether they love and engage in much secret prayer.
59. Whether the Bible is unsealed to them.
60. Whether the scales have fallen from their spiritual eyes.
61. Whether they are taught and led by the Holy Spirit.
62. Whether they have the witness of the Spirit that they are the children of God, the Spirit of adoption, constrained by love.
63. Whether the atonement of Christ has any place in the things they have been taught.
64. Whether their experience embraces all the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

B. If satisfied that they are truly converted,

1. See that they are not left to hope and enjoy, without instruction in and attending to all duty.
2. A servant is to serve, and not to wait to be served.
3. That he may serve with efficiency, urge much prayer, secret, with frequent fastings, and renewal of consecration.
4. Family, social, public, if occasion demands.
5. Never to shrink if called on to pray.
6. If convenient, hear them pray, and frequently.
7. See whether they have the true spirit of prayer.
8. Whether this continues, and does not abate.
9. Warn them upon the least appearance of falling off.
10. Lay the utmost stress upon prevailing prayer.
11. Keep them in mind of the revealed conditions.
12. To keep themselves in the love of God, praying in the Holy Ghost.
13. Watching thereunto, lest the Spirit be grieved and quenched.
14. Warn continually against self-indulgent practices.
15. Urge a fundamental temperance in all things.
16. In society, evil-speaking, talebearing, uncharitableness, evil surmisings, envy, jealousy, enmities, hardness.
17. Worldly-mindedness
18. Worldly ambitions.
19. Self-seeking in anything.
20. Against the beginnings of compromise with the world.
21. Against easily-besetting sins, self-will, self-conceit
22. Against shunning any cross at any time or place.
23. Self-righteousness, self-complacency, egotism.
24. Study their temperament and suit instructions and warnings to them.
  - a. If given to self-esteem, clip them.
  - b. If they are given to despondency, encourage them.
  - c. If to levity, sober them.
  - d. If to pride and affectation, probe and humble them.
  - e. If timid, encourage and strengthen them.
  - f. If obtrusive and self-confident be plain, specific, faithful.
  - g. Correct in due time, every error in doctrine or practice.
  - h. Lead them to know and appropriate, Christ in all his relations.

(1)As Redeemer from the custody of justice or law

(2)As justification, sanctification, etc.

25. Teach them how to keep out of bondage by simple faith.

a. By Implicit faith.

b. If they fall into any sin, to make immediate confession, restitution if need be.

c. To make a clear breast of it.

d. Not to stop short of conscious restoration to favor

e. Urge re-consecration and fuller sealing of the Spirit.

f. Don't let them rest in any supposed consecration that is not followed with a fresh baptism and shedding abroad of the love and joy, and peace of God in their hearts.

g. Teach that the baptism of the spirit is distinct from, and subsequent to consecration or conversion. Acts 19:2; Eph. 1:13; II Cor. 1:22.

h. That this unsealing is the condition of stability.

i. In my experience, a fresh anointing, has followed every sound renewal of entire consecration.

j. God has not been slow to manifest his acceptance of my offering, and to shed Himself abroad in my heart.

k. Lead them to expect the endowment of power, for the performance of duties, especially of important ones.

l. See that they keep all upon the altar of consecration.

m. Be jealous of them, in this regard.

n. Inquire how they spend their time and money.

o. Servants must not be idle, must not purloin.

p. Keep before them the fact, that selfishness is sin, self-indulgence.

q. Give them no rest in any form of sin, or indulgence that is sinful.

r. Guard them equally against legality, and antinomian license. Doing duty is condition and not the ground of acceptance.

s. Always find enough for them to do. An idle Christian is already a backslider.

t. Teach them the various relations of Christ, and how and when to appropriate them.

u. The church still remains lamentably ignorant of the manifold official relations of Christ.

v. This knowledge is indispensable, both in times of great temptation, and under divine searching.

w. Aim at developing a symmetrical Christianity.

x. Aim to make them stable, as opposed to spasmodic.

y. Warn them against resisting, grieving, quenching the Spirit.

### 30. LEGALITY.

A. Before the fall, man needed no law but the love that was in his heart.

B. He needed only instruction, law as a test.

C. After the fall, the law was introduced as a rule of life, but not as the way of salvation.

D. The design was to restrain transgression, until Christ came, Gal. 3:19.

E. It appealed to hope and fear, as the only motives that could be influential, in the absence of love.

F. It proved a snare, because both its spirituality and its design were misapprehended.

G. Men sought to obey it, influenced only by its threatenings and promises, and not by love.

H. This is self-righteousness, bondage to God.

I. Obedience only outwardly, and in the letter.

J. It led, of course, to a slavish spirit and service.

K. To a selfish effort to secure the favor of God.

L. The ceremonial law was a foreshadowing of the gospel, but was regarded as a covenant of works. The spiritual Jews partially understood the typical teaching of this law.

M. Paul was, at first a zealous asserter of the legal way of salvation. duty doing.

N. The gospel opened his eyes, and his apostolic life was devoted to the correction of this error.

O. But a modified form of legality is the religion of multitudes of professed Christians.

P. This is really the religion of all who do not so know Christ, as to be constrained by love.

Q. They are still influenced by legal motives.

1. By the idea of right, without love.

2. They overlook the fact that nothing is right, but love and its manifestations.

3. The idea of duty, also without love.

4. They overlook the fact that nothing can be duty, that is not love, or the fruit of love.

5. Fear--must be religious, or go to hell; must do duty or be lost. Duty is hard, but the less of two evils.

6. Hope--religion is not only safe, but profitable, selfishness and self-righteousness elevate their aims.

R. Awakened, convicted, fall to reforming, praying, using means--all selfish, of course.

S. Make up their minds to serve the Lord as the condition of salvation.

T. They seek rest, salvation, happiness, and religion as a means--all this is, of course, legality.

U. But not having Christ formed within them, their religion is without love, and therefore unsaving, I Cor. 13.

V. It is a bond service, and can be nothing better.

W. This is the religion illustrated in the 7th of Romans.

X. Of bondage to the law.

Y. Also to the law of sin and death in the members.

Z. Also to the world, can't overcome the love and fear thereof.

AA. Are led captive by Satan in entire ignorance of the fact.

BB. This religion reveals itself In confession without reformation.

CC. Prayers reveal their sense of condemnation.

DD. Legal hymns, reason I hear, her counsels weigh... and yet I find it hard to obey, and harder still to love

EE. It is a religion of conscience, such as Paul had before his conversion--not a religion of love.

FF. Such persons are sincere in their efforts to obey, but having no love all is failure.

GG. It is without love, and of course, without help or comfort.

HH. Prayer, worship, etc. , are duties without communion.

II. They never rise above the sense of duty into the perfect liberty of love.

JJ. To them the commands of God are grievous, and obedience impossible.

KK. What they understand to be Christ's yoke is heavy, and his burden grievous to be born.

LL. Wisdom's ways are ways of unpleasantness, and her paths are not paths of peace.

MM. Their experience is the opposite of Jn. 3:3-9.

NN. A legal ministry has misled the church.

OO. A legal religion they have always heard preached, prayed, and sung.

PP. They are slaves, afraid to accept their freedom.

QQ. They make faith an intellectual state, and of course think they believe in Christ.

RR. Of course, conscience is not at rest, and hence they have many doubts and fears, and distrust those who have not.

SS. They can't expect to be holy in this life, in the body.

TT. Legal ministers can preach souls into, but not out of, bondage.

UU. Beget slaves in their own likeness, and fill their churches with them.

VV. Great conscientiousness in discharge of what they conceive as duty, is their highest ideal of religion.

WW. Of real Christian love and consequent liberty, they have no conception.

XX. Of course, this religion is not sanctifying, and for this reason, not saving.

YY. Wonderful that their sense of condemnation does not teach them that they are not forgiven.

ZZ. Why don't they learn, that if their consciences condemn them, God, of course, condemns them.

AAA. Why not see that if their experience is Christianity, Christ is not what he professes to be, the Savior from sin.

BBB. This religion so common as to stumble the world.

CCC. Your confessions, say they, prove that Christ is not what he professes to be.

### 31. GOSPEL RELIGION.

A. John the Baptist's mission.

1. To prepare the nation to receive their Messiah.

2. Also by preaching repentance, to convict of sin.

3. To explain the law as to annihilate self-righteousness

4. He purified with water, and directed them to Christ, for the purifying of the Holy Spirit.

5. Christ's life and preaching were designed to illustrate the spirit of the law, convict of sin, and prepare them to understand the significance of his mission and death. Mal. 3:1-5; Sermon on the Mount.

B. Design of Christ.

1. To win the world to confidence and love.

2. To destroy their false hopes.

3. Overcome their prejudice, enmity and unbelief.

4. Also, their selfish and self-righteous efforts to secure eternal life.

C. Peace proclaimed.



1. Hence, at his birth, the angels proclaim "peace on earth, and good will to men"--decree of universal amnesty.
2. The angels proclaimed to the shepherds glad tidings, of great joy to all people, Lk. 2:8-10.
3. This announcement made to people entangled in the meshes of the law, and condemned by the preaching of John.
4. Those who understood it, found themselves forgiven, and provided for, on the simple condition of their acceptance of it.
5. The gift was unconditional.
6. Their acceptance was a natural condition of their coming into possession of the gift. The gift secured the grateful acceptance.
7. But it annihilated every motive to legality.
8. Restored lost confidence, and drew the apostles and those who believed the glad tidings into intense sympathy, with the heart and work of God in Christ.
9. Changed their legal into an unselfish love--consecration.
10. But this was not understood and consummated, until the baptism of the Spirit at Pentecost.
11. From this point, the apostles and brethren proclaimed a free and full and present salvation by law, or works. It placed reconciliation on an entirely new basis, as they understood it.
12. The sacrificial death of Christ so reveals the love and mercy of God, as to win the implicit confidence and love of the soul that understands it.
13. It establishes the love, required by the law, in the heart.
14. Henceforward, obedience is spontaneous. It is law of liberty written in the heart; Jer. 31:31; James 1:25; Heb. 8:10.
15. Instead of using means to win the favor of God, the soul is secure of his love and favor and has no selfish reason for legal service. It has nothing to do for self.
16. It is left entirely free to act out its heart's love and trust
17. It knows it has eternal life, as a free and unconditional gift.
18. Of course, it has not to work for it.
19. It knows also, that "God has given to all his saints, all things that pertain to life and godliness," II Pet. 1:3
20. Also, "exceeding great and precious promises," 1:4.
21. As soon as it is baptized by the Holy Spirit, it is conscious of the daily welling up in the soul, of the living water--Christ forming within the soul.
22. Christ an effectual, indwelling and eternal life.
23. It has the same love and consecration that God has.
24. Hence has the same liberty that Christ has.
25. The same restraints and constraints of love alone.
26. Christianity is liberty, because God is in Christians.
27. Observe, I speak of Christian, not legal religion.
28. The whole of the Christian religion is a spontaneous love service, and hence the highest form of liberty.
29. All other experiences are legal, and not Christian.
30. This experience begins with the first true conversion to Christ.
31. True conversion involves repentance, faith, love, consecration.
32. This is the new birth, beginning of a new life.
33. This is doubtless a present sinless state.
34. But to be permanent, it needs the seal of God's acceptance and confirmation, earnest of our inheritance Eph. 1:13-14; II Cor. 1:22.
35. It needs the anointing that abideth, I Jn. 2:27.
36. Without this, there will be at best an alternation of liberty and legality, in the experience of the converted.
37. What is Christian, and what is legal in our experience should not be confounded.
38. It is common to confound them and call both Christian experience, because converted persons are commonly, at different times, subjects of both experiences.
39. The design of Paul in the 7th and 8th of Romans was to distinguish clearly between what is legal and what is Christian, in human experience.
40. Those who have no experience of the 8th are not Christians.
41. If they have known the 8th, and fallen to the 7th, they have lost their love and faith, and lapsed into legality.
42. The 7th of Romans experience is bondage and condemnation, and cannot be Christian or saving.
43. In Christian experience all performance of duty is spontaneous, constrained by neither hope or fear, but only by love.
44. Hence, the performance is enjoyed, "blessed in his doing," James 1:25.

45. Hence, Christian self-denial, cross-bearing, self-sacrifice for Christ and souls, are enjoyed.

46. This is incomprehensible to a legal, or an unloving Soul. "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

47. The call to self-sacrifice is a stumbling-block to the selfish soul. But it can't be helped, it was to the Jews.

48. The difference between a legal and gospel religion, is that between slavery and freedom.

49. The slave obeys because he must, the free man clings to, and serves his master from love and sympathy.

50. Likewise between a conscientious, unloving, but dutiful wife, who resolves to do her duty, but of course, wholly fails, and one whose whole heart is given to and is spontaneously with the husband.

51. Her husband's will is hers, his wish is hers, hence, his law is in her heart, and she needs no other.

52. She is free to do as she pleases just because she pleases to please her husband.

53. So with real Christians. They are at liberty to do as they please, just because they please to please Christ.

D. Remarks--How to preach the Gospel

1. Remember the rule of life is the same under both the law and the gospel.

2. But the terms of salvation, opposite.

3. Salvation as a gift cannot be accepted until all self-righteousness is annihilated.

4. Hence, the necessity of first playing John the Baptist.

5. I am always, at first, accused of this.

### 32. GOSPEL LIBERTY--THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

A. This is a condition of a state of true gospel liberty.

B. In Jer. 31:31 we have the promise of the new and heart covenant.

C. In Heb. 8:9 we have the assurance that this promise has become due.

D. In Ezek. 36:25-26, we have the promise of sanctification, or of a clean heart, by the spiritual baptism of Christ.

E. In the 14th, 15th and 16th chapters of John, we have repeated promises by Christ of great spiritual illumination after his departure, and that this Spirit should be a personal and abiding presence in them, Jn. 14:23

F. That this should be an indwelling presence, of which they should be conscious, Jn. 14:16-17.

G. And that this should be abiding, 14:16.

H. That He should glorify Jesus, by fully revealing Him to them, 16:7,13,14,15.

I. These promises began to be fulfilled on the day of Pentecost.

J. They were all made, not to the impenitent, but to converted persons.

K. This is a blessing sought and received distinct from, and after conversion.

L. So the apostles understood it, and prayed many days before they received it.

M. In II Cor. 1:21-22, it is spoken of as a sealing, by the "earnest of the Spirit," confirming.

N. In Eph. 1:13-14, it is again recognized as a sealing by the "earnest, etc."

O. And as distinct from, and subsequent to conversion.

P. All the promises to which I have referred, in the Old Testament, and in the New, are made to converted persons, and are fulfilled to them after they have believed.

Q. So they were understood and treated.

1. The day of Pentecost.

2. Acts 19:1-6.

R. This baptism of the Spirit is held by some to be sanctification, but the Bible treats it as a blessing to be given to the already obedient. To them and to no others, did Christ promise it, Jn. 14:15,21,23.

S. An obedient state of mind is the invariable condition of these promises.

T. They are made and, fulfilled only to souls already consecrated.

U. This anointing is designated to establish us in Christ, and in a state of consecration to him, II Cor. 1:21.

V. It is a sealing of the consecrated by the "earnest of the Spirit," II Cor. 1:22.

W. In experience, it is a powerful revelation, and putting on of the Lord Jesus Christ, in his official relations.

X. This revelation of Christ, breaks up, subdues, and rectifies the sensibility--cleansing, Ezek. 36:26.

Y. Thus it breaks the power of the sensibility over the will.

Z. It also quickens and establishes emotional and affectional love of the sensibility.

AA. It introduces the soul into a higher form of Christian experience.

BB. Until this baptism, Christ is not known in the soul, as a living loving presence.

CC. Indeed, it is a baptism of God, as love.

DD. A fulfillment of Christ's promise to reveal himself by his Spirit to, and take up his abode in, the soul, as a conscious presence.

EE. Christ promises this fullness to the hungering and thirsting after righteousness, converted persons, of course.

FF. This baptism introduces the soul to a state of gospel liberty.

GG. The highest form of liberty is doing as we please.

HH. This baptism is such a wedding of the soul to Christ, that from thence it is restrained and constrained by his love.

II. It is a writing and fulfilling of Christ's law of love in our hearts, Jer. 31:31-34; Rom. 8:2,3.

JJ. From hence, the objective law, as commandment, is not needed, because the love required is fulfilled and established in the soul

KK. From hence, it is the "royal law of liberty," and religion is a spontaneous love-service.

LL. Abiding in this state, the soul enjoys the highest conceivable liberty, the liberty of God.

MM. The promises of this baptism have been much neglected.

NN. The necessity and experience of this blessing have been controverted.

OO. But these are only negative witnesses, their testimony amount to nothing.

PP. The positive witnesses are legion.

QQ. This anointing is indispensable to true and permanent gospel liberty.

RR. It is a condition of safe religious teaching.

SS. Without it, religious teachers will only beget slaves

TT. Hence, the mass of professed Christians are still in the 7th of Romans.

UU. The conditions of receiving this baptism are:

1. Consecration and an obedient spirit. See Christ's promise, Jn. 14:15,16,23.

2. Asking in faith, with a hungering and thirsting after the righteousness of God.

3. By apprehending Christ for it, by faith, implicit.

VV. Remarks:

1. Beware of seeking an experience instead of seeking Christ, by whom this experience is given.

2. Beware of negative testimony.

3. This blessing is not sanctification, but God's acceptance of it.

4. It is not the blessing of holiness, but only God's acceptance and confirmation of it.

5. Converts will lose their first love unless they receive this baptism.

6. Don't fail to insist on this.

7. Or they will fall into a 7th of Roman's experience, which is legal and not gracious.

### 33. PRAYER -- WHAT IS IT? ASKING FAVOURS OF GOD.

A. Popularly--Praise, worship, thanksgiving, confession, supplication, communion with God.

B. Reasons.

1. Dictate of nature.

2. Dependence.

3. Guilt.

4. Our relations to God.

5. Wants.

6. His relations to us.

7. Its subjective utility.

8. Its objective utility.

9. Command of God.

10. Invitations of God.

11. Promises.

12. Privilege.

13. Omnipotent power.

14. Condition of blessing

15. Of growth in grace, success.

16. Of power with God or man.

17. Secures wisdom.

18. Secures the baptism of the Spirit.

19. Clothes with virtual omnipotence, promises.

20. The most blessed of all employments.

21. Also the most useful.

22. The most hallowed

23. The most indispensable.

24. The most honorable.

25. The most profitable--to God, to the church, to the world, to self--nothing so far reaching as prayer.



26. No employment so certain of success.
27. Has no substitute.
28. Neglect can't be afforded.
29. Neglect is ruin to self.
30. Neglect is cruelty to others.
31. Neglect is displeasing to God.
32. Neglect involves unspeakable guilt
33. Neglect leaves us covered with the blood of lost souls.
34. Also, our own.
35. Neglect exposes us to universal execration.
36. Faithfulness will secure eternal reward.

### 34. OBJECTIONS TO PRAYER.

A. Divine omniscience, Answer: Prayer not designed to inform God.

B. Unchangeableness of God. Ans: To answer does not imply a change in God, either of nature or character. Prayer supplies the condition of certain divine actions.

C. Laws of nature. Ans:

1. Their uniformity not an intuitive truth, only an induction.
2. Uniformity of effects from same cause is an intuitive truth.
3. Prayer may introduce a new cause and reverse or modify results.
4. Science can't disprove this.
5. To answer the prayer of faith is one of God's laws of action.
6. Nature and revelation contradict the mechanical philosophy.
7. We modify the operation of nature's laws by every free volition.
8. Materialists admit that prayer must belong to the chain of physical cause and effect.
9. The interference of free spiritual agents breaks up the continuity of material action.
10. Every moral agent exerts a continuous supernatural, or super-material, agency.

D. The supposition of an interfering Providence implies an imperfection in creation. Ans:

1. Imperfection is a want of adaption to its end. God's end not the manifestation of mechanical skill, but moral.
2. The interference system the most perfect.

3. This the system of revelation and experience.

E. It is a reflection upon divine goodness. Ans:

1. No, but an illustration of it.
2. He seeks communion for our good.
3. And for his own good, and glory.
4. We need to be shut up to much prayer
5. If prayer were not necessary, atheism would result.
6. Afflictions often come to compel us to pray more, to seek help.

F. Promises too much, James 5:14-15. Ans:

1. Faith is the gift of God.
2. So all men might be saved, if they would believe.
3. God secures faith, where he wisely can.
4. It is possible to save all lives by prayer, but unbelief prevents--the promise limited by Heb. 9:27.

G. Promises are upon impossible conditions. Ans.:

1. No. Eternal life already given, I Jn. 5:11, so there is ground for faith before faith.
2. Same is true of all things pertaining to life and godliness, II Pet. 1:3.
3. These things are given to all for whom we should pray
4. But we never pray in faith without divine inspiration,
5. This inspiration is equivalent to a specific promise.
6. A close walk will secure much of this.

H. May be deceived. Ans. : Yes, false prophets were, but the true knew they were not deceived.

I. Some questions.

1. Do we sin, in not saving all lives by prayer? Ans. :
  - a. For this would be contrary to the revealed will of God.
  - b. We know not what particular lives God would save.
  - c. We need the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Rom. 8:26-27. Same is true in all specific cases.
  - d. He will save all for whom we can pray in faith.
2. Is it not a duty to pray in faith for all? Ans. :
  - a. No. 'Tis contrary to the revealed will, Jn. 17:9.
  - b. 'Tis our duty to be filled with and led by the Spirit
  - c. To live in full consecration and pray as we are led.

### 35. PROPER SUBJECTS OF PRAYER.

A. As broad as our wants--physical, spiritual, temporal, eternal.

B. Also those of others.

C. All objects of legitimate desire, for ourselves and all others, i. e. , whatever is consistent with universal benevolence.

D. We should thank and praise God for all favors.

1. Providence, as universal, perfectly wise and good--therefore, for all things

2. Especially for afflictive dispensations--for all discipline, of selves and others; for hell, for pardons and punishments.

### 36. EFFECTUAL PRAYER.

A. What is it?

1. That which secures its object.

2. That which is answered according to its spirit, II Cor. 12:9.

B. Conditions of.

1. The inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Rom. 8:26-27.

2. Unselfishness, James 4:3.

3. The spirit of obedience, Prov. 38:9.

4. A clear conscience, I Jn 3:20-22

5. Purity of heart, Ps. 66:18.

6. Clean hands, Ps. 26:6; I Tim. 2:8.

7. Wrongs righted, Mt. 5:23.

8. According to God's revealed will, I Jn. 5:14.

9. Just confession and restitution, Prov. 28:13.

10. Stumbling blocks taken up, Ezek. 14:3.

11. Humility, James 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5.

12. Forgiving from the heart, Mt. 6:12-15; Lk. 11:4.

13. In the name of Jesus, i. e. :

a. For the sake of Jesus.

b. In the Spirit and person of Jesus.

14. Faith, expecting to receive, James 1:5-7; Heb. 11:6.

15. Promise, expressed or implied, Rom. 8:26-27, general or specific.

16. Fervency, James 5:16.

17. Perseverance, Lk. 18:1 and on.

18. Often, travail of soul, Gal, 4:19; Is. 66:7-8; Lk. 11:6-8.

19. Intense waiting on the Lord: Ps. 40:1-3; 25:3,5,21; 27:14; 37:7,9,34; Is. 8:17; 39:18; 40:31

20. Daily bearing the cross.

21. A bridled tongue.

22. Diligent use of appropriate means, not quackery.

23. Irrepressible urgency--Jacob, Moses, Elijah, Syr. woman, Daniel, Importunate widow, parable of asking loaves.

24. Consecration in prayer.

25. Accepting the whole will of God.

26. Entire sincerity. (DeKalb, Burnett. )

27. Praying with the whole heart.

28. Watchfulness, watching thereunto.

29. A walking softly before God.

30. Sympathy with God. (Beldon. )

31. Thorough renunciation of our own will--thy will. (Wisner)

32. Willingness to have what we ask.

33. Also to abide by the consequences.

34. Abiding in Christ, and his word is us

C. Remarks.

1. Why so much called prayer not answered.

2. Strange that any should continue to ask and neglect the revealed conditions, tempting God.

3. The unconsecrated have no right to expect an answer, or to escape the rebuke of Ezek. 14:4.

4. Some seem to pray as an offset to their sin.

5. Even sinners think it safer to pray, mocking,

a. Confession without repentance.

b. Praying for pardon without repentance.

c. Formality.

d. Repeating the Lord's prayer.

e. Many neglect the conditions and lose confidence.

### 37. PRAYER AS A DUTY OR AS A PRIVILEGE.

A. As a duty.

1. This kind not duty.

2. An absurd idea of prayer.

3. It is self-righteous.

4. Cannot truly pray from sense of duty, can only say or read a prayer--mockery.

5. Such prayer is a delusion.

6. confirms it.

7. Often profane.

8. Often an abomination.

9. It is the sinner's idea of prayer, hence he prays as an offset and goes on in sin.

10. So with many professors, tempting God.

B. Prayer as a privilege.

1. In Christ's name we are allowed to pray.

2. Also encouraged to pray.

3. Without ceasing.

4. We have "exceeding great" and precious promises.

5. For ourselves and others.

6. Praying as a privilege, with the heart, is the only real prayer.

7. It is also fulfilling all revealed conditions.

8. Answer promised to none other.

9. Real prayer is an inward state of humble filial depending

10. As an act, it is the asking for what we want in childlike simplicity and sincerity. What an amazing privilege is this.

11. This is the prayer of the truly converted.

C. Secret prayer.

1. The condition of spiritual life.

2. The closet is the secret of power.

3. Unction reveals the praying soul.

4. Lack of unction, lack of secret prayer.

5. The closet the mount of communion

6. Here we unburden.

7. Also confess all.

8. Confide all.

9. Go into detail.

10. Closet prayer the most momentous work of life.

11. The most refreshing of all exercises.

12. The more we pray in secret the greater our faith and strength.

13. Also enjoyment, liberty in service, light in the Lord.

14. Power with men.

15. Pray aloud.

16. Cases of conviction from providential over-hearing.

### 38. SPIRIT OF PRAYER.

A. Nature of.

1. An inspiration.

2. An intercession of Christ in the heart, Rom. 8:26-27.

3. This a gift to be much coveted.

4. Obtained only by the consecrated.

5. Retained only by the watchful and softly-walking.

6. It imposes many heart burdens.

7. It often imposes much silence.

8. Is often mysterious to the uninitiated,

9. Is often hard on the body.

10. Is the greatest earthly power.

11. It often has a boldness that shocks the uninitiated.

12. It often is a stumbling-block to those who have it not.

13. The answers will, sooner or later, justify it.

B. Manifestations of the Spirit of prayer.

1. A state of prayerfulness.

2. A state of grief for the lost.

3. Frequent travail for backsliders.

4. Often fastens upon individual cases.

5. A state of importunate waiting upon God.

6. It often cannot be denied, examples: Jacob, Elijah, Syro-phoenician, importunate widow, John Knox, Nash, Clary, and many others.

7. Expresses itself in much sobriety, anxious looks, sighs, groans, tears.

8. In much watchfulness.

9. Prays without ceasing.

10. Avoids light company.

11. Also light conversation.

12. Worldly amusements.

13. Seeks retirement to be alone with God.

14. When first experienced, the subject may not understand it.

15. Often an agony that finds vent in groans and struggles that cannot be expressed in words.

16. It will often persevere for days and nights, and oftentimes for weeks.

17. The Bible expresses it by the term "travail."

18. Those who know, justify the figure.

19. It appears in all great revivals.

20. Revivals are superficial in proportion as this form of prayer is wanting.

21. Often it cannot rest short of assurance.

22. Often causes bodily prostration.



23. Often made a stumbling-block, by unbelief. Consequently, many thus exercised, confine their prayers as much as possible to the closet.

24. They dare not attempt to pray in public.

25. Many have wounded themselves and stumbled others, by open resistance, others by secret resistance. (Dexter, Clay. )

26. This form of prayer a special gift, and not the experience of all spiritual minds.

27. To lack it is not sin, if you walk in and are led by the Spirit.

28. Let those who lack it avoid censoriousness.

29. Also, those who possess it.

30. A censorious spirit will quench it.

### 39. PRAYER OF FAITH.

A. What it is not.

1. It is not that which we commonly offer and hear.

2. Not offering our desires without expectation.

B. What it is.

1. Believing that we receive what we ask, Mk. 11:23-24; Mt. 17:19; 21:19,20,21.

2. It is an inspired prayer.

3. Peculiar, as attested by consciousness.

4. Believe that you receive, and you shall have.

5. Not that you have already.

6. The petition is granted, and we shall possess the gift in due time.

7. We may without authority infer that the answer will reach us immediately.

8. We may fail to rightly understand the Spirit's intercession within us, and receive something other and vastly more than we thought of at the time.

9. It is really the faith of assurance, applied to prayer.

10. It is a kind of faith, of when many Christians know nothing, others possess the gift in a large measure.

11. This assurance relieves the travail of the soul.

12. The assurance is given by direct revelation.

C. Question -- May the blessing be forfeited, and the promise fail?

1. I think it may, Num. 14:34.

2. By failing to fulfill the conditions of the answer.

3. By tempting God.

D. Objections.

1. The conditions of promise impossible. Ans.: No, the prayer is inspired, Rom. 8:26-27.

2. Not always answered, II Cor. 12:7-9; Jn. 12:23-33. Answered according to the mind of the Spirit.

### 40. SOCIAL PRAYER.

A. This is of prime importance -- special promises. Mt. 18:19,20.

B. Its efficacy abundantly tested in revivals of religion.

C. It greatly strengthens the young converts.

D. Greatly conducive to fraternal confidence.

E. A privilege greatly neglected.

F. Conducive to watchfulness, when Christians meet.

G. Also to Christian sobriety.

H. To power with God.

I. Very helpful to each other.

J. Should be accompanied with confession of faults to one another, James 5:16.

K. Difficulties:

1. Embarrassment because of the presence of others.

2. Temptation to pray for their ears, instead of God's.

3. A true devotional spirit will soon overcome these difficulties.







