

With those who do not truly preach Christ we have nothing to do just now; for they cannot even claim to be building their spurious and perishable trash on the apostolic foundation. But there is a set of expedients, used frequently in connection with good preaching, by Presbyterians sometimes and more by others, which are familiarly known by the name of "new measures." Some of these expedients are capable of a partial apology, as when they profess to enlist the intercessions of God's people for an anxious soul, but they are more often calculated to mislead, by confounding natural religious feelings with the supernatural and sanctifying; and thus they often result in the heaping up of much wood, hay, and stubble in the church. Let us then examine the dangers of these methods, by looking into the facts of human nature as influenced by religious excitements.

The first fact to which we would call attention is, that all excitements about religion are not therefore good, or pious, or sanctifying. It may be supposed that a thing so obvious would need no remark; but it is amazing how blindly multitudes of Christians credit any strong emotion about religion as being, of course, wholesome and beneficial emotion. That the man feels acutely, that he has been profoundly disturbed, and has attained to more comfortable emotions, seems to be all these good people demand, in order to think well of him; and any excitement *about* religion is hailed as a precious religious revival. It is forgotten that grace is supernatural, while a multitude of religious emotions are very natural. The word *religion* has been so long used as the same with *Christianity*, that men have lost sight of the fact that there is a multitude of religions, some bad, yea vile, and only one good; that all mankind, down to the basest pagan tribes, have their religious systems and religious fears, anxieties, joys and triumphs. Emotion merely religious may be compatible with the most depraved and atrocious state of character, and with creeds utterly false. To think of future welfare, to be goaded by a guilty conscience, to be full of feeling and passion about eternal realities, may be just as congruous with paganism as with Christianity. And Turkish Dervishes, Hindoo-Faquirs, or Indian Medicine-men, have their *religious revivals*, just as truly as our ill-judging churches. That is, they have their seasons of prevalent and contagious religious emotions, agitating at once large masses of men. Now, since these things are so,

would it not be reasonable to suppose that poor human nature may frequently be subject to these spreading impulses of merely natural, un sanctifying feelings about religion in our Christian lands as well as in heathendom, and that there is probably a great deal of feeling here also about the soul which yet does no good to the soul? Indeed, these contagious accesses of feeling are so natural to the human race, that they may occur about many other subjects besides religion. We have seen our political revivals, fostered by inflammatory speeches, songs, badges, processions, which were as truly *revivals* as, and perhaps little less worthless than, many religious excitements. It is not enough then to produce feeling about the soul; we must aim to produce right feeling. And this is only produced by revealed truth intelligibly presented to the understanding, and applied by a supernatural agent. All else, no matter how genuinely warm or intense, is only that sorrow of the world that worketh death, and needeth to be repented of. The whole labor of the wise minister, therefore, will be to replace this natural religious feeling by the supernatural.

Let us next advert to the principle of sympathy in the human soul. We so habitually limit the operations of this, in our thoughts, to the sorrowful emotions, that we almost forget its universality. The Creator has formed man with this law of feeling, that the mere witnessing of any human emotion colors the soul of the spectator with a similar emotion, in a less degree. In the object of the sympathy, the emotion was propagated according to the laws of the understanding, which presents to the heart some view of facts rationally adapted to be the motive or occasion of the feeling. But in the subject of the sympathetic feeling, there is no acting of the understanding, no view presented by it to the heart, unless we call the mere perception of emotion in the other person a view of the understanding. The sympathetic emotion is wholly unintelligent, is superinduced by the mere sight of the feeling in another, and usually vanishes when that is removed. In proof, we point to the facts that we are saddened when we see a person weep, although we do not know the cause of his grief, and if we see persons angry or fighting, we partake of their excitement, though we know and care nothing of them or their quarrel. In a word, our sympathetic feeling is provoked, not by the rational cause of the feel-