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*It is believed that, with these corrections, all references will be found correct.*

*H. R. Mcendon.*

*June, 1902.*

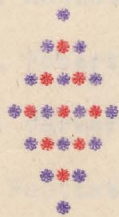
THE MOURNER'S BENCH:

A THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty of the Southern Baptist  
Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, May  
1st, 1902, by

H. R. McLENDON,

In Application for the Degree of  
Doctor in Theology.



Louisville, Ky.,  
Edgar Allen Forbes.  
1902.

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To the Memory of My Three Boys,

Henry Broadus McLendon,

George Manly McLendon,

Seaborn Willis Boyce McLendon,

To the Memory of Our Most Estimable Faculty,

Rev. E. Y. Mullins, D.D., LL.D., Prest.,

Rev. E. C. Dargan, D.D.,

Rev. Geo. B. Eager, D.D.,

Rev. John R. Sampey, D.D., LL.D.,

Rev. W. J. McGlothlin, D.D.,

Rev. A. T. Robertson, D.D.,

Rev. W. O. Carver, Th. D.,

Present Faculty Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and

To the Glory of Him

Who is infinitely interested in all the proper instruments of His

Service, is

this Thesis

Most Affectionately Dedicated by

the Author.

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**PREFACE.**

Much interest has attached to the Mourner's Bench. Since it claims a place among religious practices, and invites our acceptance, it becomes the subject of much discussion. It has been very strongly advocated. At the same time, it has been very bitterly opposed.

The object of this Thesis is to bring out, as far as may be practicable, the facts concerning it.

**H. R. McLendon.**

Louisville, Ky.,

March 28, 1902.

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## CHAPTER I.

### DEFINITION.

(a) Proper Definition: Some prominent bench, or benches, in congregations of worship, to which interested sinners are invited for interrogation, instruction and prayer, or simply for prayer.

(b) Improper Definition: The above so extended as to embrace all kinds of public expression on the part of minister, or helping brother, toward sinners, with a view to such admonition and prayer.\*

(c) Finney's Definition: "Some particular seat in the place of meeting, where the anxious may come and be addressed particularly, and be made subjects of prayer, and sometimes be conversed with individually.†

(d) A Word from Spencer: As penitents "usually occupied one seat, convenient of approach, and were spoken of as mourners, on account of their sins, the seat they occupied during the exercises came to be called the Mourners' Bench." \*\*

(e) Adverse: "Anxious Seats", seats "on which the awakened and alarmed are placed by themselves, to be addressed and prayed for separately, and to be gazed at by the whole assembly." ††

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\* Chr. Index., Oct. 19, 1899, art. 'Mourners' Bench.'

† Finney: Revival Lectures, p. 253.

\*\* Spencer: Hist. Ky. Baptists, vol. I, p. 693.

†† Sprague, Lect. on Revivals; appendix, p. 349.

CHAPTER I

DEFINITION

(1) Proper Definition: Some prominent hands, or names, in our  
traditions of worship, to which interested singers are invited for in-  
tervention, instruction and prayer, or simply for prayer.

(2) Improper Definition: The above as extended to include all  
kinds of public expression on the part of minister, or helping brother.

\* "Penitents' Bench", 1884 - Hervey, Man. of Rev., p. 79.

\* "Mourners' Bench"

(3) Improper Definition: Some particular seat in the place of  
worship, where the various may come and be addressed particularly, and  
be with subjects of prayer, and sometimes be conversed with individ-

(4) A Good Example: An excellent example is furnished one seat,  
convenient of approach, and was spoken of as penitents, on account of  
their use, the seat they occupied during the services was to be

called the Mourners' Bench.

(5) Another: "Penitents' Bench", seats "on which the penitents and  
sinner are placed by themselves, to be addressed and prayed for sep-

\* The Index, Col. 18, 1850, and "Mourners' Bench"  
| Trinity: Hervey's Sermons, p. 228.  
\*\* The Index, Col. 18, 1850, vol. 1, p. 228.  
|| The Index, Col. 18, 1850, vol. 1, p. 228.

## CHAPTER II.

## DIFFERENT DESIGNATIONS.

"Anxious Seat", A.D. 1831.--Chr. Ind., vol. 5, p. 155.

"Front Benches", 1831.--Chr. Ind. vol. 5, p. 378.

"Inquirers' Seats", 1832.--Chr. Ind. vol. 7, p. 218.

"Front Seats", 1832.--Chr. Ind., vol. 7, p. 273.

"Anxious Bench", 1844.--Nevin, The Anxious Bench, p. 11.

"Seats of Decision", 1876.--Moody, Gos. Awak., p. 752.

"Penitents' Bench", 1885.--Spencer, Hist. Ky. Bapt., vol. I, p. 693.

There are also some comprehensive terms which are designed to include the 'Mourners' Bench':--

"Finneyism", 1844.--Nevin, The Anx. Bench, p. <sup>23</sup>44.

"New Measures", 1844.--Nevin, The Anx. Bench, p. <sup>11</sup>74.

Some of these designations began to take form in the early part of last century. Says Dr. Spencer: "During the revival of 1827-30,..... The penitents were invited to come forward and designate themselves as such; . . . as they usually occupied one seat, convenient of approach, and were spoken of as mourners, on account of their sins, the seat they occupied during the exercises came to be called the Mourners' Bench."

The term 'Mourners' Bench' was sometimes used in derision. Says Dr. Spencer: "This may have been used sometimes as a convenient term of designation, but much oftener . . . as a term of contempt." §

\* Hist. Ky. Bapt., vol. I., p. 693.

§ Hist. Ky. Bapt., vol. I., p. 693.



The term 'Finneyism' was suggested by the fact that Mr. C. G. Finney employed and made the Mourners' Bench prominent in his revivals.\*

The terms 'Mourners' Bench' and 'Anxious Seat' are far more frequently employed among the generality of writers than are the other designations. 'Penitents' Bench' and 'Inquirers' Seats' are very seldom found. Nevin uses both 'Anxious Seat' and 'Anxious Bench', having a great preference for the latter.

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\* Comp. Nevin, The Anx. Bench, p. 34, note.

## CHAPTER III.

## RELATED DEVICES.

'Rising' in congregation, 1821-1824,--Wright, Life of Finney, p.100.

Requests for prayer by rising, 1822,--Sprague, Lect. on Revivals,  
Appendix, p. <sup>368</sup>367.

Kneeling at seats, 1831,--Chr. Ind. vol. 5, p. 155.

Kneeling before the altar. 1831,--Chr. Index, vol. 5, p.255.

Coming forward and kneeling, 1832,--Sprague, Lect. on Revivals, App.368.

Invited into aisle, 1831,--Chr. Ind., vol. 5, p.31.

Lifting up hands, 1834,--Hervey, Man. of Rev., p. 83.

Leaning forward, putting head on back of pew,--Finney, Rev. Lect. p.255.

Shaking hands while singing, 1801,--Burkitt & Reed, Ch, Hist. p.149.

Entering into covenant of prayer by rising to the feet, 1797,--  
Writings of L. Dow, p. 45.

Written requests, 1830,--Life of Em. Andrews, p. 118.

Petitions to be read, 1830,--Life of Em. Andrews, p. 118.

Remaining in places after services, 1834,--Hervey, Man. of Rev. p.85.

Anxious take seats in gallery; Christians retire for prayer, 1831,--  
Chr. Ind., vol. 4, p. 367.

Anxious retire to chapel; Christians remain for prayer, 1831,--  
Chr. Ind., vol. 5, p. <sup>93</sup>188.

Anxious invited into basement rooms, 1832,--Chr. Ind., vol. <sup>6</sup>7, p. 89.

Retire to lecture room, 1834,--Hervey, Man. of Rev., p. 85.

Retire to tent for conversation, 1831,--Chr. Ind., vol. 5, p. 201.

Invited to adjacent hall for instruction, 1830,--Life of Em. Andrews, p. <sup>119</sup>118.

Inquiry meeting, 1821-1824,--Wright, Life of Finney, p. 100.

Anxious meetings, 1831,--Chr. Ind., vol. 4, p. 399.

Requesting inquirers to call upon pastor, 1887,--Fish, Handbook of Revivals, p. 350.

Pastor visiting awakened at their homes, 1832,--Sprague, Lect. on Revivals, App., p. 235.

Meeting pastor at parsonage, 1884,--Hervey, Man. of Rev., p. 85.

Meeting pastor in one of their own homes, 1884,--Hervey, Man. of Rev., p. 86.

#### COMPREHENSIVE TERMS.

"System of New Measures", 1844,--Nevin, The Anx. Bench, p. 4.

"System of Anxious Bench", 1844,--Nevin, The Anx. Bench, p. 5.

As to any particular form of expression, to the exclusion of others, there could evidently be no just contention here, since the Scriptures do not designate any particular form. Rising, kneeling at one's seat, sitting down if congregation is standing, coming forward and taking front seat, kneeling, or giving the hand to the minister and returning to one's place in the congregation, sending forward to minister a written request over one's signature, with privilege of announcement to congregation, or raising the hand--these and such like expressions would involve the same principle. As in every other part of congregational service, so here, all things should "be done decently and in order." \*

\* See Chr. Ind., Oct. 19, 1899, art., 'Mourners' Bench.'

"Some have adopted the expedient of inviting the people who were anxious for their souls to stay for conversation after the rest of the congregation had retired. . . . Others, who would be much ashamed to employ the anxious seat, have asked those who have any feeling on the subject to sit still in their seats when the rest retire. Others have called the anxious to retire into the lecture room. The object of all these is the same, and the principle is the same, . . . . Now what objection is there against taking a particular seat, or rising up, or going into the lecture-room? They all mean the same thing, when properly conducted." \*

The above devices, as used by the ministry of denominations which approve them, have in view the accomplishment of the same general object, and for convenience, may be comprehended under the name,--System of the Mourner's Bench. Any one of them may be considered as represented in principle, therefore, by the simple term, Mourner's Bench.

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\* Finney, Revival Lectures, pp. 254 f.

## CHAPTER IV.

## ORIGIN.

This fact seems involved in obscurity. We appear to have no satisfactory evidence as to the exact place, date, or introducer of this device. It is a matter of no little interest, however, as to where and when it originated. The attention of the reader is invited to the following:--

I. It has been the opinion of some that the practice originated with Rev. C. G. Finney, a noted Presbyterian evangelist of last century, whose ministry extends from 1824 to 1875, and who conducted many successful meetings in New York and other states.

We find prominent in the work of Mr. Finney,

(1) Invitations to 'Inquiry Meetings', 1822-1824.\* (2) Requests for people desirous of accepting Christ, 'to rise' to their feet, 1822-1824.† (3) Requests for those "who desired to be saved to come forward to the front seat while the rest of the congregation prayed for and with them", 1825.\*\*

These practices did not however originate with Mr. Finney. He simply introduced them into his services from the practice of others.‡

II. Going back from the latest above date, 19 years, to June 1806, we find Rev. Lorenzo Dow, Methodist, in Ireland, "inviting up mourners

\* Wright, Life of Finney, p. 100.

† Vedder, Hist. Baptists Mid. States, p. 152.

\*\* Vedder, Hist. Baptists Mid. States, p. 152.

‡ See Vedder and Wright, as above.

to be prayed for." \*

We record also other instances in the work of Dow:

- (1) Sundry "come up to be prayed for", August 29, 1805. §
- (2) He "called up the mourners to be prayed for", Long Island, May 18, 1805. \*\*
- (3) We find "four mourners" coming forward "to be prayed for", Augusta, Ga., March 13, 1802. §§
- (4) On September 1797, he proposes to the people a covenant of prayer, to be signified to by standing on their feet. \*\*\*

Propositions for prayer were a familiar part of Dow's method of work, embracing in the fullest sense the principle (and use) of the Mourner's Bench.

III. The Revival and Revival Influences of 1799-1803. We note, here,

1. Incidents in the ministry of Rev. Lemuel Burkitt.

(1) In January 1802, at Cashie Church, Kehukee Association, North Carolina, Rev. Mr. Burkitt, at the close of his sermon, gave an opportunity for prayer. He said, "If there was any person in the congregation who saw himself in a lost, condemned state by reason of sin, if he would come up to the table, at the pulpit, he would pray to the Lord for him." Accordingly Mrs. Gillam came forward and kneeled down at the table, with one or two more." §§§

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\* Writings of Lorenzo Dow, p. 267.

§ Dow, p. 244.

\*\* Dow, p. 234.

§§ Dow, p. 135.

\*\*\* Dow, p. 45.

§§§ Burkitt & Reed, Ch. Hist., pp. 207<sup>4</sup> 208.

(2) In 1801, or about this time, at Fishing Creek Church, Halifax, North Carolina, at the close of the meeting, Mr. Burkitt said "That if there was any person in the congregation who desired to go to heaven or be converted, if he would come up to the pulpit, he would pray to the Lord for him." In response, "A young man came, with tears in his eyes, and requested his prayers." \*

Thus, in the practice of Mr. Burkitt, we find full sympathy with the Mourner's Bench.

## 2. Camp-meetings and the Altar.

(1) In 1799, or 1800, Camp-meetings originated. Says Dr. J. B. McFerrin, "There were signs of the coming revival on Cumberland Circuit in 1799. . . The most wonderful display was at Desha's Creek, near the Cumberland River, where many thousands had collected together. This was a Camp-meeting, and was perhaps the second or third ever held in the country; indeed, it was in this great revival that Camp-meetings originated." †

"In the year 1799", says one of the brothers M'Gee, "we agreed to make a tour through the Barrens, toward Ohio, and concluded to attend a sacramental solemnity in the Rev. Mr. McGready's congregation, on Red River, in our way. . . This was the beginning of that glorious revival of religion in this country, which was so great a blessing to thousands, and from this meeting Camp-meetings took their rise." \*\*

"The first Camp-meeting in the United States was held in 1799, on

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\*Burkitt & Reed, Ch. Hist., pp. 242f.

† McFerrin, Meth. in Tenn., p. 336. 268f

\*\* Redford, Meth. in Ky., vol. I., pp. 269.

the banks of Red River, in Kentucky." \*

(2) The altar established.

In connection with the first Camp-meeting, an "altar" was "erected unto the Lord in the forest." †

"It was in this great revival that camp-meetings originated. . . . The grounds were generally laid out near to some flowing spring, . . . a shelter in the center for public worship. . . . In front of the pulpit was the altar: this was designed as a place for penitents, where they might be collected together for prayer and religious instruction. This altar was usually made of poles, or square pieces of hewed timber placed on posts, at the four corners, with openings for ingress and egress. Inside the altar were seats, called by many, and sometimes in derision, the 'Mourner's bench'. At the close of the sermon or exhortation, an invitation was given for mourners, or penitents, to come to the altar--that is, such as were convinced of sin, and were inquiring 'what they should do to be saved', were invited to approach seats set apart for them." \*\*

Thus the Mourner Bench feature was an important part of Camp-meeting method, and dates in them favor their origin in 1799-1800.

We therefore find the Mourner's Bench, thus far in our investigation, a device accepted by many people as early as above date, and justly conclude that it had its origin earlier than the 19th century. Also, that mental devices were employed by some where we find no dis-

\* McClintock & Strong's Cyclopedia, art., "Camp-meeting."

‡ " " " " " " " "

\*\* McFerrin, Meth. in Tenn., pp.336-338.



ting mention of the simple Mourner's Bench itself.

#### IV. The Practice of J. A. Granade.

"In the year 1785, there was a class organized in Sullivan County, near where Blountvill now stands, and the following year a house of worship was built. This, from the best information I can get, was the first Methodist Church built in the State. . . Here Granade for the first time preached in Tennessee. It seems that about the year 1790, it was announced that a stranger, 'the wild man', would preach at Acuff's Chapel on a certain day. The day arrived, and with it a vast concourse of people were assembled, anxiously awaiting the appearance of the 'wild man'. . . Announcing his text, he proceeded to preach the 'unsearchable riches of Christ'. The meeting was protracted for ten days with great effect. Scores of mourners crowded the mourner's bench--the first time they had heard of such a thing." \*

We find here that it existed and seemed to be in familiar use with Mr. Granade in 1790. †

V. In South Carolina, about August, 1790, numbers came before the whole congregation, and requested prayers. Also, "little lambs melted into tears", requested "the prayers of God's people." \*\*

Here, (of course), we see evident the spirit and atmosphere of the Mourner's Bench. These interested ones were of course encouraged in thus expressing their wishes for the help of prayer.

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\* McFerrin, Meth. in Tenn., pp. 105f.

† There seems to be some conflict in authors here, as to date. I have thought desirable, however, to accept the above date as correct. See Bang, Hist. Meth. Ep. Ch. vol. 2, p. 105, --date about 1800 to 1801. \*\* Rippon, Ann. Register, vol. 1, pp. 107f.

first mention of the single-horned's Band itself.

IV. The Preacher of A. A. Gurnea.

"In the year 1788, there was a class organized in Sullivan County, near where Elizaville now stands, and the following year a mass of worship was built. This, from the best information I can get, was the first Methodist Church built in the State. . . . Here Gurnea for the first time preached in Tennessee. It seems that about the year 1790, it was announced that a stranger, 'the wild man', would preach at Aunt's Chapel on a certain day. The day arrived, and with it a vast concourse of people was assembled, anxiously awaiting the appearance of the 'wild man'. . . . Announcing his text, he proceeded to preach the 'unspeakable riches of Christ'. The meeting was protracted for ten days with great effect. Scores of converts crowded the preacher's bench--the first time they had heard of such a thing. . . . We find here that it existed and seemed to be in full vigor with Mr. Gurnea in 1790. . . .

V. In South Carolina, about 1790, Methodists were before the whole congregation, and repeated prayers. Also, "little islands well as into tents", repeated "the prayers of God's people". . . . Here, (of course, we see without the spirit and atmosphere of the hourner's band. These interested ones were of course encouraged

in this expression their riches for the help of prayer. . . .  
 \* Hays, Hist. of Tenn., vol. 1, pp. 1087, 2nd ed.  
 † There seems to be some conflict in author here, as to date. I have thought desirable, however, to accept the above date as correct. See Hays, Hist. of Tenn., vol. 1, pp. 108, 109, 2nd ed. . . .  
 \* Hays, Hist. of Tenn., vol. 1, pp. 107, 108, 2nd ed.

## VI. Further Light from North Carolina.

About 1796 or 1798, Rev. Smith Ferguson preached on "Lewis Fork in Wilkes". When he was closing, "he invited any who wished to be prayed for to draw near, and almost the whole congregation bowed around the preacher." \*

## VII. The Experience and Practice of Rev. John Taylor.

(1) Mrs. Rice asks prayer, --1822. "Lewis Craig being at the meeting, it occurred to her (Mrs. Rice) in the time of preaching, that he and myself were worshippers of God, and that he would hear our prayers for her; therefore, with great appearance of contrition she requested our prayers." †

(2) Christians ask prayers for themselves and their children,--1821. "When preaching closed, a number of old professors were up, male and female and in a flood of tears, desiring prayers to be put up to God for them and their children." \*\*

(3) One walks three miles to ask for prayer,--1786. "Walked about three miles to request me to pray for him, for he felt himself a poor lost sinner. We immediately withdrew into the woods and went to prayer." ††

(4) A woman (Miss Taylor) rushes into the presence of her father, Rev. John Taylor and asks him to pray for her,--1786. "She came

\* North Carolina Bapt. Hist. Papers, vol. 3, p. 70.

† Taylor, Hist. Ten Churches, p. 102.

\*\* Hist. Ten Ch., p. 86.

†† Hist. Ten Ch., p. 63.

VI. Further Light from North Carolina.

About 1793 or 1794, Rev. John Taylor preached on "Levin Fox in Winton." When he was closing, "he invited any who wished to be prayed for to draw near, and almost the whole congregation bowed around the preacher."

VII. "The Experience and Practice of Rev. John Taylor.

(1) Mrs. Rice asks prayer, --1822. "Levin Craig being at the meeting, it occurred to her (Mrs. Rice) in the time of praying, that he and myself were worshippers of God, and that he would hear our prayers for her; therefore, with great appearance of contrition she requested our prayers."

(2) Christians ask prayers for themselves and their children, --1821. "After preaching closed, a number of old professors were up, wife and I, wife and I in a flock of tears, desiring prayers to be put up to God for them and their children."

(3) One asks three times to ask for prayer, --1789. "I asked about three times to request me to pray for him, for he felt himself a poor lost sinner. We immediately withdrew into the woods and went to pray."

(4) A woman (Miss Taylor) rushes into the presence of her father, Rev. John Taylor and asks him to pray for her, --1788. "She came

2nd Ed.  
North Carolina Hist. Soc. Papers, vol. 3, p. 70.  
Taylor, Hist. Soc. Papers, p. 102.  
Hist. Soc. Ch. 1. vol. 1.  
Hist. Soc. Ch. 1. p. 88.

rushing in with an apparent fright and a flood of tears, and . . . dropping on her knees, with heart rending cries intreating me to pray for her." \*

(5) Two husbands with their wives come forward for prayer,--1785.

"It being in the spring of the year, I took a text from the Canticles, . . . When I stopped speaking, two men and their wives, as if they had previously consulted, rose up, and, with trembling, came forward, and asked me to pray for them. . . The thing being so new to the people, it spread a heavenly blaze through the assembly." §

Here we find ourselves again in the atmosphere of the Mourner's Bench.

#### VIII. Light from Bang's History of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

(1) On July 29, 1776, we have interested ones "begging all to pray for them". \*\*

(2) On May 7, 1776, we find distressed sinners begging the preacher "to stay and pray with them". §§

(3) On May 3, 1776, the distressed remain for prayer after the services. "When most of the congregation went away, some were so distressed with a sense of their sins that they could not be persuaded to leave the place. Some lively Christians stayed with them, and continued in prayer for the space of two hours, till fifteen mourners were enabled to rejoice in God their Saviour." \*\*\*

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\* Hist. Ten Ch. p. 60.

§ Hist. Ten Ch., pp. 47f; Spencer, Hist. Ky. Baptists, vol. I., p. 111.

\*\* Bang, Hist. Meth. Ep. Ch., p. 101.

§§ " " " " " p. 100.

\*\*\* " " " " " p. 98.

walking in with an apparent fright and a flood of tears, and . . . drop-

ing on her knees, with hands raised, crying out, "Oh, God, have mercy on us!"

her."

(8) Two husbands with their wives came forward for prayer, --1788.

"It being in the spring of the year, I took a boat from the Gentlemen,

. . . When I stopped speaking, two men and their wives, as if they had

previously consented, rose up, and, with trembling, came forward, and

asked me to pray for them. . . The thing being so new to the people,

it spread a heavenly blaze through the assembly."

Here we find ourselves again in the atmosphere of the Holy Spirit's

power.

VIII. Light from God's History of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

(1) On July 23, 1780, we have interested ones "desiring all to pray

for them."

(2) On May 7, 1778, we find distressed sinners begging the preacher

"to stay and pray with them."

(3) On May 3, 1778, she distressed remain for prayer after the ser-

vice. "When most of the congregation went away, some were so distressed

with a sense of their sins that they could not be persuaded to leave

the place. Some lively Christians stayed with them, and continued in

prayer for the space of two hours, till fifteen minutes were enabled

to rejoice in God their Saviour."

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\* Hist. Gen. Ch. p. 80.  
 † Hist. Gen. Ch. p. 81.  
 \*\* Hist. Gen. Ch. p. 101.  
 †† " " " " p. 100.  
 ††† " " " " p. 98.

(4) They fall on their knees and entreat the prayers of God's people, 1775. "Sometimes ten or twelve have been deeply convinced of sin in one day. Some of these were in great distress, and when they were questioned concerning the state of their souls, were scarce able to make any reply but by weeping and falling on their knees, before all the class, and earnestly soliciting the prayers of God's people. And from time to time he has answered these petitions." \*

Here we find ourselves again right in the midst of the Mourner's Bench atmosphere, with some encouraging, and some making, requests for prayer.

IX. Light from the Labors of Rev. Eleazer Wheelock, of Lebanon, Connecticut.

"As he was delivering his discourse very pleasantly and moderately', the depth and strength of feeling increased, till some began to cry out both above and below, in awful distress and anguish of soul, upon which he raised his voice, that he might be heard above their outcries; but the distress and outcry spreading and increasing, his voice was at length so drowned that he could not be heard. Wherefore, not being able to finish his sermon, with great apparent serenity and calmness of soul, - he called to the distressed, and desired them to gather themselves together in the body of the seats below. This he did, that he might the more conveniently converse with them, counsel, direct, exhort them, etc. But he ought not to have done it. . . He should have sent his hearers home, to engage in solitary, serious thought, in read-

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\* Bang, Hist. Meth. Ep. Ch., p. 94.

ing the Bible and in prayer. There is reason to fear that from about this time, and in the mode here exemplified, false conversions were fearfully multiplied."--Taunton, New England, Oct. 1741. \*

The "etc" here amply provides for the presence of prayer, which on such an occasion as this would most naturally be expected. We have an allusion to prayer in the latter part of the extract, "in reading the Bible and in prayer". The idea seems to be, Let them do their praying, etc., in private.

#### X. The Practice of the Wesleys.

1. The Wesleys often prayed for people who asked or desired an interest in their prayers. Some instances.

(1) April 26, 1739, we find this statement: "We besought God in her behalf, and He turned her heaviness into joy." †

(2) June 26, 1739, "Three persons terribly felt the wrath of God abiding on them at the society this evening. But upon prayer being made on their behalf, He was pleased soon to lift up the light of His countenance upon them."--John Wesley, Bristol, England. \*\* See other instances in his journal.

2. In 1739, eight or ten ask for prayer.

"In the latter end of the year 1739, eight or ten persons came to Mr. Wesley, in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced by sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired (as did two or three

\* The Great Awakening, pp. 167f.

† Tyerman, Life of Wesley, vol. 1, p. 255.

\*\* " " " " " vol. 1, etc. p. 269.



more the next day) that he would spend some time with them in prayer and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come, which they saw continually hanging over their heads." \*

XI. What shall we say then as to the origin of the Mourner's Bench? In answer to this question, I wish to say,

1. That so far as relates to its modern development, the practices of the Wesleys were, at least, favorable to it. Mr. Charles Wesley even uses the expression, "Oh that blessed anxious seat", etc. †

2. If it did not actually originate with the Wesleys, it must have come into existence as early as the work of Eleazar Wheelock, 1741.\*\*

3. The earliest existence of this practice in some form, and with some limitations, may be very remote. The matter of intercessions was even common in very ancient times. In Acts 8:24, the sinner makes request for prayer.--"Pray ye to the Lord for me", justifies us in the understanding that such requests from the wicked were thought admissible and right. He was wicked. He felt himself in danger. He asked for prayer. Why, however, should he have considered this the wise thing to do, when he had just been counselled (Acts 8:23) to repent and pray? He may have seen others make requests, and known of their being encouraged in so doing by the apostles. In his emergency he would hardly have made such request had he not some reason for believing it consistent with the mind of the apostles." ††

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\* Redford, Meth. in Ky., vol. 2, pp. 16f.

† Kirk, Lect. on Revivals, p. 296.

\*\* See above, ch. IV., IX.

†† The Chr. Ind., Oct. 19, 1899, art., 'Mourn. Bench.'

## CHAPTER V.

## OBJECT.

The question, Why have people resorted to this device, now comes up for investigation. We can perhaps best answer it, by looking into the design of different men, who have expressed themselves on this point, or by noticing its operation, as it comes before us at different times and places.

1. The object of Rev. C. G. Finney, in New York and other places, about 1825, was to lead the truly penitent "to a decision in the matter of their relation", and to publicly commit themselves to the service of God. Thus, "In one of his early meetings when he had been preaching about three hours", he "attempted to bring people to a decision. . . by requesting them to rise if they desired to accept Christ".<sup>\*</sup>

"Those in the audience who were seriously considering the question of their religious duties were asked to rise and by that act publicly commit themselves to the service of God", etc. "When he introduced into his services the so-called 'anxious seat', the invitation was to those who were ready to repent of their sins and to consecrate their whole hearts to God. Such were invited to respond at once in a public committal, and were asked to separate themselves from the world, and to come forward to specified seats", etc.<sup>‡</sup> In accordance with the practices of Mr. Finney, we read, "Much has been done of late to lead

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\* Vedder, Hist. Bapt. Mid. States, p. 152.

‡ Wright, Life of Finney, pp.100 f.

awakened sinners to commit themselves, in order to get them over that indecision and fear of man which have kept them back".\*

2. The institutors of the "Altar" fitted it "up with seats for any that may be seeking the pardon of sin". †

"The anxious", we read, were "invited to come forward for instruction and prayer". \*\*

Again, "Those penitent sinners who desired the prayers of God's people, and deliberately resolved to give themselves away to the Savior, were invited to come and take the seats immediately in front of the Pulpit". ††

We have again, "The calling upon those who are anxious about their salvation to come forward and occupy a place by themselves--or what are called in America anxious Seats--that they may be individually conversed with, and that special prayer may be made for them." \*\*\*

Here, the object evidently is to mediate, or help the sinner, by means of prayer to God. The sinner realizes his need of the Divine power and believes that God will respect the prayers of His people, offered in his behalf. At the same time, the Christian desires to approach God in his behalf, and believes that God, for Christ's sake, will hear prayer for him, if they can both come in earnestness before God, and offer him the prayer of faith.

\* Sprague, Lect. on Rev., App., p. 368.

† Gorrie, Hist. Meth. Ep. Ch., pp. 309f.

\*\* Chr. Ind., vol. 5, p. 201.

†† Chr. Ind., vol. 67, p. 89.

\*\*\* Int. Cyclop., vol. 12, p. 597, art. "Rev. Religion."

3. "These measures, while they are intended to commit the actors, are meant also to awaken the attention of others, and to serve as means of general impression." \*

"Shaking hands while singing, was a means (though simple in itself) to further the work. The ministers used frequently, at the close of worship, to sing a spiritual song suited to the occasion and go through the congregation, and shake hands with the people. And several, when relating their experience, declared that this was the first means of their conviction." †

Here, we have it employed as a means of leading sinners to reflection and of thus advancing the interests of the Master's work.

4. Another design was to get sinners to commit themselves, "and to render it impossible for them to return with consistency" to their former life. \*\*

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\* Sprague, Lect. on Rev., App., p. 368.

† Burkitt & Reed, Ch. Hist., pp. 149-151.

\*\* Sprague, Lect. on Rev., App. p. 368.

## CHAPTER VI.

## GROWTH AND PREVALENCE.

1. About 1741, as seems evident from Number IX. above, the use of the Mourner's Bench, as now seen in practice among us, first came into sight. Accordingly, in October of above year, we discover Rev. Eleazar Wheelock calling to the distressed and desiring them to "gather themselves together in the body of the seats below, . . . that he might the more conveniently converse with them, counsel, direct, exhort them," etc. \*

There is reason to consider that "From about this time, and in the mode here exemplified," there developed a more or less extensive employment of revivalistic phenomena, since, as was the opinion of some, "False conversions were fearfully multiplied", and that as the result of these new and supposed unwholesome methods. †

We find ourselves here in the midst of such a revivalistic spirit as would readily welcome any instrumentality that should bring with it marks of sanction from on high. Hence, these things, to the extent that they commended themselves to the people, as of this kind, found advocates. We may suppose they found advocates readily and advocates many.

In the same decade we find: "Several were brought under the same concern about their souls, and began to see their miserable lost state, and were made to continue earnest in prayer. . . The troubled and bro-

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\* The Great Awakening, p. 167.

† The Great Awakening, p. 168.

CHAPTER VI

GROWTH AND REVIVALISM

About 1841, as seems evident from Number IX above, the use of the Kourner's Bench, as now seen in practice among us, first came into vogue. Accordingly, in October of above year, we discovered Kourner's Bench calling to the distressed and desiring them to "sit on themselves together in the body of the seats below, . . . that in the night the more conveniently converse with them, counsel, direct, exhort them," etc. . . .

There is reason to consider that "From about this time, and in the mode hereafter specified," there developed a more or less extensive employment of revivalistic phenomena, since, as was the opinion of some "These conversions were fearfully multiplied," and that as the result of these new and exposed revivalistic methods. . . .

To find ourselves here in the midst of such a revivalistic spirit as would readily welcome any instrumentality that should bring with it marks of sanctification from on high. Hence, these things, to the extent that they commended themselves to the people, as of this kind, found advocates. We may suppose they found advocates readily and abundantly.

In the same decade <sup>lively</sup> "Several were brought under the power of the Holy Spirit, and began to see their miserable lost state, and were made to continue earnest in prayer. . . . The troubled and pro-

x of p 12

\* The Great Awakening, Vol. 1, p. 167.  
 † The Great Awakening, p. 168.

ken in heart were brought to Mr. Kuyper's house, who, upon conversing with them, soon discovered that the Holy Spirit, by the word, had begun a work of conviction in them . . . From that day the work increased beyond description: there is no painting of it to the life; it was a perfect commentary upon the second chapter of the Acts"--Gerardus Kuyper's pastorate at Nieuwekerk, about 1748,--"Reformed" Church. \*

2. We seem to find ourselves in the midst of Mourner Bench devotions in 1775 and 1776. Says the Rev. Mr. Jarrett, Protestant Episcopal minister from England, then in this country, "Sometimes ten or twelve have been deeply convinced of sin in one day. Some of these were in great distress, and when they were questioned concerning the state of their souls, were scarce able to make any reply but by weeping and falling on their knees, before all the class, and earnestly soliciting the prayers of God's people. And from time to time he has answered these petitions".--A.D. 1775. †

"May 3, 1776, the Methodists held their love-feast. . . Before three had done speaking, you might see a solemn sense of the presence of God visible on every countenance, while tears of sorrow or joy were flowing from many eyes. Several testified the consolation they had received. . . When most of the congregation went away, some were so distressed with a sense of their sins that they could not be persuaded to leave the place. Some timely Christians stayed with them and continued in prayer for the space of two hours, till fifteen mourners

\* Watson, Life of Wesley, App., p. 182.

† Bang, Hist. Meth. Ep. Ch., p. 94.

had in heart were brought to Mr. Rogers's house, who, upon conversing with them, soon discovered that the Holy Spirit, by the word, had bestowed a work of conversion in them . . . From that day the work increased

beyond description; there is no painting of it to the life; it was a perfect conversion upon the second chapter of the Acts"---Gerrard's Key-part's pastorals at Newcastle, about 1748,---"Reformation" Chapter. \*

3. We seem to find ourselves in the midst of Roman Catholic devotions as in 1775 and 1776. Says the Rev. Mr. Barrett, Protestant Episcopal

and minister from England, then in this country, "Romanists ten or twelve have been deeply convinced of sin in one day. Some of these were in great distress, and when they were questioned concerning the state of their souls, were unable able to make any reply but by weeping and falling on their knees, before all the class, and earnestly soliciting the prayers of God's people. And from time to time he has answered these petitions"---A. D. 1776. †

"May 3, 1776, the Catholics held their love-feast. . . . Before three had done speaking, you might see a solemn scene of the presence of God visible on every countenance, while tears of sorrow or joy were flowing from many eyes. Several testified the consolation they had received. . . . When most of the congregation went away, some were so distressed with a sense of their sins that they could not be persuaded to leave the place. Some truly Christianized stayed with them and continued in prayer for the space of two hours, till fifteen numbers

Vol. 1.

\* Watson, Life of Wesley, p. 182.  
† Barrett, Hist. Meth. Ep. Ch., p. 24.



were enabled to rejoice in God their Saviour." \*

May 7, 1776, "Many who were in great distress begged him . . . to stay and pray with them." †

Here we are especially impressed with the many urgent requests for prayer. Of course these requests were encouraged by the praying people.

3. No less important to our investigation is the account of Mr. Lee, 1787.

(1) "The preachers went among the mourners and encouraged them and prayed with them." \*\*

(2) "In class meetings the Lord frequently set the mourning souls at liberty." ‡‡

Here we see the preachers active among the "mourners", and the Lord frequently setting the "mourners" free from their bondage of sin.

4. In the spring of 1785, we have four coming forward of their own accord at the close of sermon and asking for prayer. \*\*\* In 1786, we find a woman in a flood of tears, falling upon her knees, entreating the ministers to pray for her. ††† In the same year, a man walks three miles, to the same minister to make the same request for himself. \*\*\*\* These are but a few of a great many instances which might have been seen at that time. "It has sometimes been

\* Bang, Hist. Meth. Ep. Ch., p. 98.

† Bang, Hist. Meth. Ep. Ch., p. 100.

\*\* Bang, Hist. Meth. Ep. Ch., p. 264.

‡‡ Bang, Hist. Meth. Ep. Ch., p. 267.

\*\*\* Taylor, Hist. Ten Ch., pp. 47f.

††† Taylor, Hist. Ten Ch., p. 60.

\*\*\*\* Taylor, Hist. Ten Ch., p. 63.

erroneously supposed that the practice of praying for the unconverted originated among the Baptists about this period (1827-30). This is a great mistake. It was practiced by Dudley, Taylor, Hickman and other pioneer preachers from the time of planting the first churches in the Mississippi Valley." \* These "first churches" were planted about 1785 --1788. There were then a number of men engaging in this practice as early as 1785-1788. The practice was also spreading, and evidently much on the increase.

5. About 1790, if we accept the date of Dr. McFerrin, we see Granade using the "mourner's bench" with such familiarity and emphasis as to impress us that in some quarters it was now most heartily received and perhaps also widely used. He preached at "Acuff's Chapel" for ten days with great effect. Scores of mourners crowded the mourner's bench". "At this meeting Francis Acuff was converted". ‡

6. From 1799 to 1806, we find very extensive use of these practices.

(1) In 1799 or 1800, camp-meetings originated. The "Mourner's Bench", arranged for within the "Altar" became a prominent and marked feature in the camp-meeting services. "In front of the stand is an enclosure called the 'altar', fitted up with seats for any that may be seeking the pardon of sin." \*\* "In front of the pulpit was the altar: this was designed as a place for penitents, where they

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\* Spencer, Hist. Ky. Baptists, vol. 1, p. 693.

‡ McFerrin, Meth. in Tenn., pp. 105-6.

\*\* Gorrie, Hist. Meth. Ep. Ch., pp. 309f.

erroneously supposed that the practice of praying for the unconverted originated among the Baptists about this period (1827-30). This is a great mistake. It was practiced by Budley, Taylor, Wicks and other pioneer preachers from the time of planting the first churches in the Mississippi Valley. These "first churches" were planted about 1788-1789. There were then a number of men engaged in this practice as early as 1788-1789. The practice was also spreading, and evidently much on the interior.

6. About 1790, if we accept the date of Dr. Hefnerin, we see Swanda using the "runner's bench" with equal facility and aptness as to layout as that in some quarters it was now most heartily received and perhaps also widely used. He preached at "Aunt's Chapel" for ten days with great effect. Scores of hearers crowded the room-er's bench. "At this meeting Francis Auld was converted."

7. From 1792 to 1800, we find very extensive use of these times.

(1) In 1792 or 1800, camp-meetings originated. The "Kourin-er's bench", arranged for within the "alter" became a prominent and marked feature in the camp-meeting services. "In front of the stand is an enclosure called the 'alter', fitted up with seats for any that may be seeking the pardon of sin." "In front of the pulpit was the altar: this was designed as a place for penitents, where they

\* Spencer, Hist. Ky. Baptists, vol. I, p. 622.  
 † Hefnerin, Hist. in Tenn., pp. 108-9.  
 ‡ Gordon, Hist. Ky. Baptists, vol. I, p. 209.

might be collected together for pray<sup>er</sup> and religious instruction. . . . Inside the altar were seats, called by many, and sometimes in derision, the 'mourner's bench'. At the close of the sermon or exhortation, an invitation was given for mourners or penitents to come to the altar-- that is, such as were convinced of sin, and were inquiring 'what they should do to be saved', were invited to approach seats set apart for them, where they would be instructed in the way of the Lord more perfectly, and where Christians would unite in songs, and hymns, and fervent prayer for their deliverance. These altar exercises sometimes continued for many hours, especially after the evening sermon, and many thousands found peace in Jesus, while kneeling in prayer, and crying, 'Lord, save, or we perish.'" \* That the "Mourner's Bench" was much employed in these services will appear clearly indicated in the above statement from Dr. McFerrin.

(2) Revivalistic devices in 1801. "At the association at Great Swamp, in 1801, Elder Burkitt just returning from Tennessee and Kentucky, brought the news to this association, and proclaimed it from the stage, that in about eight months six thousand had given a rational account of a work of grace on their souls, and have been baptized in the state of Kentucky. . . . The desirable news seemed to take such an uncommon effect on the people, that numbers were crying out for mercy, and many praising and glorifying God. Such a Kehukee Association we had never before seen. . . . The Lord was pleased to make use of weak and simple means to effect great purposes, that it might be

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\* McFerrin, Meth. in Tenn., pp. 336-338.

manifest that the work was his and not man's. Singing was attended with a great blessing. . . Shaking hands while singing, was a means (though simple in itself) to further the work. The ministers used frequently, at the close of worship, to sing a spiritual song suited to the occasion, and go through the congregation, and shake hands with the people while singing; and several, when relating their experience, . . . declared that this was the first means of their conviction. . . Giving the people an invitation to come up to be prayed for, was also blessed. The ministers usually, at the close of preaching, would tell the congregation that if there were any persons who felt themselves lost and condemned under the guilt and burden of their sins, that if they would come near the stage, and kneel down, they would pray for them. Shame at first kept many back, but as the work increased, numbers, apparently under strong conviction, would come and fall down before the Lord at the feet of the ministers, and crave an interest in their prayers. Sometimes twenty or thirty at a time. And at some union meetings, two or three hundred would come, and try to come as near as they could. This very much engaged the ministers; and many confessed that the Lord heard the prayers of his ministers, and they had reason to hope their souls were relieved from the burden of their sins, through the blood of Christ." \*

This throws much light on the practice of the ministers of 1801. They believed in the use of means, and they believed that they had evidence that God blessed those means. Especially comprehensive is the

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\* Burkitt & Reed, Ch. Hist., pp. 144-151.

statement that "the ministers usually " gave an invitation for prayer.

"Thus the work began and increased; and the Lord magnifies the riches of his free grace in carrying on his work by simple means. He is a sovereign agent; he can and does work when and where he pleases; and by strong means, weak means, and no means." \*

(3) At Augusta, Ga., March 13, 1802. "Saturday evening and next morning, I held meetings in the vicinity and the work evidently appeared; four mourners came forward to be prayed for. In the afternoon I gave my last discourse in Augusta, and then I requested those that were determined to set out and seek God, to let me take their names in writing, that I might remember them in my devotions when gone; about seventy, who had been careless, came forward." §

On August 29, 1805, "About three thousand rose up in covenant, sundry of whom came up to be prayed for." \*\*

On October 3, 1805, "Last camp meeting for America. Providence was with us here; hundreds at these meetings gave me their hands as a token of their desire that I should remember them in my absence" etc. §§

In Ireland, June, 1806, "Preached, and . . . invited up the mourners to be prayed for; several found peace, and we had a refreshing season from the presence of God." \*\*\*

Thus it can be seen that the "Mourner's Bench" and other revivalistic devices were live practices in the work of Lorenzo Dow. Everywhere he went these came in as a matter in course.

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\* Burkitt & Reed, Ch. Hist., p. 209.

§ Writings of L. Dow, p. 135.

\*\* " " " p. 244.

§§ " " " p. 251.

\*\*\* " " " p. 271-267.



(4) In 1804, "It was estimated that about one thousand souls were brought from darkness to light. . . at the various camp-meetings which were held in the states of North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania and New York" etc. \* Where the Camp-meeting went, the "Mourner's Bench" may be understood to have gone also. Hence, we may here see it vigorously at work in all these states. The practice may therefore now be considered as practically general, at least, among the Baptists and the Methodists.

7. Allusions to the Mourner's Bench, in 1808, or 1809.

(1) About 1808. "The good old man imagined that they were awakened by the exhortation of the Methodist lawyer, and that they would soon all be at the mourner's bench crying for mercy." §

(2) About 1808, 1809<sup>+</sup>. "In Middle Tennessee and Southern Kentucky, Miles Harper is passing from place to place, now defending the doctrines of the church, and then thunder tones denouncing sin; or again kneeling beside the humble penitent at the altar of prayer, or mingling his shouts with those just converted to God." \*\*

These statements show that the Mourner's Bench was in familiar, and perhaps quite general use among the Methodists in 1808.

8. Allusions to the Mourner's Bench in 1811-1816.

(1) In 1811-1812, in connection with the work of Benjamin Durham.--

\* Bang, Hist. Meth. Ep. Ch., vol. 2, p. 159.

§ Finley, Sketches of West. Meth., p. 207.

\*\* Redford, Meth. in Ky., vol. 2, pp. 91<sup>f</sup>.<sup>92</sup>



"On one occasion he attended a Presbyterian meeting in Danville. President Young and others were preaching to attentive listeners. The large church was crowded. Mourners were called to the 'anxious seat'. There was a pause. Mr. Durham rose to his full height and poured forth 'The Old Ship of Zion', like 'the sound of many waters'. It swept over the congregation and bore the people with it. In a continuous stream they came to the 'anxious seat'. Then was there rejoicing in heaven and on earth over repentant sinners." \*

(2) In 1812-1813, in allusion to the character and work of George Sturthor.--"What a skillful, experienced, successful worker for God was he when the mourners were at the altar! A suitable passage of Scripture bridged the dark gulf for the penitent, over which he stepped into the land of peace and love. A sweet verse from our inimitable hymns helped faith tremblingly to embrace Jesus. Fearful doubt gave way, as this man of God told the mourner in Zion how to give up all and find all in believing." ‡

(3) About 1816, in allusions to Marcus Lindsay.--"Powerful in exhortation and prayer, and devoted to the exercises of the altar." \*\*

Here we see that the Mourner's Bench was a familiar and popular practice among the Methodists in 1811-1816.

9. Allusions to the Mourner's Bench in 1822. "The great revival of this church commenced at one of Father Sutton's meetings, at the house of Horatio Middleton, his next neighbor. The indications

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\* Redford, Meth. in Ky., vol. 2, p. 235.

‡ Meth. in Ky., vol. 2, p. 279.

\*\* Meth. in Ky., vol. 2, p. 120.

were such as to suggest the propriety of calling for mourners; the invitation was given, and four came forward, of whom the Rev. F. B. Bruce was one. This revival continued some three years--perhaps longer. . . We have an account of a singular case that occurred during this revival. An old man about sixty, and very dissipated and profane, came in a state of intoxication to a meeting at Father Sutton's house. When mourners were called for, he came forward with others and bowed at the mourner's bench. Some of the members of the church were in favor of having him removed; but Father Sutton would not have him disturbed but talked kindly to him though as in a state of intoxication --told him how he should do when he should become sober, etc. That night week he was at meeting again, perfectly sober, and a deeply convicted man. When mourners were called for, he was one of the number. In four or five weeks he was soundly converted." \*

Thus we find the mourner's bench alive and flourishing in 1822.

10. Employment of the Mourner's Bench by C. G. Finney. "Mr. Finney attempted to bring people to a decision in the matter of their salvation, by requesting them to rise if they desired to accept Christ; and a few years later, in 1825, on a single occasion he asked those who desired to be saved to come forward to the front seat while the rest of the congregation prayed for and with them. It was not until his first series of meetings at Rochester, that he made much use of either device, but from this time onward the practice of inviting inquirers

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\* Redford, Meth. in Ky., vol. 2, pp. 81, 82.

forward became usual with them. This was known as 'coming to the anxious seat'". \*

Mr. Finney made so much and such conspicuous use of the Mourner's Bench that it, along with other revivalistic devices employed by him, has been characterized as "Finneyism". We may consider that these practices were in a state of full development--in their glory--in the time of C. G. Finney. He was a great revivalist and gave great emphasis to them by the use he made of them in his meetings.

#### 11. The Mourner's Bench in 1827-1830.

(1) "An extensive revival . . . commenced in Kentucky, in 1827, and continued three years. . . . In Elkhorn Association, where the Creaths, William Martin and Jeremiah Vardeman were among the active laborers, more than 1,600 were baptized in a single year. . .

(Vardeman) continued to call on the penitent to come forward for prayer." §

(2) "At the close (of the sermon), a much larger number came forward and knelt down to be prayed for."--Willington, Conn., 1830.\*\*

Through this period of three years, the practice of inviting sinners forward for prayer was common. The practice of Vardeman was only that of one among many, and the coming forward of "a much larger number", in "(2)", was doubtless only one of a great many instances all over the land.

#### 12. The Mourner's Bench in 1831, 1832.

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\* Vedder, Hist. Bapt. Mid. States, pp. 152f.

§ Spencer, Hist. Ky. Bapt., vol. 1, p. 598.

\*\* Chr. Ind., vol. 24, p. 30.

(1) East Rutland, Vermont, June 17, 1831: "At the close, the invitation was given to those who had not previously presented themselves for prayers, who felt anxious for their soul's salvation, and a determination to seek religion then, to come out into the aisle; 13 presented themselves." \*

(2) Gillisonville, S.C., Sept. 1831: "After the night service, those desirous of having the prayers of the congregation for the salvation of their souls were desired to kneel before the altar, while the pious were singing the praises of Jesus. Amid the weeping of mothers and sisters--which was however confined to the limits of good order--almost all the unconverted females advanced to the aisle of the meeting house and knelt." †

(3) Cherokee Nation, July 18, 1831: "Nearly the whole congregation who were not professors came forward to be prayed for." \*\*

(4) Albemarle, 1831: "At our last meeting, . . . I proposed that all those who felt anxious for their soul's welfare and those who desired the religion of Jesus, would manifest it by kneeling at their seats, and of a large congregation I do not know that there was one that did not bow down." ††

(5) King and Queen, August 6, 1831: "When the inquirers were invited to come up, we could not obtain seats enough for them." \*\*\*

(6) Hopeful, Hanover, August, 1831: "Poor sinners were invited

\* Chr. Ind., vol. 5, p. 31.

† Chr. Ind. vol. 5, p. 255.

\*\* Chr. Ind., vol. 5, p. 154.

†† Chr. Ind., vol. 5, p. 155.

\*\*\* Chr. Ind., vol. 5, p. 155.

to the anxious seat, and a considerable number came forward, and apparently under great distress, many of whom were young ladies." "It is believed that there were from eighty to a hundred upon the anxious seats, all crying for mercy." \*

(7) Edgefield Association, Baptist Camp-meeting, August, 1831:

"On the second and on each succeeding day, the invitation was given to those who desired an interest in the prayers of saints, to approach the stand from which the gospel was dispensed. The invitation was accepted from time to time by multitudes, who with streaming eyes and agonized hearts approached, and kneeling on the ground, entreated the servants of God to pray for them." ‡

(8) Winton, N.C., August 12, 1831: "It is not uncommon when those who have resolved to turn their backs on the fascinating allurements of this world to seek the religion of our blessed Savior, are invited to kneel as objects of prayer, to see 50 or more do it simultaneously, all crying for mercy." \*\*

(9) Milesburg, Sept. 1831: "In the evening of that day the Spirit of the Lord was poured out upon us, and after preaching an invitation was given to those who felt anxious for the salvation of their souls to come out from the congregation and occupy the front seats. This invitation was in a few moments accepted by more than twenty." §§

(10) Union Presbyterian Church, New York State, 1831: "When the sermon closed in the evening, all who were then determined to come

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\* Chr. Ind., vol. 5, p. 155.

‡ Chr. Ind., vol. 5, p. 158.

\*\* Chr. Ind., vol. 5, p. 140.

§§ Chr. Ind., vol. 5, p. 309.

to the various seats, and a considerable number came forward, and appear-  
edly under great distress, many of whom were young ladies. It is  
believed that there were from thirty to a hundred upon the various

(7) Edgemoor Association, Baptist Camp-meeting, August, 1881:

"On the second and on each succeeding day, the invitation was given to  
those who desired an interest in the prayers of saints, to approach the  
stand from which the Gospel was dispensed. The invitation was accept-  
ed from time to time by multitudes, who with streaming eyes and ex-  
cited hearts approached, and kneeling on the ground, entrusted the ser-  
vants of God to pray for them."

(8) Winton, N.C., August 18, 1881: "It is not uncommon when

those who have resolved to turn their backs on the fascinating alibi-  
ments of this world to seek the religion of our blessed Savior, and  
invited to kneel as objects of prayer, to see 50 or more do it simulta-  
neously, all crying for mercy."

(9) Miscellaneous, Sept. 1881: "In the evening of that day the Spirit

of the Lord was poured out upon us, and after preaching an invitation  
was given to those who felt anxious for the salvation of their souls  
to come out from the congregation and occupy the various seats. An  
invitation was in a few minutes accepted by more than twenty."

\* "Unconverted" or "unconverted"

unconverted

(10) Union Presbyterian Church, New York State, 1881: "When

the session closed in the evening, all who were then determined to come

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1	Chr. Ind., vol. 3, p. 188
2	Chr. Ind., vol. 3, p. 188
3	Chr. Ind., vol. 3, p. 140
4	Chr. Ind., vol. 3, p. 300

to Jesus Christ, that they might have life, were invited to take seats in front of the pulpit. More than one hundred came and bowed the knee before God, and the attentive assembly. After sermon in the evening (Tuesday afternoon), while the choir was singing the 'Judgment Hymn' between three and four hundred came forward and took the anxious seats."\*

(11) Revival in South Carolina, 1832: "An invitation was given to mourners, if any such, to come forward. Many came forward and seemed to be deeply affected." †

(12) Lilesville, N.C., August 13, 1832: "At sundry times during the meeting, when invitations were given, hundreds came forward and presented themselves before the throne of grace, asking mercy of God, and requesting the prayers of God's people. On the Sabbath, when it was known that the mourners could not come forward for the crowd, they were requested to kneel down in their places, as many as desired to be prayed for, when I have no doubt more than five hundred fell on their knees, and many of them remained there until late in the night; and the preachers and Christians spent nearly the whole night in conversing with, and praying for them." \*\*

(13) Champlain, N.Y., Sept. 10, 1832: "At the close of the first day's exercises, those un<sup>\*</sup>cel<sup>\*</sup>nted sinners who desired the prayers of God's people, were requested to rise. Eight or ten only arose . . . On the Sabbath the house of God was more than crowded. . . About 100 took the inquirers' seats." §§

\* Chr. Ind., vol. 5, p. 310.

† Chr. Ind., vol. 7<sup>8</sup>, p. 46. (June 29, 1832.)

\*\* Chr. Ind., vol. 7<sup>8</sup>, p. 136.

§§ Chr. Ind., vol. 7<sup>8</sup>, p. 218.

(14) Revival Meetings 1832: "After preaching, inquirers were invited to come forward and take their seats, upon which a large company solemnly arose and deliberately advanced forward with bowed heads and weeping eyes and presented themselves before the Lord." "This was followed by an invitation to all the unrenewed so disposed, to take the inquirers' seats. Many from various parts of the extensive crowd eagerly pressed forward. It was a time of mourning and joy. The youth and the gray-headed sire alike, humbly solicited the prayers of the redeemed." \*

(15) Presbyterian <sup>Fields of</sup> Camp-Meeting, Brandywine, Del., <sup>1831</sup> 1832: "All who were, indeed, anxiously concerned for the salvation of their souls, were invited to seats in the aisle. The opportunity was no sooner given, than a crowd pressed out to the anxious seats and many of them in such agony of soul as I had never before witnessed. The number was so great, that it was found impossible to converse with every individual, and an address was made to them collectively." "They were invited once more to separate seats; but the number was so great, that all could not be accommodated. Conversation, however, was had with more than three hundred individuals." ‡

(16) Philadelphia, 1832: "Those penitent sinners who desired the prayers of God's people and deliberately resolved to give themselves away to the Savior, were invited to come and take the seats immediately in front of the pulpit. At first none came. . . . At length one young man came forward. Others succeeded--the numbers increased till I was

\* Chr. Ind., vol. 78, p. 254.

‡ Chr. Ind., vol. 67, p. 62.



constrained to ask within myself, 'Who are these?' etc". \*

From the above abundant, original statements, the reader can easily see for himself that great and extensive use was made of the Mourner's Bench in 1831-2. From one to many hundreds presented themselves at a time, for an interest in the prayers of God's people. Many opportunities for expression were given by the ministry, and the unconverted were encouraged to consider them, and avail themselves of them. The religious atmosphere of many of the above statements cannot fail to appear to the sympathizing and candid reader. The occasions to which they refer, were very serious ones with a great many people. One in reading some of the above statements can hardly prevent the thought that we are surely now dealing with the golden age of our revivalistic devices. Especially so, if he will bear in mind the fact that innumerable occasions of their use all around and in every direction failed ever to find any mention whatever in any kind of print. The history of the Mourner's Bench is largely an unwritten history.

13. The Mourner's Bench in 1838--1844.--As employed by Emerson Andrews, Baptist Revivalist.

(1) "Some eighty anxious sinners came forward for prayers at once and sometimes eight or ten would go away rejoicing with new hopes."  
--1838. §

(2) "An infidel . . . was struck under conviction . . . He came forward, prayer was offered, and he soon yielded and believed, giving

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\* Chr. Ind., vol. 6<sup>7</sup>, p. 89.

§ Life of Em. Andrews, p. 120.

... maintained to see within myself, the one I have stated. \*  
 From the above abundant, original statements, the reader can see  
 clearly that the great and extensive use was made of the Houn-  
 der's Bench in 1831-2. From one to many hundreds presented themselves  
 at a time, for an interest in the progress of God's people. Many oppor-  
 tunities for expression were given by the ministry, and the answers  
 are very numerous to consider them, and still themselves of them.  
 The religious atmosphere of many of the above statements cannot fail  
 to appear to the sympathetic and candid reader. The occasion in  
 which they refer, were very serious ones with a great many people.  
 One in reading some of the above statements can hardly prevent the  
 thought that we are surely now dealing with the golden age of our re-  
 vivalistic devices. Especially so; if he will bear in mind the fact  
 that innumerable occasions of their use all around and in every direc-  
 tion failed ever to find any mention whatever in any kind of print.  
 The history of the Hounder's Bench is largely an unwritten history.

*are seen*

18. The Hounder's Bench in 1833-1844.--As compiled by Emerson

Andrew, Baptist Revivalist.

(1) From eighty anxious sinners came forward for prayers at  
 once and sometimes eight or ten would go away rejoicing with new hopes.

1835-1836

(2) "An infidel . . . was struck under conviction . . . He came  
 forward, prayer was offered, and he soon yielded and believed, giving

\* Chr. Int., vol. 6, p. 59.  
 Life of Dr. Andrew, p. 120.

glory to God."--Palmer, N.Y., 1839. \*

(3) "Numbers came forward every evening to be prayed for."--  
Washington, D.C. November, 1839. §

(4) "Sixty anxious souls for the first time would come forward  
for prayers, and some dozen obtained peace the same night."--Wilmington,  
Del., 1842.\*\*§

(5) "I once called out a couple of seats full of 'anxious persons',  
before many of the brethren had got ready to pray for . . . them."  
--Woodstown, N.J., 1842. §§

(6) Says Mr. Andrews, "At our public prayer-meetings, and more  
retired meetings of the anxious--(we have) frequently forty, sometimes  
fifty or sixty, bowing together in the anxious seat, asking the prayers  
of God's people."--Wilmington, Del., June 20, 1842. \*\*\*

(7) We have in the same writer, "The common routine of a pro-  
tracted meeting, and seventy or eighty anxious inquirers at a time."  
--Jan., 1843.

(8) Also, "About sixty persons have been forward for prayer, and  
about thirty of them have been converted."--Russellville, Pa., 1843. §§§

(9) "Fifty-three have presented themselves as objects of special  
prayer, among whom are some of the most worthy and intelligent citizens  
of our town, many of whom have been hopefully converted to God."  
--Pennsylvania, March, 1844. \*\*\*\*

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\* Life of Andrews, p. 122.

§ Life of Andrews, p. 190.

\*\* Life of Andrews, p. 147.

§§ Life of Andrews, p. 151.

\*\*\* Life of Andrews, p. 193.<sup>192</sup>

§§§ Andrews, Living Life,<sup>of</sup> p. 199.

\*\*\*\* Andrews, Living Life,<sup>of</sup> p. 203.

(10) "About eighty have presented themselves as objects of special prayer, most of whom are now rejoicing in the Lord."--Pennsylvania, 1844. \*

Mr. Andrews refers to and employs the "mourner's bench" as practices which are well recognized, and to be used as a matter of course, and without hesitation. He employed the "Mourner's Bench" extensively himself, as appears from his frequent mention of same in his works. In addition to the above, we have instances of Mr. Andrews use of the Mourner's Bench, Colerain, Pa., 1847; Oxford, Pa., 1847; Sing Sing, N.Y., 1855. The device was a live practice in his day.

14. The Mourner's Bench in Great Britain, April, 1844.

"I well remember the night, during the revival in Brunswick Chapel, when" Mr. Shann "came forward to the altar, with many others, to seek salvation." §

15. The Mourner's Bench in 1844, and earlier, as seen by one who opposed it.

(1) "Over a wide section of the land, we find it still holding its ground without any regard to the disgrace with which it has been overtaken in the North and East." \*\*

(2) "A large division of " (the Lutheran) "denomination has identified itself openly and zealously with the system both in doctrine

\* Andrews, Living Life,<sup>of</sup> p. 204.<sup>200</sup>

§ Caughey, Meth. in Earnest, p. 375.

\*\* Nevin, The Anx. Bench, pp. 154.

and practice. The Lutheran Observer, which has a wide circulation and great influence, has lent all its authority to recommend and support the anxious bench with its accompaniments, taking every occasion to speak in its favor and making continually the most of its results. The 'revivals' of the church latterly have been very generally carried forward with the use of new measures, as may be perceived from the reports of them published from time to time in the Observer. The great awakening of last winter, pronounced by the editor of that paper to have been probably the greatest since the days of the apostles, seems almost everywhere to have involved the free use of this method. Thus ministers and congregations have become extensively committed in its favor; so that with many the use of the Anxious Bench, and a zeal for evangelical godliness, are considered to be very much the same thing.\*\*

(3) "The system is moving forward in full strength." §

Accordingly the Mourner's Bench had a deep root in the confidence of a great many people long before 1844, and was then advancing in mighty power. Says a correspondent of the Lutheran Observer, Nov. 17, 1843, "I am . . . strongly convinced, as a pastor, that the so-called 'anxious bench' is the lever of Archimedes, which by the blessing of God can raise our German churches to that degree of respectability and prosperity in the religious world, which they ought to enjoy." \*\*

The above three extracts from the pen of Mr. Nevin give us not a little light as to the extent to which the Mourner's Bench was used in his day. As he saw it, well-nigh the whole world had gone after it.

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\* The Anxious Bench, pp. 17, 18.

§ The Anxious Bench, p. 19.

\*\* See The Anxious Bench, p. 18, note.

The Liberator's position, which has a wide circulation and great influence, has lost all its authority in respect and support the nation's peace with its arrangements, taking every occasion to speak in the favor of the slave. The Liberator's position has been very generally out-ward with the use of new resources, as may be perceived from the reports of those published from time to time in the Liberator. The great excitement of last winter, pronounced by the editor of that paper to have been probably the greatest since the days of the apostles, seems almost everywhere to have involved the free use of this method. This ministers and organizations have become extensively committed in the favor; as that with many the use of the anxious bench, and a zeal for evangelical activities, are considered to be very much the same thing.

credit (see p. 43)  
 credit  
 ^

§ 18. The system is moving forward in full strength. Accordingly the Worcester's Bench had a deep root in the continent of a cross many people long before 1844, and was then winning in a high degree. Says a correspondent of the Liberator, "I have, on 17, 1843, of an... strongly convinced, as a pastor, that the so-called 'anxious bench' is the lever of Archimedes, which by the blessing of God can raise our German churches to that degree of respectability and prosperity in the religious world, which they ought to enjoy." The above three extracts from the pen of Mr. Kavin give us not a little light as to the extent to which the Worcester's Bench was used in his day. As he says it, "well-nigh the whole world had come off its

\* The Anxious Bench, p. 17, 18.  
 † The Anxious Bench, p. 19.  
 ‡ The Anxious Bench, p. 18, note.

It was high time that some strong hand should be stretched out to stop it.

(4) Says Mr. Nevin, "Not many years since, it stood in very considerable in different parts of the Presbyterian Church, and over a large portion of New England." \*

16. Allusions to the Mourner's Bench, 1860--1870.

(1) In the revivalistic work of Rev. A.B. Earle.

(a) "From eighty to one hundred came to the front seats for special prayer."--Chester, Vt., 1867. †

(b) "More than one hundred persons . . . knelt in the aisles and around the desk to be prayed for."--1867: \*\*

Mr. Earle made frequent and great use of the Mourner's Bench in his meetings. It was a thoroughly live measure in his day.

(2) In the revivalistic work of the Southern Armies.

(a) In 1861.--"Services are held every night in the Baptist Church and the seats set apart for the anxious are frequently well-nigh filled by the soldiers, who are asking for the prayers of God's people." ††

(b) In 1862.--"There was an average of about twenty-five anxious seekers who approached when the invitation was given and knelt upon the ground near the spot occupied by the Chaplain." \*\*\*

(c) In 1863.--"At every call for the anxious, the entire altar, the

\* The Anxious Bench, p. 33.

† Bringing in Sheaves, p. 253.

\*\* Bringing in Sheaves, pp. 253f.

†† Great Rev. Southern Armies, pp. 104f. <sup>103f</sup>

\*\*\* Great Rev. Southern Armies, pp. 204f.

It was high time that some steps should be stretched out to  
 stop it.

(1) For Mr. Lewis, "for many years since, it stood in very  
 considerable in different parts of the Presbyterian Church, and over a  
 large portion of New England."

10. Allusion to the Hunter's Bench, 1860-1870.

(1) In the revivalistic work of Rev. A. B. Kettle,  
 (a) "From eighty to one hundred came to the front seats for special  
 prayer."--Gleaner, VI., 1867. †

(b) "More than one hundred persons... knelt in the aisle and around  
 the feet to be prayed for."--1867. \*\*

Mr. Lewis made frequent and great use of the Hunter's Bench in  
 his country. It was a thoroughly live measure in his day.

(2) In the revivalistic work of the Southern States,  
 (a) In 1861--"Services are held every night in the Baptist Church  
 and the seats set apart for the anxious are frequently well-nigh filled  
 by the soldiers, who are coming for the purpose of God's people." ††

(b) In 1862--"There was an average of about twenty-five anxious seek-  
 ers who approached when the invitation was given and knelt upon the  
 ground near the spot occupied by the Captain." \*\*\*

(c) In 1863--"At every call for the anxious, the entire choir, the

*Corley*

\* The Anxious Bench, p. 22.  
 † Preaching in America, p. 223.  
 \*\* Preaching in America, pp. 1867.  
 †† Great Rev. Southern States, pp. 1862.  
 \*\*\* Great Rev. Southern States, p. 1863.



front six seats of the five blocks of pews surrounding the pulpit, and all the squares thereabout ever so closely packed, could scarcely accommodate the supplicants."\*

(d) In 1863.--"There are generally from thirty to fifty penitents at the altar each night." §

(e) In 1863.--"From sixty to seventy-five penitents at the altar each night." \*\*

(f) In 1864-65.--"Some fifteen or twenty penitents presented themselves for prayer." §§

Many other instances of the use of the Mourner's Bench in the Army might be given but the above are sufficient to show that its use was extensive and very eagerly and cordially accepted by the soldiers.

#### 17. The Mourner's Bench as seen by the Writer.

(1) As employed by Rev. Thomas Muse, in Georgia, for more than a half century, beginning about 1845. This good brother was quite a revivalistic pastor. He baptized over four thousand converts during his ministry. He usually invited sinners forward for prayer, at the close of the sermon, in revival meetings. They usually returned to their places in the congregation after coming forward and giving the preacher the hand. Mr. Muse had great faith in these prayer exercises in his meetings. He was evidently a success in his work as pastor of churches.

(2) As employed by Rev. J. H. Conley, in Georgia, from about

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\* Great Rev. in South. Armies, p. 252.  
 § Great Rev. in South. Arm., p. 313.  
 \*\* Great Rev. in South. Arm., p. 315.  
 §§ " " " " " " p. 402.

Corley

front six seats of the five rows of seats surrounding the pulpit, and all the other seats should be equally packed, could scarcely accommodate the congregation.

(A) In 1808, there were generally from thirty to fifty patients at the altar each night.  
(C) In 1809, there were generally from twenty-five patients at the altar each night.

(Y) In 1854-55, twenty patients presented themselves for prayer.

Many other instances of the use of the Hymn's Band in the Assembly might be given but the above are sufficient to show that its use was extensive and very early and ordinarily adopted by the soldiers.

### 17. The Hymn's Band as seen by the Writer.

(1) As employed by Rev. Thomas Mass, in Georgia, for more than a half century, beginning about 1815. This good brother was quite a revivalistic pastor. He baptized over four thousand converts during his ministry. He usually invited converts forward for prayer, at the close of the sermon, in revival meetings. They usually returned to their places in the congregation after coming forward and giving the prayer exercise. Mr. Mass had great faith in these prayer exercises in the meetings. He was evidently a success in his work as pastor of churches.

(2) As employed by Rev. J. N. Corley, in Georgia, from about  
Grant Rev. in South Carolina, p. 282.  
Grant Rev. in South Carolina, p. 282.  
Grant Rev. in South Carolina, p. 282.  
Grant Rev. in South Carolina, p. 282.

1848.

Mr. Conley was one of the best of preachers, and was also very revivalistic. He usually conducted his meetings himself. His reliance on God was very great. He usually requested the interested ones to come forward and occupy front seats during prayer. His appeals were very strong. The whole service, including the invitation and exercises at the Mourner's Bench, was very solemn and impressive. Brother Conley was one of the most successful pastors in Georgia.

The ministry of Brethren Muse and Conley practically closed about the middle of the last decade of last century,--1895. Their use of the Mourner's Bench was practically that of their brethren in other localities.

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In some form the Mourner's Bench is employed by Baptist ministers almost everywhere. In some form it may be considered a common practice throughout this great land.

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\* See above, Chap. III., end.

## CHAPTER VII.

## DECLINE.

We may say, here, at the outset, that there has been no general decline. There has been, however, some variation, at different times, and in different places, as to the particular device used. Sometimes, too, even a denomination has changed its attitude towards the matter. The following references will aid the reader in coming to a proper view of the situation.

## 1. The Presbyterians and the Mourner's Bench.

(1) In the early part of last century, even as early as 1800, the Presbyterians, or many of them, were friends of this device. They were favorable to Camp-meetings, and took part in them. In so doing they used and endorsed the Mourner's Bench.

(a) "Last year, 1799, was distinguished for the commencement of those great revivals of religion in the western country, which introduced the practice of holding 'Camp meetings'. . . This work commenced under the united labors of two brothers by the name of M'Gee, one a Presbyterian and the other a Methodist preacher. . . Though belonging to different denominations, those doctrines and usages by which each was distinguished from the other by no means interrupted the harmony of brotherly love. Hence they cordially united in their meetings and strengthened each other's hands in the work of the Lord." \*

(b) "As the Methodists and Presbyterians were generally invited to-

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\* Bang, Hist. Meth. Ep. Ch., vol. 2, pp.101f.

gether in these meetings, they took the name of 'General Camp Meetings.'"

(c) "Not many years since, it" (the Mourner's Bench) "stood in very considerable credit in different parts of the Presbyterian Church." §

(d) "All who were, indeed, anxiously concerned for the salvation of their souls, were invited to seats in the aisle. The opportunity was no sooner given than a crowd pressed to the anxious seats."--Presbyterian Camp-meetings, <sup>Towns of</sup> Brandywine, Del., <sup>1831</sup> 1832. \*\*

(2) By degrees the Presbyterians became unfavorable to and gave up Camp-meetings and the Mourner's Bench.

(a) "The Presbyterians ceased to take interest in the meetings because of the excitement which attended them. It was not in harmony with the genius of that body." §§

(b) "Presbyterians who had favored these revivals . . . separated themselves from both the old Presbyterians, who were supposed to be defective in experimental religion, and too tenacious of the peculiarities of Calvinism, and from those wild fanatics we have already described, and established a community of their own under the jurisdiction of what has been called 'The Cumberland Presbytery'."--1804. \*\*\*

(c) "Not many years since, it stood in very considerable credit in different parts of the Presbyterian Church, and over a large portion of New England. But on this ground the thing has fairly exploded.

\* Bang, Hist. Meth. Ep. Ch., vol. 2, p. 111. <sup>110</sup>

§ Nevin, The Anxious Bench, p. 33.

\*\* Chr. Ind., vol. <sup>67</sup>, p. 40. <sup>62</sup>

§§ Buckley, Hist. Meth., vol. 1, p. 360f.

\*\*\* Bang, Hist. Meth. Ep. Ch., vol. 2, p. 162.

It has been tried and found wanting." \*

(d) To the same effect are the letters of a number of leading Presbyterian divines published in Sprague's Lectures on Revivals, N.Y. 1833.

## 2. The Baptists and the Mourner's Bench.

(1) Some of the Baptists, as was true of the Presbyterians, joined actively in the services of the Camp-meetings, as early as 1800. They therefore cooperated with the Presbyterians and Methodists in the use of the Mourner's Bench. The number was limited, however.

(a) "This was the beginning "(1799, 1800) "of that great revival of religion in the western country which introduced 'Camp meetings'. The people came with horses and wagons, bringing provisions and bedding, and others built temporary huts or tents, while all, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists, united together in prayer, exhortation, and preaching, exerting all their energies to forward this great work." §

(b) "The next Camp meeting was on the Ridge, where there was an increase of people, and carriages of different descriptions, and a great many preachers of the Presbyterian and Methodist orders, and some of the Baptists; but the latter were generally opposed to the work."\*\*

(c) "Camp meetings . . . for many years . . . were popular among the Baptists of Alabama. Some years prior to the Civil War they were gradually abandoned." §§

\* Nevin, The Anxious Bench, pp. 33f.

§ Bang, Hist. Meth. Ep. Ch., vol. 2, p. 103.

\*\* Redford, Meth. in Ky., vol. 1/2, p. 270.

§§ Riley: Hist. Bapt. Ala., p. 78.

(2) The Baptists have generally abandoned Camp-meetings; but they have not abandoned the Mourner's Bench; that is, they have not generally abandoned it and its equivalents, or related devices. Some, instead of using the simple Mourner's Bench, employ the raising of hands; rising up in the congregation; kneeling at seats; coming forward and giving the hand to the minister, and returning to place in the congregation, etc. Some prefer the "Inquiry Room", where they have the exercises of prayer, and the like. \*

### 3. Some revivalists and the Mourner's Bench.

Some use the simple mourner's bench; some do not. Some have used it and abandoned it, one from one consideration; another from another. "The reasons for the gradual disuse of the 'anxious seat' or 'penitents' ' bench by some revivalists are frankly and fairly stated by the Rev. Orson Parker: 'For about fifteen years I made use of the 'anxious seat', till I saw that the people began to trust in it; and that, although they would go to the 'anxious seat', they would not go to Christ. It had been injudiciously used as the 'mourner's bench' and as the 'anxious seat', until people generally became prejudiced against it. So that few would come forward when called unless somebody went and urged them, and almost pulled them forward.'"<sup>§</sup> This same writer favors and uses "an inquiry room". Thus they all as a rule, use either the Mourner's Bench, or something in its stead.

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\* So, Mr. Moody. See The Gosp. Awak. p. 752.

§ Hervey, Man. of Rev. p. 79.

4. As a substitute for the Mourner's Bench, there is with many, as with the Presbyterians, an indorsement and use of the 'Inquiry Room'. This meets their wishes as regards the manner of quiet, order, etc. At the same time, it is employed for much the same general purpose as the Mourner's Bench. Thus it remains a fact, that the Mourner's Bench, in some form, is today employed far and near. It has not passed away. It is not going to pass away.

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\* Compare Sprague, Lect. on Rev., App., pp. 331f.



As a substitute for the Journal's Bench, there is with you,  
 as with the Presbyterian, an indorsement and use of the 'Inquiry Book'.  
 This book is their witness as regards the manner of dissent, order, etc.  
 At the same time, it is employed for much the same general purposes as  
 the Journal's Bench. This is a fact, that the Journal's Bench  
 in some form, is today employed far and near. It has not passed a  
 way. It is not going to pass away.

\* Complete Speeches, Part on Rev. Mr. ... still.

*conversation*

*Baptist*

CHAPTER VIII.  
HELPS TO THE CAUSE.

As in other matters, so here, people stand divided in their sentiments. The writer is glad to be able to record here, however, the opinions and convictions of men who were friends of these measures, and who made use of them in their work. Let us note the following.

1. Encouragement to the workers. "In the evening the day began to dawn; after sermon an invitation was given for mourners to come forward for prayer, 5 or 6 presented themselves; after prayer one more came, and one the least expected; this gave us fresh courage."--In-lays Town, N.J., Jul. 6, 1831. \*

2. Opportunity for Conversation <sup>at</sup> with the Interested.

(a) "Particular seats were assigned for the anxious and inquiring, and these were usually well filled. The ministers in attendance has thus frequent opportunities for conversation with those who were disposed to ask the way to Zion. Thus that dreaded instrument of front seats, special praying, and personal conversation, about which there is a doleful squeamishness even among some who affect to be in favor of protracted meetings, was wielded to good effect."--Presbyterian Camp-meeting, 1832. †

(b) "Among the means which God has signally blessed in carrying forward revivals of religion, meetings for personal conversation with the awakened are found to hold an important place. These meetings are

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\* Chr. Index, vol. 5, p. 51.

† Chr. Index, vol. 7<sup>e</sup>, p. 273.

by common consent called Inquiry Meetings, in distinction from all others." \* *overseign agents, he can and does work them and there is plenty*

(c) "I established inquiry . . . meetings soon after I came here, and have continued them without interruption. . . . unto the present time. --We . . . have found them exceedingly useful."--May 29, 1821. §

(d) "Where the Lord has poured out his Spirit, good ministers have always encouraged inquirers to come to them for personal conversation and advice, either singly or several together; but where a great many awakened sinners have needed their attention at the same time, they have found it impossible to meet them all, and say even a few words to them at the critical stages of their need of instruction--perhaps the turning point of their immortal destiny. The question was, Can any thing be done to bring all the inquirers within our reach, so that in a single hour we may learn the state of fifty or a hundred anxious souls, that demand our immediate attention? At this critical point, God put it into the heart of somebody, no matter who or where, to invite all who were anxious to meet their pastor at a given time and place. It was found that in this way the desired object might be accomplished without taking time which could not be spared from other duties that always press hard during a revival. . . . When Mr. Nettleton was in the midst of his remarkable career, . . . he held inquiry meetings. . . . and felt that in the midst of a large revival he could not do without them." \*\*

(e) "Thus the work began and increased; and the Lord magnifies

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\* Humphrey, Rev. Sketch., 343.

§ Sprague, Lect. on Rev. App., p. 298.

\*\* Humphrey, Rev. Sketch., pp. 343f.

the riches of his free grace in carrying on his work by simple means. He is a sovereign agent; he can and does work when and where he pleases; and by strong means, weak means or no means." \*

(f) "God may design such indication" (as is made by rising, or coming to the Mourner's Bench for prayer) "as means to an end to strengthen faith and effort in his people, and aid sinners upward to the cross of Christ. That this is the case, seems evident from the new life and interest to be seen in even the most consecrated Christians, as they see and hear men say: 'I want you to pray for me'. Also from the increased earnestness in the struggling sinner. These expressions aid Christians into deeper sympathy with the interested, and encourage the interested to commit themselves fully to the exercise of faith." ‡

### 3. Decision and Commitment.

(a) Mr. Moody was asked, "Is it best to put a test question in a Church, asking those that are anxious for their souls to rise, or rather to go to another room?" Mr. Moody--" I think so. . . . What you want is to get them to do something they don't want to do, and it is a great cross for people generally to rise for prayer; but in the very act of doing it, they are very often blessed. It is letting their friends know that they are interested, and are on the Lord's side. I have found, in the last three years, that it has been a great help to us." \*\*

(b) "For a long time I called upon the convicted to rise up for prayers. There is something gained by this, but not as much as is

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\* Burkitt & Reed, Ch. Hist., p. 209.

‡ Chr. Ind., Oct. 19, 1899, art. "Mourner's Bench".

\*\* Moody, The Gosp. Awakening, p. 751.

supposed. It brings a man one step forward as an inquirer, and may deepen his conviction, but he often trusts in the prayers of Christians, and hangs upon them until he is shaken off and made to feel that Christians cannot save him." \*

(c) "This meeting has . . . convinced us more than we were before, of the propriety and utility of pressing sinners to an immediate decision by leading them to act."--Revival Meeting, Champlain, N.Y., Sept. 10, 1832. §

(d) "The 'anxious seat', the rising for prayers, and the attendance at inquiry meetings were simply devices to make one whose conscience was roused and who felt a desire for salvation commit himself by taking some public stand. He (Mr. Finney) rightly judged that this was more than half the battle, and that when people were induced to take this step, if they were really sincere, they were not far from the Kingdom of God". \*\*

(e) "One thing that made our one o'clock meeting so interesting today was, a young man got up and said: 'My sister and my mother are very anxious to have me become a Christian, and I myself want to.' I said: 'Thank God for that; that man has more courage. He is willing to let the world know that he wants to be on the Lord's side.' I never yet have seen a man who came out boldly in that way but that he surely turns out all right at last." §§

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\* Hervey, Man. of Revivals, pp. 79f.

§ Chr. Index, vol. 78, p. 219.

\*\* Vedder, Hist. Bapt. Middle States, p. 153.

§§ Moody, The Gosp. Awakening, p. 227.

(f) "When I stopped speaking, two men and their wives rose up . . . and, with trembling, came forward, and asked me to pray for them, they being perfect strangers to me. . . . They all soon afterward obtained hope in the Lord and were baptized." \*

(g) "Those who are, for these or like reasons, opposed to the 'anxious seat', do not deny that it is important to call sinners to an immediate decision, and also to an immediate manifestation of that decision." †

#### 4. An Awakening of Interest in the People.

"Mrs. Gillam came forward and knelt down at the table, with one or two more. The people had never seen an instance of the like before, and beholding their great desire for the salvation of their souls so earnestly expressed, it had a very great effect on the people; and Brother Moses Gillam, the husband of Mrs. Gillam, seemed greatly affected. So that we had a happy meeting at last." \*\*

#### 5. A Means of Conviction.

(a) "Shaking hands while singing, was a means . . . to further the work. The ministers used frequently, at the close of worship, to sing a spiritual song suited to the occasion, and go through the congregation, and shake hands with the people; and several, when relating their experience, . . . declared that this was the first means of their conviction. . . . Giving the people an invitation to come up to be prayed for, was also blessed. . . . It had a powerful effect on the spectators to see

\* Taylor, Hist. Ten Churches, 2nd ed., p. 47f.

† Harvey, Man of Rev. p. 85.

\*\* Burkitt & Reed, Ch. Hist., pp. 208f.

their wives, their husbands, children, neighbors, etc., so solicitous for the salvation of their souls; and was sometimes a means of their conviction." \*

(b) "Some of the candidates mentioned their first convictions as being occasioned by witnessing the scene of penitent sinners going up publicly to receive an interest in the prayers of the church."--Salem, N.J., Aug. 10, 1831. §

#### 6. A Means of Conviction and Conversion.

(a) "I also spoke at night at the Camp, and then called up the mourners to be prayed for. Several found peace, backsliders were reclaimed and Christians quickened and comforted."--Long Island, May 18, 1805. \*\*

(b) "At the close of the meeting, he . . . told them, 'that if there was any person in the congregation who desired to go to heaven or be converted, if he would come up to the pulpit, he would pray to the Lord for him.' . . . At length a young man came, with tears in his eyes and requested his prayers. Some months after this young man was converted and related his experience at a Union Meeting, . . . and declared this was a mean in the hand of the Lord for his conviction and conversion; and said he was a thousand times obliged to the man for praying for him; and ten thousand to the Lord for putting it in the mind of his minister to do so." §§

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\* Burkitt & Reed, Ch. Hist., pp. 149, 150.

§ Chr. Index, vol. 5, p. 140.

\*\* Writings of Lorenzo Dow, p. 234.

§§ Burkitt & Reed, Ch. Hist., pp. 242f.

(c) "While listening to the relation of experiences, I have often wished that some of our good brethren who are opposed to 'anxious seats, front benches,' etc., could be present to hear the simple narrative of these newborn souls, and learn from them their feelings and views, when they have taken the seats designated for mourners; or when their companions in sin have left them, and stepped forward to manifest their desire for an interest in the prayers of God's people. If under such circumstances their hearts did not melt and their prejudices evaporate, I should conclude that they were harder than the nether millstone, and colder than 'Greenland's icy mountains.'"--Great Valley Church, Pa., Nov. 28, 1831. \*

#### 7. An Obstacle, or an Occasion of Blessing.

(a) "In the case of the anxious sinner, this act of surrender is at once followed by a change; it is the first step in the way of salvation. The rebellion in his heart is gone. . . He perhaps had said, 'No one shall know my feelings until I am sure I am a Christian'; yet now he is heard in the crowded assembly asking for prayer. Or, perhaps, he is the first to accept the invitation to go forward with those who are anxious, although he had asserted that he never would take such a step." §

(b) Mr. Moody was asked, "What would you say to a person who replies, 'I can be a Christian without rising for prayer'?" Mr. Moody--"I should say most certainly he could; but as a general thing he won't." \*\*

\* Chr. Index, vol. 5, p. 378.

§ Earle, Bringing in Sheaves, pp. 212f.

\*\* Moody, Gospel Awakening, p. 752.



(c) "Dr. Skinner made a solemn exhortation to the impenitent-- meeting the objection 'it is not necessary for me to come out', by showing them that it threw their minds into such a state that they must act, and that under the circumstances it might be necessary to their salvation, to take a stand for Jesus Christ as open and public as their stand against him had been." --Philadelphia, 1832. \*

(d) "Some years ago, while engaged in a meeting in Massachusetts, I met with a lady who had been an earnest and sincere seeker after Christ for five years. She had been greatly prejudiced against what she called an 'anxious seat'; and had been taught that God's pardoning love could be found in one place as well as another, and, consequently, the particular seat in a meeting house could make no difference. . . 'If this is so,' said she, 'Why ask me to take an anxious seat?' The matter seemed so clear to her own mind, that she deliberately said, 'I will never go to an anxious seat to be converted.'"--But she was never converted till she became willing to go to the 'anxious seat'. §

#### 8. Influence on the Churches, etc.

"The influence of this period of revivalism" (the times of Finney, 1825, and on, when the Mourner's Bench and related devices were most freely used) "on the life and growth of the churches was profound, and manifested itself in many ways. . . The vital piety of the Churches was confessedly greater. Religion became a more real thing to men, a thing affecting their everyday life. . . It had a great effect on the

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\* Chr. Index, vol. <sup>67</sup>, p. 39.

§ Earle, *Bringing in Sheaves*, pp. 118-120.

preaching. To a large extent it banished the written sermon from the pulpit, and made the preaching of all--even of those who continued to read their sermons--more personal and pungent. A certain type of doctrinal sermon disappeared by degrees. The influence of evangelism during this period was also to simplify pulpit style. Preachers no longer indulged in florid rhetoric and stilted language but talked to men in the language of ordinary life." \*

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\* Vedder, Hist. Baptists in Middle States, pp. 155ff.

our duty must be exercised to see that it helps people towards Christ."

4. "No appeal should ever be made to the conviction of the nation to rise, to lift up their hands, or to move forward, unless the leader of the meeting is assured beforehand that there are some who are willing to do so. Urgent and repeated exhortations, to which there is no response have a very unhappy effect." 11

5. "As in every other part of God's service, so here all things should be done decently and in order. . . . I Cor. 14:40."

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\* Harvey, Man. of Rev., p. 21.

1. Harvey, Man. of Rev., p. 21.

2. Harvey, Man. of Rev., pp. 121, 20.

3. Harvey, Man. of Rev., p. 22.

4. The Bible, Oct. 12, 1839, vol. "Moses's March."

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 in the language of ordinary life.

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\* Voth, Hist. Baptists in Middle States, pp. 182-183.

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## CHAPTER IX.

## HOW, WHEN AND WHAT?

1. "Many and various are the delusions of the anxious. These should be found out and removed." \*
2. "Awakened sinners . . . should be taught that Jesus is their first and only refuge, and therefore they are to renounce all ideas of preparation, self-dependence, and even of self-complacency," etc. §
3. In the Inquiry Room, "as in the case of the 'anxious seat', care must be exercised to see that it helps people towards Christ." \*\*
4. "No appeal should ever be made to the convicted or the anxious to rise, to lift up their hands, or to come forward, unless the leader of the meeting is assured beforehand that there are some who are willing to do so. Uregent and repeated exhortations, to which there is no response have a very unhappy effect." §§
5. "As in every other part of God's service, so here all things should 'be done decently and in order.'--I Cor. 14:40." \*\*\*

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\* Hervey, Man. of Rev., p. 81.

§ Hervey, Man. of Rev., p. 84.

\*\* Hervey, Man. of Rev., pp. 79 & 80

§§ Hervey, Man. of Rev., p. 83.

\*\*\* Chr. Index, Oct. 19, 1899, art. 'Mourner's Bench'.

## CHAPTER X.

## INCIDENTS.

## 1. Miscellaneous.

(a) "Four praying wives" were "sitting by the side of their unconverted husbands. . . . Before long those wives rose and requested prayer for their husbands." \*

(b) "Isaac C. Douglass. . . died Jan. 18, 1851. He was a member of the Methodist Church for something like fifteen years as a mourner. A little over a year before he died he found the pearl of great price." §

(c) "Colo Jones . . . tried to rise for prayers in the meeting but 'was hindered' as if he were tied down." \*\*

(d) "Not less than three hundred anxious souls requested us to pray for them, many of them rising for prayers in their carriages and on the ground outside of the meeting-house, as not more than half of the congregation, it was believed, were able to get inside."--New Brunswick, 1858. §§

(e) "We believe one thousand people were exposed to the rain without any shelter; and some crying, some convulsed to the ground, some begging the ministers to pray for them; and they composedly stood and received the falling shower without ever being dispersed."--Aug., 1803. \*\*\*

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\* Earle, Bringing in Sheaves, p. 296.

§ McFerran, Meth. in Tenn., p. 52.

\*\* Andrews, Pearls of Worlds, pp. 172f.

§§ Earle, Bringing in Sheaves, p. 58.

\*\*\* Burkitt & Reed, Ch. Hist., p. 157.

(f) "While I was preaching, a convicted man cried out aloud for mercy. I stopped, went down to his pew, talked and prayed with him; and in a moment he rejoiced, believing."--Oxford, Pa., 1847. \*

(g) "A little girl of ten years was converted, and asked her mother if she prayed; and in reply was asked to pray. . . The daughter, on the next evening, brought her mother to church and to the 'anxious seat', and soon we heard her rejoicing."--Kensington, Pa., 1841. §

(h) "Father Angus was ninety-three years old, came out for prayers, was soundly converted, and was soon baptized."--Sing Sing, N.Y., 1855. \*\*

(i) "I have held prayer-meetings in my own regiment until ten o'clock many a night, and, after closing, the brethren would all retire to the woods, frequently accompanied by half a dozen mourners, and there, with no other covering save the open canopy of heaven, pour out their souls in humble supplication at a throne of grace, often remaining until after midnight."-----, 1863. §§

(j) "The mayor, the sheriff, several physicians, lawyers, and business men, came forward, at one time, under deep conviction, and knelt with the anxious." \*\*\*

(k) "I said, 'Mr. Olin, if you will come to the front seat we will pray for you now'. The second or third evening after this, Mr.

\* Life of Andrews, p. 161.

§ Life of Andrews, pp. 145f.

\*\* Life of Andrews, p. 170.

§§ Great Rev. in Southern Arm., pp. 254f.

\*\*\* Earle, Bringing in Sheaves, p. 314.

Olin rose in our meeting, and urged us to pray for him. I asked him if he would come forward and let us pray with him; he said, 'Yes, anywhere, if God will only have mercy on so great a sinner'." \*

(l) A young lady slights, and becomes doomed.--1838. §

(m) An old man becomes convicted, and is saved.--Floyd, N.Y., 1838. \*\*

(n) "A deeply convicted young lady concluded to stay away from the 'anxious seat' and give up seeking religion", etc. --Washington, D.C., 1839. §§--She did this at her own great cost. It is always a dangerous thing to draw back from an effort to seek and serve the Lord.

## 2. Special Classes and Special Cases.

(a) Derision, etc.,--How Brought to a Close.

(1) "A pair of twin brothers agreed, and came forward to the 'front seats', to make derision, but became powerfully convicted there in the very act, cried aloud for mercy, fell to the floor in great agony, 'wallowing, foaming', and groaning."--1838. \*\*\*

(2) "On Saturday night the work broke out. Two rings were formed for the mourners when the power of the Most High was displayed in a most signal manner. The combined forces raised in opposition to the work became alarmed. Some ran up and sprang into the rings, throwing away their flasks of whiskey, fell upon their knees, and earnestly prayed for mercy. Others, equally alarmed, threw away their bottles and ran into

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\* Bringing in Sheaves, pp. 85f.

§ Life of Andrews, p. 121.

\*\* Life of Andrews, p. 122.

§§ Life of Andrews, p. 130.

\*\*\* Life of Andrews, p. 121.

the woods, where their shrieks and cries were heard in various directions."--near Cynthiana, 1818. \*

(3) "A leader among pleasure seekers: This man, for some reason, rose in the meeting and asked prayers for four persons, purely in desision. He sat down; but the sport was gone; deep conviction of sin seized him; and now, in honest agony of soul, he cried for mercy for himself." §

(b) Granada and others.

(1) "It seems that about the year 1790, it was announced that a stranger 'the wild man', would preach at Acuff's Chapel on a certain day. The day arrived, and with it a vast concourse of people were assembled, anxiously awaiting the appearance of the 'wild man'. At length Mr. Granada came, and after spending a little time in the grove near by, came forth shouting and praising God. The effect was wonderful on the congregation. He told the people that he had been driving the devil before him for three hundred miles, he (the devil) closely contesting every inch, till in the grove, just up there (pointing with his finger to the hill whence he came) 'I obtained a complete victory over his infernal majesty. He is now routed in complete disorder, and I, thank God, have the field without a rival!' Then announcing his text, he proceeded to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ." \*\*

(2) "An infidel . . . was struck under conviction . . . He came forward, prayer was offered and he soon yielded and believed, giving glory to God."--Palmer, N.Y. 1839. §§

\* Redford, Meth. in Ky., vol. 2, pp. 313f.

§ Earle, Bringing in Sheaves, p. 309.

\*\* McFerran, Meth, in Tenn., p. 105f. §§ Life of Andrews, p. 122.



(3) "A man who was here last night said to a friend, 'I am coming to-morrow into the inquiry room'. He fell dead twenty minutes before three o'clock this afternoon." \*

(c) Children Asking Prayer.

(1) A "little boy . . . came to me, with tears on his face, and asked me to pray that Jesus would forgive and save him." §

(2) "Coming in one morning, with tears on her face, she said, 'Mr. Earle, I came up here to give my heart to Jesus. I feel that I am a great sinner. Will you pray for me?' I replied, 'I will pray for you, Ella, and I can pray in faith if you see that you are a sinner; for Jesus died for sinners.'"--Ella Gilkey.--1860-61. \*\*

(3) "As Brother Earle closed his labors with us (at Saxton River, Vermont). . . an interesting company of little girls were gathered in the vestibule, weeping, and desiring to speak with him. When asked by him what they desired, with sobbing and tears they said, 'We are all sinners, and want you to pray for us'. He knelt in their midst, and in simple faith commended them to God." §§

(d) Dr. Yerkes. This man "was so convicted that he sat up in his office sleepless for three nights, till, coming forward for prayers one morning he felt the burden roll--a happy change--before he reached the front seat, and then testified aloud for Jesus."--Phoenixville,

Pa., <sup>1840</sup> 1849. \*\*\*

\* Moody, The Gospel Awakening, p. 122.

§ Earle, Bringing in Sheaves, p. 297.

\*\* Earle, Bringing in Sheaves, pp. 112. 113.

§§ Bringing in Sheaves, p. 264.

\*\*\* Life of Andrews, p. 143.

## CHAPTER XI.

## MATTERS UNCLASSIFIED.

(a) "There seemed to be great fear of personal addresses, and of any 'innovations or extras'."--About 1830. \*

(b) "He (Mr. Patterson) excused himself for not rising for prayers when the general invitation was given, but said 'he felt his need!'" §

(c) "As usual, the hymn was started, 'Come humble sinner'."-----  
1844. \*\*

(d) "Whitfield and Edwards needed no new measures to make themselves felt." §§

(e) "Men may be savingly benefitted by the instrumentality of means which all would unite in condemning." \*\*\*

(f) "It is unsafe to argue from the present effect of any new system, that it is better than the old. It may accomplish more in a week, but not so much in a year. It may bring a greater number of persons into the visible kingdom of Christ, but not so many into his spiritual kingdom." --Amherst College, Mass., Apr. 10, 1832. §§§

(g) "We have always taught, that a penitent mourned or was pained on this very account, because he felt, he was not in the favor of God, but had the wrath of God abiding on him."--John Wesley. \*\*\*\*

\* Life of Andrews, p. 119.

§ Andrews, Pearls of Worlds, pp. 174 f. 175

\*\* Nevin, The Anxious Bench, p. 41.

§§ Nevin, The Anxious Bench, p. 57.

\*\*\* Sprague, Lect. on Rev., App., pp. 261f.

§§§ Sprague, Lect. on Rev., App., pp. 332f.

\*\*\*\* Lives of the Wesleys, p. 460.

(h) "I had intended to have presented very briefly some views on the measures employed for the promotion of revivals; but considering that the subject is fully and satisfactorily discussed in your work, and ably alluded to in the letters appended to it, I have on further reflection deemed it most proper to withhold them." --New York, June 10, 1833.

--T. DeWitt.\*

(i) "A preacher said to (Sam) Jones: 'At least a hundred people in the audience looked like they were anxious to seek Christ. Why don't you call them up?' 'I never kill hogs till I get the water hot.'" said he. §

#### Inquiry Meetings.

(a) "A . . . number of selected workers served in the three inquiry rooms." \*\*

(b) "So long as inquiry meetings are held in churches, there should be no difficulty in providing a sufficient superintendence and an adequate supply of assistance, both male and female, for private conversation and prayer." §§ --

(c) "I find, in <sup>the</sup> union meetings, it is best to ask" the interested "to go right into the other room, and talk to them there." \*\*\*

(d) Usually, at the close of an evening sermon, I now let all leave who wish while the people are singing and invite all to remain who will for private conversation, and so turn the whole house into

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\* Sprague, Lect. on Rev., App., p. 384.

§ Sam Jones' Sermons and Sayings, p. 108.

\*\* Moody, The Gospel Awakening, p. 33.

§§ Harvest Work of the Holy Spirit, p. 173.

\*\*\* Moody, The Gospel Awakening, p. 752.

an inquiry room. After a few evenings very few will leave, and men and women will remain to be conversed with, and many will be converted, who would never get up and leave their seats and come to what is termed the 'anxious seat'. And yet in this, as in the case of the 'anxious seat', care must be exercised to see that it helps people toward Christ. So long as that is the standard, 'anxious seats', rising for prayers, and inquiry meetings may all safely be employed. " \*

(e) "If I was preaching, and tried to rouse men to flee from the wrath to come, I would have an inquiry meeting afterward."§

(f) "Inquiry meetings have, I believe, been much perverted from their original object. The great use of an inquiry meeting is to enable the minister to commence with those whom it would be better to see more privately, but who are too numerous to allow his seeing all of them often enough at their separate houses. It should be strictly an opportunity for him to inquire of them and they of him,"etc.--Brooklyn, April 6, 1832. \*\*

#### Campbell and Campbellism.

(a) "Attention was particularly directed to the practice"(of the Mourner's Bench) "about 1827, because it was then first opposed, add that by the followers of Alexander Campbell, who opposed almost everything in religious practice that did not originate with the would-be great reformer." §§

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\* Hervey, Man. of Rev., p. 80.

§ Moody, The Gospel Awak., p. 755.

\*\* Sprague, Lect. on Rev., App., p. 312.

§§ Spencer, Hist. Ky. Bapt., vol. 1, p. 693.

(b) "All wild and fanatical sects employed it, with equal success. Campbellites, Winebrennarians, and Universalists, show the same power, when necessary, in producing revivals under this form." \*

(c) As a natural result of the influence of Campbell, about the year of our Lord 1820, "Opposition to all enterprises, having for their object the salvation of men," began to show itself. In 1816, objection to "the calling on sinners in our congregations, to repent of their sins, and believe the gospel," etc., showed itself. In 1829, and 1830, "songs of praise, prayers for divine mercy, the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost, preaching from Scripture texts, exhorting sinners to pray, and relating the dealings of God with the soul were made subjects of jeering contempt and derision." ‡

#### Miscellaneous.

(a) Finney and his Meetings. "Mr. Finney was a Presbyterian. . . Many of his meetings were held in connection with Baptist churches or in towns where these participated in the benefits of the general religious awakening." \*\*

(b) Adam Clarke and his opposition. "Saw Adam Clark; . . . his mind was made up against the Camp meetings in America as being improper. . . It seemed to me from circumstances, that he had got his mind hurt and prejudiced, through the abuse of revivals, which caused him to fix his mind on one invariable rule as a criterion for direction, viz:

\* Nevin, *The Anxious Bench*, p. 45.

‡ Spencer, *Hist. Ky. Bapt.*, pp. 607, 617f.

\*\* Vedder, *Hist. Bapt. Midd. States*, p. 153.

the old system order--for he seemed determined not to listen to any argument, which might be adduced to solve the query."--England, July, 1806. \*

(c) The Mourner Bench System. "The system in question is in its principle and soul neither Calvinism nor Lutheranism, but Wesleyan Methodism." §

(d) Measures then and now. "The measures which have been adopted, and to a great extent the results which have been witnessed, have formed a melancholy contrast to those which have characterized the revivals with which I have been conversant in former days; though it gives me pleasure to state my conviction that the extravagancies which have prevailed among us are gradually subsiding, and that our churches are generally becoming more deeply impressed with the importance of adhering to the great principles of gospel order." --Clinton, N.Y., Aug. 25, 1833. \*\*

(e) Commitment. "Much has been done of late to lead awakened sinners to commit themselves, in order to get them over that indecision and fear of man which have kept them back, and to render it impossible for them to return with consistency."--Williams College, Jan. 20, 1832. §§

(f) Singing with invitation. "To request any class of persons to retire, or to propose taking up a collection during the singing of hymns is unfriendly to good order and heartfelt and reverent worship. This is the rule; an exceptional case is that of inviting the anxious to

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\* Writings of Lorenzo Dow, pp. 273f.

§ Nevin, The Anxious Bench, p. 7.

\*\* Sprague, Lect. on Rev., App., p. 381.

§§ Sprague, Lect. on Rev., App., pp. 368f.

come forward or pass into the inquiry room while a hymn of invitation or appeal to this very class of persons is being sung." \*

(g) Mourner's Bench and Revival Prayer-meeting. "The 'anxious seat' and the revival prayer-meeting are sometimes rendered inoperative by a resort to prayer before either the Christian workers or the seekers have learned what are the things that are to be asked of the Lord." §

\* Hervey, Man. of Rev., p. 80.

§ Hervey, Man. of Rev. p. 81.

2. Mrs. Rice, with great abundance of conviction, ... requested our prayers and while prayer was thus offered up to God she obtained a happy deliverance, which she openly professed and was soon afterwards baptised. - August 1796.

3. "I spoke in the afternoon an evangelization. About three thousand rose up in covenant, number of whom came up to be prayed for, and amongst them three young women, two of whom were prayerless three days before, and came with us down of their former periods in a few days, and received the promise of God; the other was delivered shortly; and the third, who saved the Company's soul, found deliverance that night." - August 29, 1796.

4. "The invitation was given to someone, if any such, to come forward. Many came forward and seemed to be deeply affected, and one among that number obtained a happy deliverance in the act of prayer." - Revival, South

\* ... of the ... § ...

some forward or pass into the industry took with a view of invitation  
 or appeal to this very class of persons is being made. \*  
 (2) Workers' Revival and Revival Prayer-meeting. The workers  
 meet, and the revival prayer-meeting are sometimes conducted inoperative  
 by a resort to prayer before either the Christian workers or the work-  
 ers have learned what are the things that are to be asked of the Lord.

\* Harvey, Man. of Rev., p. 80.  
 † Harvey, Man. of Rev., p. 81.



## CHAPTER XII.

## PRESENT ANSWER TO PRAYER.

1. "A poor woman in despair!". . Charles Wesley "showed her the gospel plan of salvation; a plan founded in mercy and love to lost, perishing sinners. She received what he said with all imaginable eagerness. When they had continued some time together in prayer for her, she rose up a new creature, strongly and explicitly declaring her faith in the blood of Christ, and full persuasion that she was accepted in him."--England, June, 1738. \*

2. Mrs. Rice "with great appearance of contrition. . . requested our prayers and while prayer was thus offering up to God she obtained a happy deliverance, which she openly professed and was soon afterward baptized."--About 1786. †

3. "I spoke in the afternoon on sanctification. About three thousand rose up in covenant, sundry of whom came up to be prayed for, and amongst them three young women, two of whom were prayerless three days before, and came with me; one of them found pardon in a few minutes and shouted the praise of God; the other was delivered shortly; and the third, who owned the Camp-ground, found deliverance that night."--August 29, 1805. \*\*

4. "An invitation was given to mourners, if any such, to come forward. Many came forward and seemed to be deeply affected, and one among that number obtained a hope while in the act of prayer."--Revival, South

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\* Lives of the Wesleys, p. 104.

† Taylor, Hist. Ten Churches, p. 102.

\*\* Writings of Lorenzo Dow, p. 244.

Carolina, June 29, 1832. \*

5. "Several facts are on record to the effect that persons of high self-regard have found peace while on their way to the 'anxious seat'. What was required of them was submission to the will of the Lord. As soon as they surrendered pride and wilfulness, they obtained the hope of pardon." §

6. "Many happy experiences date to these particular occasions as scores of thousand of intelligent, consecrated Christians would joyfully attest." \*\*

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\* Christian Index, vol. 7<sup>6</sup>, June 29, 1832. p. 46

§ Hervey, Man. of Revivals, p. 81.

\*\* Chr. Index, Oct. 19, 1899, art. 'Mourner's Bench'.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST.

It is proper to note here,

1. Things that cannot with justice be brought as Arguments against the Mourner's Bench. This is true,

(1) Of matters coming under the head of, or growing out from, pure and simple prejudice. It applies,

(a) To "enemies of Revivals", who are "afraid of inquiry meetings, . . . anxious seats, &c.", but have come into that condition without impartial investigations of facts, and from some unworthy motive. \*

(b) To persons who have become prejudiced through the injudicious practice, or unfavorable representations, of others. †

(c) To those who are actuated by various prejudices from whatever cause. \*\*

(d) To any person or policy that would deal with the subject superficially, and "pronounce" upon "results" as "valueless and vain", "before all examination", and take it "for granted that" "this or that

"will not stand". ‡

\* Chr. Ind., vol. 67, pp. 72, 716

† See above, Ch. VIII., 7, (d); see Ch. XIII., (2), j.

\*\* See above, Ch. VIII., 6, (c).

‡§ Nevin, The Anx. Bench, pp. 47, 81.--Note penned by the writer after reading Nevin, p. 31: "Impression: Our author is prejudiced against the Anxious Bench, and is working for the preservation of the Lutheran Churches and their old, recognized forms and faith." Again, after pages 61-64: "Impression: Our author seems to be jealous of the influence of humbler men, brought to them by easier course than such as he took. He seems not to get into the real inside merit of the A.B. as affording a good opportunity of indicating real conviction and interest in the direction of accepting Christ. . . He keeps in view always the 'Catechism.'" --MSS. Notes, pp. 79, 83.---See Nevin, p. 55.

CHAPTER XIII

ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST

It is proper to note here,

- 1. Things that cannot with justice be brought as Arguments against the Honourable Bench. This is true.
- (1) Of matters coming under the head of, or growing out from, pure and simple procedure. It applies.
- (a) To "actions of Revivais", who are "stirred of inquiry writings", but have come into that condition without any partial investigations of facts, and from some unworthy motive.
- (b) To persons who have become prejudiced through the injudicious practice, or unwelcome representations, of others.
- (c) To those who are actuated by various prejudices from various which combined attended the Camp-meetings in
- (d) To any person or party that would deal with the subject un- impartially, and "pronounce" upon "results" as "vainness and vain", "de- fore all examination", and take it "for granted that" this or that

"will not stand."

\* Our lab., vol. 2, p. 117.

1 See above, Ch. VIII, (2), 1.

\*\* See above, Ch. VIII, (a).

11 Havin, The Am. Bench, pp. 47, 81. --Note passed by the writer after reading Davis, p. 51: "Impression: Our author is prejudiced against the Am. Bench, and is working for the preservation of the latter and their old, recognized forms and faith." Again, after pa- 53-64: "Impression: Our author seems to be jealous of the influence of English law, sought to take by easier course than such as he took. It seems not to get into the real inside work of the A.B., as attending a good opportunity of indicating real conviction and interest in the direction of accepting Christ. . . He keeps in view always the detection."

--See below, p. 18, 22. --See below, p. 18.

"The eyes of a man in the jaundice make yellow observations on everything; and the soul tinctured with any passion or prejudice diffuses a false color over the real appearances of things, and disguises many of the common occurrences of life. It never beholds things in a true light, nor suffers them to appear as they are." \*

(2) Of the conduct of fanatics, and of more or less ignorant men, of various intentions, who might seem to bring the measure into disgrace. Even the pulpit is not exempt from the intrusions of such persons. It is not, however, on that account, denounced by impartial and thoughtful men. Accordingly, the Mourner's Bench must be viewed through its own inherent qualities, and not through the acts of the ignorant, or the insane.

It is not to be held responsible,

(a) For the "unseemly gesticulations," of the early "Methodists" of Kentucky, and others. §

(b) For the "unsavory" influences of "Camp meetings". \*\*

(c) For "the pressure of artificial excitement" resorted to by some. §§

(d) For "the disastrous consequences of false excitement," worked up by some.\*\*\*

(e) For the confounding of "the judgment"; the "exciting appeals

\* Watts, Treatise on the Mind, ch. 3, rule 4. See same quoted more at length, McLendon, The Bible on Baptism, p. 24.

§ Bang, Hist. Meth. Ep. Ch., vol. 2, p. 162.

\*\* Bang, Hist. Meth. Ep. Ch., vol. 2, p. 163. See above, Ch. VII., (2), (a); Nevin, The Anx. Bench, p. 109.

§§ Nevin, The Anx. Bench, p. 81.

\*\*\* Nevin, The Anx. Bench, p. 24.<sup>23</sup>

. . . to the principle of fear"; the "advantage . . . taken in every way of the senses and nerves". \*

(f) For the noise and irregularities of "upstarts" and "noisy sects". §

(g) For the "success" had with it by "fanatical sects." \*\*

(h) For the charge of being "adapted to generate fanaticism". §§

(i) For possible inconsistencies in the kneeling of the two sexes together at the Mourner's Bench. \*\*\*

(j) For the fact that " it had been injudiciously used as the 'Mourners' Bench' and as the 'anxious seat', until people generally" (it is alleged) "became prejudiced against it." §§§

(k) For the charge that "it often happens that the preacher, in the warmth of his zeal, charges upon" those who refuse to come to the Mourners' Bench "the same guilt and madness and peril precisely, that lie upon the deliberate rejection of Christ himself." \*\*\*\*

(l) For the charge that "the anxious . . . are encouraged to weep aloud, cry out and wring their hands"; and the claim that "one and another are brought through; and thus new forms of disorder, shouting, clapping, etc., are brought into play." §§§§

It should be readily seen that in all these cases the irregularity,

\* Nevin, The Anxious Bench, p. 42.

§ Nevin, pp. 16f.

\*\* Nevin, p. 45.

§§ Sprague, Lect. on Rev., App., pp.265f; Nevin, p. 12.

\*\*\* Nevin, p. 104.

§§§ Harvey, Man. of Rev. p. 79.

\*\*\*\* Nevin, p. 75.

§§§§ Nevin, pp. 100f.

er disorder, etc., depend upon, and grow out of, the characters and methods of those who employ it. Accordingly, No. (2), above, must be accepted as true. Used by good, safe men, as occasion justifies, there are no such inconsistencies as are here suggested.

"It is not to be regarded a proper ground for rejecting any religious practice that, because of the folly, or the recklessness of the ignorant, or the extreme, it has been or is abused. Whatever in itself is Scripturally proper, is to be itself retained, divested of unwholesome infusions and adjuncts, such as grew up in circumstances unfavorable to truth." \*

2. Things that may be considered as properly connected, in argument, with the Mourners' Bench.

A. In General.--

1. Points in its favor.

(a) Used to good effect in Camp-meeting. §

(b) Good order, even amid flowing tears. \*\*

(c) Good order in the midst of prayer.---When "hundreds were in the gallery and the anxious were made the subjects of prayer in front of the pulpit below, only one head was up in the gallery". §§

2. Points alleged against it.

(a) Adapts itself to the impulsive.--"The most favorable subjects for the operation of the system, are persons . . . who are swayed

\* Chr. Ind., Oct. 19, 1899, Art., 'Mourners' Bench'.

§ See above, Ch. VIII., 2, (a).

\*\* See above, Ch. VI., 12, (2).

§§ Chr. Ind., vol. 5, p. 310.

by impulse more than reflection." \*

It could hardly be claimed, however, that reflection was wanting in such men as Andrews, Earle, and Finney, and many of the thousands we see coming forward for prayer. § It is saying much for it to admit that the impulsive can operate it successfully. The Apostle Peter was impulsive. Also, he made mistakes. The fact that he was impulsive did not disqualify him however for doing great things. \*\*

(b) Not popular with the enlightened.--"In an enlightened, well-instructed congregation, the anxious bench can never be generally popular." §§ But it was evidently popular with the great congregations presided over by the three above named Revivalists. Also, in many well informed and highly enlightened congregations among us today. \*\*\*

(c) Adapted to give a taste for display.--"Eminently adapted . . . to give a taste for ostentatious display in the service of the sanctuary." §§§ This could hardly be in a well ordered service, where the Word of God was honestly preached, and the occasion was favorable for an invitation to prayer. \*\*\*\*

(d) Attracts the superficial and insincere.--"The persons rising and coming forward are, for the most part, the sanguine, the rash, the self-confident, or the self-righteous, while those who are more deeply

- \* Nevin, The Anx. Bench, p. 42.
- § See above, Ch. VI., 10; VI., 13; VI., 16,(1); VI., 18,(2) et al.
- \*\* See above, Ch. IV., XI., 3.
- §§ Nevin, The Anx. Bench, p. 42.
- \*\*\* Comp. above, Ch. VI., 10; VI., 13,(1), (3),(4),etc.
- §§§ Sprague, Lect. on Rev., App., p.265.
- \*\*\*\* Comp. above, Ch. VI., 12,(2).



affected will perhaps keep their seats." \*

Our author qualifies his statement by saying, "for the most part". But even this can hardly be true, where the work is conducted by honest and earnest men of judgment, who mean real business for the Lord. §

(e) Mourner Bench prayer of suspicious character.--"It is a suspicious kind of prayer at best that can be engaged, in such circumstances, only by the sight of its objects, theoretically paraded to produce effects, without the power of a more general interest". \*\* This would seldom, if ever, be. The object would be primarily, to locate and encourage interest in the sinner, not in the praying Christian.

(f) The sport of quacks. "It is well adapted indeed to become the sport of quacks under every name". §§ But the Mourners' Bench is not responsible for that. Besides, quacks may be found in every direction, and engaging in every thing.

(g) Dr. Nettleton never used it.--"Dr. Nettleton never adopted the anxious seat, nor requested persons to rise in the assembly to be prayed for, or to signify that they had given their hearts to God." \*\*\* "Whitfield and Edwards needed no new measure, to make themselves felt." It is not, however, a question as to who may have employed the Mourners' Bench. The practice must rest on this one consideration: Does

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\* Hervey, Man. of Rev., p.85.

§ Comp. above, Ch. VI., 13, (1), etc.

\*\* Nevin, The Anx. Bench, p. 102.

§§ Nevin, p. 45.

\*\*\* Fish, Handbook of Rev., p. 352. Nevin, p. 57.

God approve and use it? The answer to this question must be found in the light of the facts which surround it.

(h) An act of rudeness.--"There is a measure of rudeness connected with this particular style of action in the church, from the very nature of the case." \* But it is very difficult to see how there could be rudeness in an honest, timely request for interested sinners, who might find it in their hearts to do so, to come forward and indicate their desire to be saved and let their Christian friends and themselves mutually bring the matter before the Lord in prayer.

(i) The slightly convicted make profession.--"The slightly convicted are full as likely to go forward in the way of profession as they are to go back". § This might be true were all the "new measures" set aside. It would not often occur where the pastor and church were laying emphasis on the necessity of regeneration.

(j) The conversions do not wear well.--"It is found that conversions made in this way do not as a general thing wear well." \*\* But our author does not give instances. He only asserts, and what he says seems to be the product of jealousy, etc.

(k) The tumult unfavorable to seriousness.--"The inward tumult resulting from the occasion, is in a high degree unfavorable to genuine seriousness, while it lasts, and is sure to be followed by a reaction, still more hurtful to the spirit, when the occasion is over." §§

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\* Nevin, The Anx. Bench, p. 108.

§ Nevin, p. 81.<sup>79</sup>

\*\* Nevin, p. 82.

§§ Nevin, p. 78.<sup>77</sup>

Not so, if the expression is natural and genuine. Compare Pentecost, when the Apostles were said to be "full of new wine".--Ac. 2:13.

(l) Persons privately approached are freer to express themselves. --"I have observed when I visited and conversed with persons privately who were anxious for their souls, they appeared more unreserved in the statement of the exercises of their minds than when surrounded by a number of others, besides the elders of the church". \* This appears very plausible. At the same time, much depends on the age and disposition, as well as present state of interest in the person approached. Again, much depends on the character of interest, and manner of address, in the persons questioning. Grant, however, that some would express themselves more freely, as above suggested, that would not argue that the Mourner Bench method of work was not also good.

(m) Keeps back the sincere, and encourages forward the insincere. --"There is an ostentation about anxious seats, in an indiscriminate assemblage, which I am persuaded keep some back, who are really laboring in spirit, and brings others there who feel very little". §  
Where the service is conducted under the thoughtful watchcare of a consecrated and observant pastor, and the proposition is clearly stated, with proper limitations, the insincere are not likely to intrude. As to the interested, any refusal on their part might be accounted for on some other ground, as that of endeavoring to conceal their interest. The very failure to come, however, may be sanctified by the Lord

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\* Sprague, Lect. on Rev., App., p. 358.

§ Sprague, Lect. on Rev., App., p. 352.<sup>349</sup>

to deeper penitence in the interested sinner, and turn out to his good. This has doubtless been frequently the case.

(n) Its advocates appeal to fear.--"Exciting appeals are made to the principle of fear." \* As has been already said (Ch. XIII.1,(2),above), the Mourners' Bench is not responsible for the work of fanatics. As to earnest and impassioned appeals to sinners "to flee from the wrath to come" (Mt. 3:17; Ac. 2:40), with the statement of the fact that they are lost, and as such are now exposed to the wrath of God, there can be no just objection. Such appeals do not inhere in the nature of the Mourners' Bench nor are they dependent on the presence of the same for their utterance. Such appeals have doubtless been made by earnest ministers of the gospel in every age, and in all lands. We read that Paul "reasoned of righteousness, and temperance, and the judgment to come", and that "Felix was terrified, and answered, Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me." --Ac. 24:25,--R.V.--His preaching was such as to "terrify" Felix.

(o) Its advocates enlist sympathy in its behalf.--"Especially the mysterious force of sympathy is enlisted in support of the measure and made to tell in many cases with immense effect." † There can certainly be no just objection brought against the Mourners' Bench on this ground. Every enterprise and every measure, of whatever kind, may be said to need the help of sympathy to give it success. Even the religion of the Lord Jesus depends on the love and interest of its sub-

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\* Nevin, The Anx. Bench, p. 42.

† Nevin, p. 42.

jects, instrumentally, for its advancement. It is saying much for the Mourners' Bench to be able to state that it has the power to enlist the sympathy of thinking, praying men and women in its behalf. Such, however, it has done, and does.

(p) The experiences of its subjects are superficial.--"No 'experiences' are more superficial commonly, than those which belong to this whirlwind process. The foundations of the inward life are not reached and moved by it at all, . . . it is not the depth of these anxious bench and camp-meeting conversions, but their utter want of depth, that exposes them to complaint." \* It is not expected by any intelligent and honest advocate of the Mourner's Bench that it should reach and move the hearts of the people. The Word and Spirit of God are relied upon to do this work,--the Word of God as honestly preached by his servants, and applied by the Holy Spirit to the hearts of them that hear it. The Mourner's Bench is not expected to take the place of these to any extent. It is simply an occasion of expression, affording favorable opportunities of confession, expression of interest in the matter of salvation, and of requests for prayer. But it is, and does, this much,--No more. The Holy Spirit gives all real 'experiences' of grace.

(q) Followed by hurtful influence to those who 'fall back'.--"A most unhappy influence is often exerted on those, who are drawn to the anxious bench and afterwards fall back again openly to their former careless state." † Hardly is any harm likely to result, where

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\* Nevin, The Anx. Bench, p. 202. 113

† Nevin, p. 81. 78

... instrumentally, for advancement. It is saying more for the  
... to be able to state that it has the power to assist the  
... of thinking, praying men and women in its behalf. Such, how-  
... to be done, and does.

(p) The experience of its subjects are superficial. -- "The ex-  
... are mere superficial commonplaces, than those which belong to  
... The foundation of the inward life is not  
... it is not the depth of these ex-  
... and camp-meeting conversions, but their outer want of depth,  
... It is not expected by any in-  
... and honest advocate of the Movement's Branch that it should  
... The Lord and Spirit of God  
... the Word of God an honestly proclaimed  
... and applied by the Holy Spirit to the hearts of men  
... The Movement's Branch is not expected to take the place  
... It is simply an occasion of expression, af-  
... of confession, expression of interest  
... and of requests for prayer. But it is  
... The Holy Spirit gives all real ex-  
... of grace.

honest

(p) Followed by similar influence to those who 'fall back'. --  
... is often exerted on those, who are drawn to  
... and afterwards fall back again openly to their for-  
... Hardly is any harm likely to result, where

\* Henry, The New Testament, p. 285, W.  
† Henry, p. 285, W.

the interested ones are actuated by honest motives. An honest proposition for prayer made by a consecrated man of God, whether evangelist, or pastor, and honestly accepted by people seeking Christ as their Saviour, could hardly do otherwise than result in good.

(r) Has no affinity with the Reformation.--"The System of New Measures has no affinity whatever, with the life of the Reformation."\* While that may be true, to an extent, yet it is also true, that all intelligent and truest advocates of the Mourner's Bench, have in view the glory of God in its use, and believe that God sanctions its use by them, as He employs them in the accomplishment of His work for the souls of men. We may say that it is neither Calvinistic, nor Lutheran, distinctively, but rather distinctively Christian.

(s) It is compared with Rome.--"It is well known, how in the Church of Rome certain observances are held to carry with them a sort of inward merit in this way, as though by themselves they had power to secure a spiritual blessing."§ But properly managed the fact will be kept before the congregation that this is not the case. That nothing will really avail with God, except actual faith in Christ. It gives occasion to emphasize this fact. No intelligent and honest advocate of the Mourner's Bench would claim that there was any saving efficacy in it. Yet, instrumentally, it becomes to some an occasion of blessing.

(t) Connects itself with vulgarism.--"It connects itself . . .

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\* Nevin, The Anxious Bench, p. 6.

§ Nevin, p. 72.

naturally and readily with a certain vulgarism of feeling in religion, that is always injurious to the worship of God." \* — There can certainly be no "vulgarism of feeling" in one who earnestly desires to find Christ, in the forgiveness of his sins, and, in response to the honest invitation of a faithful minister of the Lord Jesus, comes forward to engage with the people of God in prayer for his salvation. The true friends of the Mourner's Bench are responsible for it only as honestly and properly used. They are not responsible for it as employed by fanatics, and found in the hands of cranks.

(u) Inharmonious with religious societies.--"Tract societies, the cause of Missions, and the benevolent agencies in general, by which the Church is endeavoring to diffuse the knowledge of the truth throughout the world. All these things are natural, direct utterances of the spirit of Christianity itself, and have no affinity whatever with the order of action represented by the Anxious Bench." † But the efforts of the advocates of the Mourner's Bench are to aid people in their approach to Christ; to the extent that it is instrumental, in their hands, through the power of the Holy Spirit, in doing this, to that extent it is a help to all the true, religious enterprises that enlightened Christians have.

(v) Outward demonstration alone is sought.--"The object sought is a mere outward demonstration on the subject of religion." \*\* The

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\* Nevin, The Anxious Bench, p. 107.

† Nevin, p. 26.

\*\* Nevin, p. 43.



object sought by all enlightened and true ministers of the Gospel is the real spiritual good of those whom they invite forward. They believe that God may see fit to make the response an immediate occasion of blessing to their immortal souls.

(w) A show of hands an absurdity.--"It is hardly necessary to refer to the absurdity of demanding--as has sometimes been done--a show of hands from those who are now resolved to give themselves to the Lord." \*

If, however, one has it settled in his own mind that he will give himself to the Lord, there is hardly any inconsistency, on an occasion of worship, of indicating to God's people, in this very simple way, that fact. It is simply expressing to God's friends, in a quiet way, a matter now settled in his own mind. There is nothing immodest, or premature, in it, if it is based on fact. §

(x) Requires no spiritual power.--"It requires . . . no spiritual power to use the Anxious Bench with effect." \*\* It cannot be used with real power, however, without spiritual power. Moreover, the conscious presence of the Holy Spirit is an indispensable necessity to its greatest success.

(y) Confusion, where excitement.--"Where any considerable excitement prevails, it is almost impossible for the measure to be applied, without confusion and commotion." §§

\* International Cyclopedia, vol. XII., p. 597, art. "Revivals".

§ "Show of hands", a member of the "System of New Measures".

\*\* Nevin, The Anxious Bench, p. 43.

§§ Nevin, p. 103.

This, of course, would depend on the judgment and force of character of the pastor, or leader. If he desired so to do, should the occasion seem unfavorable to good order, he could restrict the invitation sufficiently to meet any reasonable requirement, or dispense with an invitation altogether. Such excitement and confusion do not inhere in the Mourner's Bench. They belong to the people who employ it. The same is true of the pulpit, the prayer-meeting, the Sunday School, --the impression made grows out of the man who conducts it.

(z) Minister invites the interested.--"At the close of the sermon, the minister, encouraged by the general seriousness of the house, invites all who are concerned for the salvation of their souls, to come forward and place themselves on the anxious seat." \*

There could be no inconsistency in giving the invitation to the "interested". They are the ones concerned. By them, if by any, would the invitation be honestly accepted. The gospel is freely preached to all, and for all; the invitation to come up for prayer, is made only to them who feel their need of prayer, and would make known that feeling of need, if just invited to do so. The coming forward is the mode of expression chosen. It is chosen because thought to be best.

(&) Involves irregularity.--"The measure involves irregularity to some extent, in its very nature, and opens the way for extravagance."§

The Mourner's Bench is not responsible for any "irregularity" or

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\* Nevin, The Anxious Bench, p. 70.

§ Nevin, p. 104.

...of course, would depend on the judgment and force of character  
 of the pastor, <sup>what</sup> if he desired so to do, should the ques-  
 tion arise. It is desirable to good order, to avoid restrict the invitation  
 arbitrarily to any; any reasonable requirement, or disposal with an  
 invitation altogether. Such restriction and confusion to not induce  
 in the members' minds. They belong to the people who enjoy it.  
 The same is true of the subject, the prayer-meeting, the Sunday school,  
 --the impression made grows out of the man who conducts it.

(1) Minister invites the interested. -- "at the close of the ser-  
 mon, the minister, encouraged by the general responsiveness of the hear-  
 ings all who are concerned for the salvation of their souls, he  
 goes forward and places themselves on the various seats."  
 There could be no inconsistency in giving the invitation to the  
 "interested". They are the ones concerned. By them, it is  
 would the invitation be honestly accepted. The Gospel is freely  
 preached to all, and for all; the invitation to come up for prayer,  
 is made only to those who feel their need of prayer, and would  
 know that feeling of need, it just invited to do so. The coming for-  
 ward in the hope of expression stands. It is chosen because thought  
 to be best.

(2) Invites irregularly. -- "The manner invites irregularly  
 to some extent, in the very nature, and opens the way for extravagance."  
 The Journal's Bench is not responsible for any "irregularity" or

\* Review, for January 1884, p. 10.  
 † Review, p. 101.

"extravagance". The people who make a wrong use of the Mourner's Bench are responsible.--Honour to <sup>whom</sup> what honour! Guilt to whom guilt!

B. In Particular.

1. Facts in Favor.

(a) The importance of decision.--"This meeting has . . . convinced us more than we were before, of the propriety and utility of pressing sinners to an immediate decision by leading them to act." \*

No one should question the good that there is in a thing to a man, when it becomes to him the occasion of right decision, or a means to wise action, in the matter of eternal interest.

(b) The importance of test questions.--"Is it best to put a test question in a church, asking those that are anxious for their souls to rise, or rather to go to another room? Mr. Moody--I think so. . . What you want is to get them to do something they don't want to do, and it is a great cross generally for people to rise for prayer." †

Those who are acquainted with the work in <sup>2</sup>Rivalry are aware that it is a matter of first consideration to get the people to move. These tests bring before them occasions for movement, and if rightly regarded by them, prove one of the very things they need. The judgment of Mr. Moody, as above expressed, is well worth the consideration of those who think.

(c) Coming forward not objectionable.--"Coming forward for prayer

\* Chr. Ind., vol. 7<sup>th</sup>, p. 219.

† Moody, The Gospel Awakening, p. 751.

"extraneous" The people who make a wrong use of the word "extraneous" are responsible for that wrong! Omit to read this!

- 8. In Particular.
- 1. First in Favor.

(a) The importance of decision... "This meeting has... convinced us more than we were before, of the propriety and utility of presenting ministers to an immediate decision by leading them to act."

No one should... (omit) the good that there is in a thing to a man, when it happens to him the occasion of right decision, or a means to wise action, in the matter of eternal interest.

(b) The importance of test questions... "It is best to put a test question in a church, asking those that are anxious for their souls to rise, or rather to go to another work. Mr. Hoody—I think so... That you want to get them to do something they don't want to do, and it is a great crowd generally for people to rise for prayer."

Those who are acquainted with the work in Hyville are aware that it is a matter of first consideration to get the people to move. These tests bring before them occasions for movement, and it rightly regarded by them, prove one of the very things they need. The consent of Mr. Hoody, as above expressed, is well worth the consideration of those who think.

(c) Going forward not objectionable... "Going forward for prayer"

\* The Ind., vol. 2, p. 212.  
 † Hoody, The Gospel Advocate, p. 761.

(which is little else than the above",--Anxious Seats--) "is very general in revival meetings. We do not see that exception can be taken to the thing itself." \*

There can be no just objection to the quiet coming forward, when invitation, on proper occasion, is extended by a true minister of Jesus Christ, and indicating, by so doing, that one desires to be made the object of prayer.

(d) Lutheran Observer favors.--"I am . . . strongly convinced, as a pastor, that the so-called 'anxious bench' is the lever of the Archimedes, which by the blessing of God can raise our German churches to that degree of respectability and prosperity in the religious world, which they ought to enjoy."--Correspondent Lutheran Observer, Nov. 17, 1843. §

The voice of the above "Correspondent" is only one of innumerable voices, sounding from long before his day till now, uttering the conviction that there is a place for the Mourner's Bench. There should be no doubt that, as a means, it has a place in the Saviour's work.

(e) Importance of decision not denied.--"Those (evangelists) who are, for these or like reasons, opposed to the 'anxious seat' do not deny that it is important to call sinners to an immediate decision, and also to an immediate manifestation of that decision." \*\*

They, of course, want them to come to a decision, and work for that. When the decision is made, they all feel an interest in knowing that fact. So do the advocates of the Mourner's Bench. The latter,

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\* Fish, Handbook of Rev., p. 351.

§ Nevin, The Anxious Bench, p. 18.

\*\* Harvey, Man. of Rev., p. 85.

however, employ this measure as an occasion of encouragement and help to them in reaching that decision, and in making it known. Both work toward the same end, but by different means.--"Those who have been violently opposed to the anxious seat have been obliged to adopt some substitute or they could not get along in promoting a revival." \*

(f) The subject demands consideration.--"This whole subject is one upon which no prudent man will venture to be very positive." †

It is a matter that will work its own way. It is a subject yet before the people. The Mourner's B<sup>an</sup>ch is yet in demand. Many rash things have been said and done in reference to it, but it still finds a place, and still answers a purpose. This it will continue to do.

(g) God blesses unnamed means.--"In reference to means suitable to be adopted in promoting revivals of religion, there are many reasons and facts to confirm the belief that God condescends to bless a greater multiplicity of methods and measures, than he has thought necessary to particularize in his Word; leaving room here, as in every other department of religious activity, for the conscientious exercise of human discretion. It is not to be doubted, after candid and extensive investigation, that among ministers and professors truly humble and devoted, there has existed and still exists, a considerable variety of modes of operation, honestly adopted, and of beneficial influence." etc.\*\*

So it is. Not in any sense a setting aside of the Word of God, or of any of its precious truths, or ordinances; neither any obscuring of its doctrines; but simply the use (as outgrowths of the true

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\* Finney, Lect. on Rev., p. 254.

† Hervey, Man. of Rev., p. 83.

\*\* Sprague, Lect. on Rev., App., p. 394.

however, apply this passage as an occasion of encouragement and help to them in reaching that decision, and in making it known. Both work toward the same end, but by different means.--"Those who have been vic-

lently opposed to the anxious seat have been obliged to adopt some end-attitude or they could not get along in promoting a revival."

(1) The subject demands consideration.--"This whole subject is one upon which the constant man will venture to be very positive." It is a matter that will work its own way. It is a subject yet before the people. The *realize* work is yet in demand. Many wish things have been said and done in reference to it, but is still finds a place, and still answers a purpose. This it will continue to do.

(2) God desires unweary means.--"In reference to means suitable to be adopted in promoting revivals of religion, there are many reasons and facts to confirm the belief that God commands us to devise a greater multiplicity of methods and measures, than he has thought necessary to particularize in his Word; leaving room here, as in every other depart-

ment of religious activity, for the conscientious exercise of human discretion. It is not to be doubted, after candid and extensive in-vestigation, that among ministers and professors truly humble and love-ly, there has existed and still exists, a considerable variety of modes of operation, honestly adopted, and of beneficial influence." etc. etc. It is not in any sense a cutting aside of the Word of God, or of any of its precious truths, or ordinances; neither any cheap-ning of its holiness; but simply the use (as outgrowths of the true

\* Finney, Lect. on Rev., p. 284.  
† Harvey, Lect. on Rev., p. 68.  
\*\* Sprague, Lect. on Rev., April, 1844.



religious spirit) of those things which come along as the unfolding or the development of things which really exist in germ in the Scriptures. So, in a measure, the development in present missionary operations in the world.

(h) Evangelists use them.--"A difference of opinion regarding the advisability of such measures existed for years among the evangelical churches. It was generally thought, after due trial, that the methods in the main vindicated themselves. Nearly every evangelist has since adopted these or similar methods." \* They have come to nearly<sup>4</sup> the evident helpfulness of these in the Master's service.

(i) Inquiry meetings a necessity.--"In the progress of a powerful revival when large numbers are in the several stages of alarm and inquiry, they are so essential, that no pastor who would make the most of his strength, can dispense with them." † Even so. But the Mourner's Bench has just as much claim to recognition as has this. Both are essential, as occasions, or instruments, of service. Each fills its own place. Each constitutes a member of the System of New Measures.

(j) Criticisms vanish with knowledge.--"Nearly every evangelist has since adopted these or similar methods, and as the people have become wonted to them the criticisms have diminished and finally disappeared." \*\* This, because they have come to see that these things are in themselves not such an object of dread as had been supposed; that under the influence of divine grace, they are really helpful servants.

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\* Vedder, Hist. Bapt. Mid. States, p. 153.

† Humphrey, Rev. Sketches, p. 343. See above Ch. VIII., 2, (d).

\*\* Vedder, Hist. Bapt. Mid. States, p. 154. <sup>153</sup>

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religious activity of the world which came along as the unfolding or  
the development of things which really exist in form in the spirit-  
world. So, in a measure, the development in present missionary opera-  
tions in the world.

(4) Evangelists use them.--A difference of opinion regarding the  
advantage of such measures existed for years among the evangelists.  
It was generally thought, after due trial, that the methods  
in the past indicated themselves. Nearly every evangelist has since  
adopted these or similar methods. \* They have come to nearly the  
evident helpfulness of those in the writer's service.

(5) Inquiry meeting a necessity.--In the progress of a general  
revival when large numbers are in the several stages of sin and in-  
quiry, they are so essential, that no pastor who would make the most  
of his strength, and dispense with them. I have seen, but the know-  
ing pastor has just as much aim to recognition as has this. Both  
are essential, as occasions, or instruments, of service. Each fills  
its own place. Each constitutes a member of the system of the work-  
ing.

(6) Criticism vital with knowledge.--Nearly every evangelist  
has since adopted these or similar methods, and as the people have  
become wiser so that the critic has been diminished and finally dis-  
appeared. \* This, because they have come to see that these things  
are themselves not such an object of dread as had been supposed; that  
under the influence of divine grace, they are really helpful services.

\* See below, p. 184. See above, Ch. VIII., p. 184.  
\* See below, p. 184. See above, Ch. VIII., p. 184.

(k) God honors prayer.--John Moxem "preached and visited frequently among them, and called those who were anxious to come up publicly and receive the prayers of the church; and God in a special manner manifested himself as a prayer-hearing God, and rained down righteousness upon them." \*

(l) Helpful testimony.--"The simple narrative of . . . new-born souls", etc. §

God's conscious presence and blessing in connection with, and during the use of, the Mourner's Bench, is high evidence of the fact that he blesses its use, and sanctions its employment.

(m) People rising often blessed.--"It is a great cross generally for people to rise for prayer; but in the very act of doing it, they are very often blessed." \*\* This then is a great reason for encouraging people to rise.

(n) Changed on way to Mourner's Bench.--"Dr. Yerkes was so convicted that he sat up in his office, sleepless, for three nights, till, coming forward for prayers one morning, he felt the burden go--a happy change--before he reached the front seat." §§

In the effort to go forward he had made a complete surrender of himself to God. To him this was visibly an occasion of great blessing.

(o) Converts.--"About sixty persons have been forward for prayer and about thirty of them have been converted." "Fifty-three have presented themselves as objects of special prayer, among whom are some of the most worthy and intelligent citizens of our town, many of whom

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\* Chr. Index, vol. 5, p. 140.

§ Chr. Index, vol. 5, p. 372. See above, Ch. VIII., 6, (c).

\*\* Moody, The Gospel Awakening, p. 751.

§§ Life of Andrews, p. 143.

have been hopefully converted to God, and are now rejoicing." "About eighty have presented themselves as objects of special prayer, most of whom are now rejoicing in the Lord." "Each night crowds of penitents throng the altar for prayer, averaging from eighty-five to one hundred, and the number of conversions, according to the most correct estimate, will not fall below one hundred and forty." \*

Thus, very many of the happiest and brightest conversions we have come from services connected with the Mourner's Bench.

(p) Advantages of Mourner's Bench.--"Formerly, the advantages of the 'Anxious Seat' were set forth in various ways. It served, it was said, as a test of character; it was a public committal; it was a very convenient way of making a public acknowledgment of one's need of Christ; such acknowledgment served to encourage other convicted souls; the effect of such a step was also an encouragement to the minister and the church." ‡

The act should at least express an honest desire for the help of prayer in the effort to come to Christ, find acceptance, and obtain the forgiveness of one's sins. The "public committal", and "the public acknowledgment of one's need of Christ", are evidently the prime considerations in the above list of "Advantages".

## 2. Concession with opposition.

(a) Not the device, but the methods used.--"We do not see that exception can be taken to the thing itself, though methods sometimes

used to persuade, urge, and almost force attendance thus to present

\* Andrews, *Living Life*, pp. 199, 203, 204; Great Rev. in *Sou. Arm.*, 281.

‡ Harvey, *Man. of Rev.*, p. 79.

themselves, should not be countenanced." \*

Such conduct is to be opposed per se. The Mourner's Bench is not responsible for it. It is just here that opposition to the Mourner's Bench originates with some.

(b) Danger of commitment on the part of the unconverted.--"The objection that 'there is great danger when you persuade a man who is not yet converted, publicly to commit himself, that he will be induced by other than religious feelings and motives to persevere and come into the church, and hang as a dead weight upon the cause', does not seem to have force. Nor yet again, another, sometimes urged, that this encourages forwardness, ostentation, and rashness." §

People sometimes come into the church from "other than religious feelings and motives", even where there is no Mourner's Bench. It is in all such cases the fault of management, or the result of ignorance. In all cases we are to proceed with proper wisdom, remembering that we are transacting business for the Master, and that we need divine guidance.

(c) Convicted man should go to Christ.--"If a man is convicted enough to ask the prayers of Christians, he is convicted enough to go to Christ; and there he should be sent, and there he should go." \*\* The whole effort is to get him to Christ. To this end is the pointed sermon and the personal effort. After all this is done, some linger.

\* Fish, Handbook of Rev., p 351.

§ Fish, Handbook of Rev., p. 351.

\*\* Hervey, Manual of Rev., p. 80.

It is thought that if they can be induced publicly to indicate their desire to be saved, that, to gather with united prayers, may result in the effectual leading of their souls to Christ. This is one of the efforts to get them to Christ. \*

(d) Expression with all methods.--"Old-fashioned revival. The sermon is over. The 'work at the altar' begins. A familiar and soul-stirring hymn of invitation, exhortation and comfort, is sung heartily by the whole congregation. The crowds in the aisles make way for awakened sinners, who are now 'seekers', and are forcing their passage to the 'altar'. . . In modern meetings, union and denominational, where anxious souls are invited to rise', 'to come forward', or 'to remain for the inquiry meeting', while there may be less 'demonstration' and 'confusion' of the sort described, there is the same liability to occasional outbursts of feeling, to the use of strong expressions, to the obtrusion of personal experience." ‡

This is evident. Even in the preaching of the sermon, the minister sometimes shouts forth his convictions and his sentiments of praise in exclamations which almost shock his congregations. Some of the quietest times, too, are those in which sinners are manifesting, by rising, or by coming forward, their desires for prayer. In all such cases, much depends on the leader, and on the spirit of the meeting.

(e) Nothing depends on anxious bench. "Everything depended on a right inclination, and nothing on the 'anxious seat' as such." \*\*

The Lord uses it as an occasion of blessing.

\* See above, Ch. XIII, A,2,(m); A,2,(n).

‡ The Revival and After, pp. 17-19.

\*\* Hervey, Man. of Rev., p. 81. See above, Ch. XII,5.

(f) Failure in Anxious Bench.--"The 'anxious seat' and the revival-prayer-meeting are sometimes rendered imperative by a resort to prayer before either the Christian workers or the seekers have learned what are the things that are to be asked of the Lord." \* It is evident that with all our approaches to a throne of grace, we should have definite objects before our minds, and present them definitely before the Lord. Above all, we should come with the fulness of earnest hearts.-- "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"--Matt. 7:11.

(g) Measures for moderately moving imagination.--"I do not object to all measures to arrest attention, to move moderately the imagination and passions, and to put the whole man into action towards God and his revealed truths. . . . But there is always some danger in working on this part of the human constitution by other means than truth set in its most affecting light and pressed home upon the conscience." ‡

The Mourner's Bench is not intended in any way to take the place of the most earnest and pointed preaching of the gospel. The object of every faithful minister of the Gospel should be to rely upon the power of God's Holy Spirit, as that makes use of the truth, and makes use of whatever means, to accomplish the work of God. It cannot be shown that the earnest preaching of the Gospel, and the orderly use of the Mourner's Bench by the consecrated and thoughtful pastor, in the conduct of his service, results in harm.

\* Hervey, Man. of Rev., p. 81.

‡ Sprague, Lect. on Rev. App., p. 367.

(h) The anxious should be addressed. "That the anxious should be specially addressed and prayed for, I not only admit, but consider as highly important. But this can surely be done, and I think to much greater advantage, after the promiscuous audience has retired, or in what I think still better, a meeting specially appointed for the purpose." \* This may be true in some congregations, in some circumstances, especially as relates to the matter of specially addressing them. As regards the more favorable occasion for prayer, this seems to be evidently in the midst of the assembled congregation. Taking everything that bears upon the subject into consideration, there seems to be ample consideration for both expedients. But there could be no argument against the Mourner's Bench in the fact that some other device, in some circumstances, might work better. The employment of either of them would be limited to such occasions as called for it.

(i) Decision is desirable.--"That a decisive step in relation to this subject is desirable, and that it ought to be taken without delay, is certain. But, at the same time, that it ought to be taken without rashness, with knowledge, with due consideration, and with sacred care not to mistake a transient emotion, for a deep impression, or a settled purpose, is equally certain." §

There need be neither rashness nor lack of consideration in coming to the Mourner's Bench. In coming, one realizes himself a sinner, recognizes that all his hope for salvation is through Christ, and that

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\* Sprague, Lect. on Rev., App., p. 349.

§ Sprague, Lect. on Rev., App., pp. 202f.



he is dependent on the grace of God, through the Holy Spirit, for the power to accept Christ. As a full and free expression of the fact that he recognizes this, he comes forward and asks the help of prayer. Many find Christ, in the very act of coming. \*

(j) Occasional use of the Mourner's Bench.--"The occasional use of it might be comparatively safe; in some hands, perhaps, without harm altogether. But let it be in credit and reputation, for a short time, on a given field, and its action will be found to be just as mischievous as has now been described." §

It is evident from this statement, that the author finds the safety, or the harm, arising from the Mourner's Bench, not in the device itself, but in the hands of those who use it. So, in the hands of good and wise men, where it is properly used, it might be expected to do no harm, but good.

If it would be safe and do no harm, in the hands of a good man who would employ it wisely, for a short time, why not all the time? So, the Mourner's Bench, in the hands of a good and wise man, is alright. This must be true. It is true.

(k) Private interviews and the Mourner's Bench.--The former afford "a far better opportunity to give distinct and appropriate instruction to particular individuals." \*\* So far as instruction itself is concerned, that may be true. But the prime idea with regard to the Mourner's Bench is prayer.

(l) The Anxious Bench the best member of System.--"The Simple

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\* See above, Ch. XII, 5.

§ Nevin, The Anxious Bench, p. 23.64

\*\* Sprague, Lect. on Rev., App., p. 264.

Anxious Bench, as it is often used in a sober way, is the most moderate and plausible shape the system can well take. If this then be found unworthy of confidence the whole system will be shorn of its title to confidence at the same time." \*

The Mourner's Bench is indeed the best member of the System. It cannot be shown unworthy of confidence. Where properly used, nothing can take its place.

### 3. Opposition.

(a) The system an abuse.--"The whole system contemplated in the tract is an abuse, from which it is of the utmost importance that the worship of the sanctuary, and the cause of revivals, should be rescued." § But hosts of good and wise brethren do not consider it an abuse. As for the Mourner's Bench, itself, many of our best brethren employ it.

"We do not see that exception can be taken to the thing itself."\*\*

(b) The Anxious Bench a nuisance.--"Belonging as it does to this System, then, and contributing to its support, the anxious bench is a nuisance, that can never be fully abated except by its entire removal."§§ It can hardly be considered a "nuisance", however, when it has been used, with such joyous success by so many eminent and consecrated ministers of the Gospel. \*\*\* It can easily be seen, on the other hand, how a man fixed in his ideas, as was the author of the 'Anxious Bench',

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\* Nevin, The Anxious Bench, p. 13.

§ Nevin, p. 9.

\*\* See above, Ch. XIII, B, 2, (a).

§§ Nevin, pp. 92.

\*\*\* Corp. above, Ch. VIII, 6, (c).

and unwilling to accept something to which he has not been accustomed, can find fault with a measure, and rashly call it "a nuisance". -- Let no measure that God sees fit to use be lightly called "a nuisance".

(c) Public view injurious.--"The language of experience is, that it is unsafe and unwise to bring persons, who are under religious impressions, too much into public view." "The subjects of religious impressions ought not to be brought much into public notice. . . . Many . . . when they find themselves the objects of much attention . . . affect feelings which are not real; and where there is humility and sincerity, such measures turn away the attention from the distinct contemplation of those subjects which ought to occupy the mind." \*

But surely it is not making people too conspicuous, or subjecting them too much to public view, to give them an opportunity and encourage them, where they feel so disposed, to come forward and indicate a desire to be remembered in the prayers of God's people! Again, where they are sufficiently interested to ask the help of prayer, in the presence of parents, playmates, fellow-laborers, etc., there is but little danger that they will go to such a hurtful extreme (so contrary to their present impressions) as to "affect feelings" which are not real", etc. Finney, Emerson Andrews, Taylor, Burkitt, Moody, and others, did not see any serious dangers along this line. †

(d) The Mourner's Bench arrests reflection.--"It is an injury . . . To have reflection arrested, and the workings of true conviction in part or all together overwhelmed, by the excitement." "The anxious bench, in the case of those who come to it, is adapted by its circum-

\* Nevin, The Anxious Bench, pp. 107f. Sprague, Lect. on Rev. App., pp. 234f.

† See above, Chs. VI, 10; VI, 13; VI, 6;(2); VIII, 3, et al.

stances to distort and distract the thoughts of the truly serious, and thus to obstruct the action of truth in their minds." \* But a properly conducted revival meeting, or other service, where it would be wise to invite sinners to come to the Mourner's Bench, would not be characterized by undue excitement. It is difficult to see how the quiet coming forward for prayer, where one feels the need of prayer, and wants to be made a special object of prayer, would work so disastrously to the earnest seeker. Properly managed, the truth is made plain and prominent in connection with the invitation, and only those are invited forward, who can of their own free choice accept the invitation. Where the meeting is in proper condition, the circumstances favor trustful, serious thought.

(e) Coming to Mourner's Bench, coming to Christ.--"The whole matter is so managed as practically to encourage the idea that a veritable step towards Christ at least, if not actually into his arms, is accomplished in the act of coming to the anxious seat." † This is due to the way in which the "matter" is "managed", then. Such would occur only in the case of some uninformed or thoughtless minister. It does not inhere in the nature of the Mourner's Bench.

(f) Use serves purpose in regeneration.--"The whole measure is so ordered, as to promote the delusion that the use of it serves some purpose in the regeneration of the soul." \*\* It is then "so ordered,

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\* Nevin, *The Anxious Bench*, pp. 69, 77, 77; 69

† Nevin, p. 74. 73f

\*\* Nevin, pp. 77f.

as to promote this. It is in the way the "matter" is "managed!" It may indeed become the immediate occasion of the soul's surrender to God. It may be an instrument in the hands of the Holy Spirit, but not itself a procuring cause. If seasonably and wisely used, it promotes no delusion, and in no sense misleads a single soul.

(g) The anxious establish claims on God.--"Many awakened sinners feel that by rising and going forward they have publicly committed themselves, and that therefore they have a right to expect regenerative grace--in other words, as they have taken steps toward Christ, they may hope that he will advance to meet them; whereas they should be taught that Jesus is their first and only refuge, and therefore they are to renounce all ideas of preparation, self-dependence, and even of self-complacency", etc. \* It is the duty of every wise and intelligent man of God to enlighten the people on this subject. They should be taught that there is no merit in anything they can do, in the sight of God. In extending an invitation for prayer, care should be taken to impress the fact that all merit is in Christ, and in what he has done.

That the Mourner's Bench is simply an occasion of expression, and that if God sees fit to bless the expression the sinner makes in coming to it, it is only from the fulness of his abounding grace. But that sometimes he is pleased to recognize the coming to it as an occasion of blessing, and therefore the encouragement to come, if in his heart, he feels inclined so to do.

(h) Dependence on the Mourner's Bench.--"It is an injury . . .

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\* Harvey, Man. of Rev., p. 84.

to be induced to lean upon such a movement; as though it could have any efficiency at all to bring the soul near to God." "I have seen enough to convince me that sinners are very apt to place a self-righteous dependence on this act of commitment." \* The Mourner's Bench, properly managed, does not serve to favor, or in any way promote such mistakes. It is only an opportunity, or occasion, of encouragement, and help, through instruction and prayer, in the direction of Christ. (1) Christ is the object. (2) Faith is the medium, --made possible by the Holy Spirit's power. (3) Human efforts, as in the use of the Mourner's Bench, only humble instrumentalities, to be laid at the Master's feet, and to receive whatever efficiency they may have, from whatever recognition he may give.

(1) Human conceits and wrong devices.--"Human conceits and systems of measures have been in higher regard than the simple truths and ordinances of the Gospel." "As a general thing, people know very well that there is no affinity or connection, between the system represented by the anxious bench, and such evangelical interests as have now been mentioned . . . if these things, and things in the same line indefinitely, have no connection in fact with true, serious religion and the cause of revivals, but tend only to bring them into discredit, let the fact be openly proclaimed." † In reply, let us observe. (1) that true servants of God will love and regard "the simple truths and ordinances of the Gospel" more than they will "human conceits and systems of measures", in so far as they are able to locate the same.

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\* Nevin, The Anxious Bench, p. 77; Sprague, Lect. on Rev., App. p. 308.

† Sprague, Lect. on Rev., App., p. 324. Nevin, pp. 27, 29.

That no one but a true servant of God has any right to extend invitations to sinners to come forward for prayer. That this discussion of the Mourner's Bench regards that measure as being in the hands of God's true servants, and not in the hands of men of the world, who have no regard for the truth. (2) That those who employ the Mourner's Bench, and related devices, as Finney, Taylor, Andrews, Burkitt, Moody, and others, above mentioned, do not see the same in the light of the above statement. (a) They see the hand of God in the matter. (b) They do not see any disgrace resulting from its use, where it is properly employed by one of God's servants.

(j) Measure generates wrong feelings.--"The process is well suited to generate wrong feelings, . . . in those who are subjected to its rough operation." § This will not result, if the service is in the hands of a consecrated and intelligent man of God, and the matter is properly conducted, on an occasion suitable to its use. Less than this, we could not ask.

(k) Is it the best plan of deciding on feeling?--"Is it the best way of deciding on the digested feelings, the deliberate purpose of persons, whose attention has been aroused, it may be for the first time, and perhaps only a few minutes before, to the great subject of religion?" The reader will please notice the nice discriminations suggested by the above question,--"digested feelings"; "deliberate purpose"; "the best way of deciding", etc. (a) The expression, "the best way of deciding",

\* Comp. above, VI, 6,(2).

§ Nevin, The Anxious Bench, p. 108.

\*\* Sprague, Lect. on Rev., App., pp.261ff.

seems to admit that it is at least, a good way of deciding. (b) If the feelings are "digested", and a "deliberate purpose" has been formed, the indication of the same can certainly be very properly made by rising, or by coming forward, when opportunity is afforded. (c) Whatever the purpose, or feelings, are, if one honestly desires the help of prayer, there can certainly be no impropriety in indicating it in either of these ways, if asked. As to whether it would be "the best way", would depend on circumstances. In many places, as those in which the people have been accustomed to this method properly employed, it would seem to be unquestionably the best for expressing a desire for prayer.

(1) Tends naturally to disorder.--"The Anxious Bench tends naturally to disorder. Where any considerable excitement prevails, it is almost impossible for the measure to be applied, without confusion and commotion." "It is always ready, . . . to run into disorder." It is "eminently adapted . . . to prepare the way for almost every species of disorder." \* Notice here the expressions "tends naturally to"; "is always ready . . . to run"; "eminently adapted . . . to prepare the way". After all, however, the subject resolves itself into the nature of the management. Where properly managed, there will be no "considerable excitement" of an improper kind. Where properly managed, the truths of God's Word will be kept prominently before the congregation. Where properly managed, the Mourner's Bench will appear as an occasion, or opportunity, and not as an efficient cause.--An occasion, or opportunity, of expression, and if God so favors, an occasion of blessing.

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\* Nevin, *The Anxious Bench*, pp. 103f; Sprague, *Lect. on Rev.*, App., p. 265.



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 feelings are "diverged", and a "deliberate progress" has been toward, the  
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 been accustomed to this method properly employed, it would seem to be in-  
 questionably the best for expressing a desire for prayer.

(1) There naturally is disorder.--The various Branch forms natu-  
 rally to disorder. There are considerable excitement prevalent, it is in-  
 vestigable for the manner to be applied, without confusion and con-  
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 ment. Where properly managed, there will be no "considerable excite-  
 ment" of an improper kind. Where properly managed, the fruits of God's  
 word will be felt prominently before the congregation. Where properly  
 managed, the Holy Spirit will appear on an occasion, or opportunity,  
 and not as an efficient cause.--An occasion, or opportunity, of expan-

tion, and if God so please, an occasion of blessing.

(m) Creates false issue for conscience.--"The Anxious Bench, in the case of an awakened sinner, creates a false issue for the conscience." \* Not where the truths of the Gospel are presented in the right light, and impressed, and the Mourner's Bench presented simply as an occasion of expression. The use of the Mourner's Bench gives a good opportunity for making prominent the office of truth, the absolute necessity of trust in Christ, and Christ alone, and the necessity of the Holy Spirit's presence and power in order to the ability to trust.

(n) Use of ordinary means of grace.--"Special effusions of the Spirit, the church has a right to expect in every age, . . . and where such expressions take place, an extraordinary use of the ordinary means of grace will appear, as a matter of course." § It was in connection with revival occasions that the use of the Mourner's Bench came into notice. Many earnest and successful ministers have welcomed its use, and felt that under God's helpful sanction, it has been the occasion of great blessing to the work. They believe it to be an outgrowth of the revival spirit and circumstances, and as such to be consistent with the spirit and life of the Gospel, and in harmony with all other Gospel means. \*\*

(o) Good sometimes done.--"Far be it from me to undertake to pronounce on those brethren who have thought it their duty to countenance" Anxious Seats, "a sentence of condemnation; or to question that good has sometimes been done where they have <sup>x</sup>ben used." §§

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\* Nevin, The Anxious Bench, p. 66.

§ Nevin, pp. 272.

\*\* Comp. above, Chs. IV, IX; VI, 6 (2), et al.

§§ Sprague, Lect. on Rev., App., pp. 261f.

Thus, one who opposes the Mourner's Bench does not "question that good has sometimes been done where" it has "been used". There can be no wonder, then, that its friends do not question that fact. They have all the evidence they want that God does really make use of it as an occasion of blessing to sinners. \*

(p) Reasons of disuse.--"The reasons for the gradual disuse of the 'anxious seat' or 'penitents' bench' by some revivalists are frankly and fairly stated by the Rev. Orson Parker: 'For about fifteen years I made use of the 'anxious seat', till I saw that the people began to trust in it; and that, although they would go to the 'anxious seat', they would not go to Christ. It had been injudiciously used as the 'mourner's' bench and as the 'anxious seat', until people generally became prejudiced against it. So that few would come forward when called, unless somebody went and urged them, and almost pulled them forward.'"§

Let us observe, here, 1. That proper presentation, and emphasis, of Gospel truth, and understanding of the real significance of the Mourner's Bench, as a simple occasion of expression, would effectually counteract the mistake of trusting in it and not in Christ. 2. The prejudice referred to grew out of the injudicious use of the Mourner's Bench. For this the device was not responsible. Its abuse is to be charged to the account of those who misused it. This is nothing against the Mourner's Bench. 3. As to the matter of going out into the congregation and forcing the people to come forward, of course that should never be done. Leave the people free to act for themselves in the matter.

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\* Comp. above, Ch. VI, 6, (2), (3), et al.

§ Hervey, Man. of Rev., p. 79.

Thus, one who opposes the Hummer's Ranch does not "question that  
 good has something been done there" if he "can read". There can be  
 no wonder, then, that the friends do not question that fact. They have  
 all the evidence they want, but they really make use of it as an  
 occasion of display to themselves. \*

(v) Reasons of history.--The reasons for the gradual decline of  
 the 'anxious seat' or 'penitential' bench by some revivalists are (1) that  
 it and fairly stated by the Rev. Orion Parker: "For about fifteen years  
 I have used of the 'anxious seat', till I saw that the people began to  
 trust in it; and that, although they would go to the 'anxious seat',  
 they would not go to Christ. It had been injudiciously used as the  
 'anxious seat', and as the 'anxious seat', until people generally be-  
 came prejudiced against it. So that few would come forward when called  
 upon somebody went and urged them, and almost pulled them forward."  
 Let us observe, here, 1. That proper presentation, and emphasis, of  
 Gospel truth, and understanding of the real significance of the Hummer-  
 er's bench, as a simple occasion of expression, would actually con-  
 trect the mistake of trusting in it and not in Christ. 2. The great-  
 est error referred to grew out of the injudicious use of the Hummer's Ranch  
 for this the device was not responsible. The abuse is to be charged to  
 the account of those who misused it. This is nothing against the Hummer-  
 er's bench. 3. As to the matter of going out into the congregation  
 and telling the people to come forward, of course that should never be  
 done. Leave the people free to not for themselves in the matter.

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\* See, for example, Dr. W. G. L. (1833) at 21.  
 † Harvey, loc. cit. p. 17.

Never go beyond the limits of Gospel truth; a clear and cordial invitation to interested sinners to come, forward, if they will, for prayer; and such remarks as may encourage them to look to Jesus for all need of grace, and for eternal salvation.

(q) The Mourner's Bench diverts attention.--"The attention of the prayerful is drawn away from the mercy seat, to secure the success of the 'anxious seat'". "It is an injury . . . to have . . . attention diverted . . . from the real issue" to a false one. \*

Where there is a proper conception of truth, there is no danger of looking away from Christ to the Mourner's Bench. The coming to the same for prayer is not looked to in such a case, as an end, but only as an humble instrumentality. If, along with a proper presentation of truth, God is pleased to make use of it, well! "Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth!" If he chooses to work upon the hearts of the people, directly, through the preaching of the Gospel, without any other instrumentalities, well! Just so his will is done,--his work accomplished. Where the truth is made clear by the minister to the congregation, there is no danger of any false issue. †

(r) Mourner's Bench committal.--"I have seen enough to convince me that sinners are very apt to place a self-righteous dependence on this act of commitment." \*\* This would not be the case where the Gospel was rightly proclaimed. In the use of the Mourner's Bench, it is the duty of the preacher to teach the people that "the Mourner's Bench cannot save you. Christ alone can save you. The fact that you come forward

\* Hervey, Man. of Rev. p. 85; Nevin, The Anx. Bench, p. 77.

† Comp. above, Ch. XIII, B, 3, (c); XIII, B, 3, (d).

\*\* Sprague, Lect. on Rev., App. p. 287. Comp. above Ch. XIII, B, 2, (i).

here, however, and thus indicate to all these praying people, who are already interested in you, that you realize yourself to be a sinner in the sight of God, and that you want to be saved, and that you are willing to surrender yourself up now to the Lord and to his service, and that you want them, by prayer, to help you so to do, and to find Christ in the pardon of your sins,--this expression made in the sincerity of your heart, God, for Christ's sake, may be now pleased to bless. There is no merit in the Mourner's Bench. There is not a particle of merit in your coming forward, here; but God may be pleased, for his own Son's sake, to accept you in the act of so doing. Now, if you wish to come, committing your soul into the hands of God, for this gracious favor and blessing, come on, while we quietly wait a moment! (or "while we sing this song").

(s) Visible effects not worth all claimed.--"To draw an argument for the Anxious Bench from its immediate visible effects, is to take for granted that these are worth all they claim to be worth." \*--Not necessarily so. And yet one would be slow to reject unmistakable evidences of conversions occurring right then and there, as it were before his eyes! §

(t) Destroys, but returns nothing.--"Its tendencies . . . are decidedly bad, without any compensation of a solid kind." \*\* This statement is made from the standpoint of enemy to the device, who can see no good in what he hates. The friends of the measure can see per-

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\* Nevin, *The Anxious Bench*, p. 35.

§ Comp. above, Ch. X, 2, (d).

\*\* Nevin, p. 9, *pref.*

manent good in it, if used according to the real needs of souls,--consistently with the real Word of truth.

(u) Is this God's way?--"Is it the wisdom of God and the power of God as its friends would fain have us believe, for convincing careless sinners and bringing them to the foot of the cross? . . . If the Anxious Bench "be found wanting and unworthy of confidence here, we may safely pronounce it to be unworthy of confidence at every other point."\* That God has been pleased to bless the use of the Mourner's Bench, is evident to a great many good men and successful revivalists. A great many pastors, who devotedly love their churches, employ this device, feeling that it has the sanction of the Holy Spirit. It has survived the opposition of at least one and a half centuries, and will evidently survive to the end of time. It is perhaps not the Mourner's Bench that people condemn, but the abuse that is sometimes made of it in some hands.

(v) Fester's ruinous idea.--"The Anxious Bench is adapted to create and foster the ruinous imagination, that there is involved in the act of coming to it a real decision in favor of religion." § Let the reader note that the statement employs the term "adapted". Here, as elsewhere, everything depends on the management. What effect would the Gospel have, if proclaimed by an infidel, or a blasphemer? What would become of our pulpits, if we were to turn them over to gamblers? \*\*

(w) No community prospers with it.--"A false theory of religion is involved in it; . . . no religious community can grow and prosper in a

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\* Nevin, The Anxious Bench, p. 65.

§ Nevin, p. 72.

\*\* Comp. above Ch. XIII, B, 3, (r) et al.

... according to the real needs of souls,--  
 ... with the real world of truth.  
 ... "Is this God's way? --" Is it the vision of God and the power  
 of God as the friends would have us believe, for convincing ex-  
 press always and bringing them to the foot of the cross? ... If the  
 Anxious Bench "be found waiting and unworthy of confidence here, we may  
 safely pronounce it to be unworthy of confidence at every other point."  
 That God has been pleased to place the use of the Anxious Bench, in  
 evident to a great many and successful revivalists. A great  
 many pastors, who devotedly love their churches, enjoy this device,  
 feeling that it has the sanction of the Holy Spirit. It has survived  
 the opposition of at least one and a half centuries, and will evidently  
 survive to the end of time. It is perhaps not the Anxious Bench that  
 people condemn, but the name that is sometimes made of it in some hands.  
 (v) Textor's witness that--"The Anxious Bench is adapted to our  
 age and foster the <sup>name</sup> imagination, that there is involved in the  
 act of coming to it a real decision in favor of religion." ... but the  
 pastor notes that the statement applies the term "adapted" ... that, as  
 elsewhere, everything depends on the management. That effect would the  
 Gospel have, if proclaimed by an infidel, or a disingenuous? That would  
 condemn of our pulpits, it is safe to turn them over to quackery.  
 (w) He connects <sup>used</sup> with it--"A false theory of religion  
 is involved in it. ... no religious community can grow and prosper in a

\* Havin, The Anxious Bench, p. 85.  
 † Havin, p. 78.  
 \*\* Cong. House of Reps., XIII, 2, 3, (7) et al.



solid way, where it is allowed to have any considerable authority." But the great many prosperous churches all over the land, which employ the Mourner's Bench, or its corresponding devices, are proofs against the above assertion. Here, as in other assertions, our author so qualifies his statement, that when you arrive at his meaning, there is but little to consider in the effort to reply. \*

(x) Sin and regeneration not sufficiently admitted.--"The fact of sin is acknowledged, but not in its true extent. The idea of a new spiritual creation is admitted, but not its proper and radical and comprehensive form." † This may be true in the case of insincere and unscrupulous men. But in the hands of intelligent and consecrated pastors and worthy revivalists, it would not be. Such as the latter, condemn sin in all its forms, and dwell upon its "exceeding" sinfulness; insist on necessity of regeneration,--"Ye must be born again", and exalt the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only way of salvation,--"for there is none other way under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

(y) Involves error and heresy.--"Error and heresy . . . are involved in the system itself, and cannot fail sooner or later, where it is encouraged, to evolve themselves in the most mischievous results." \*\* There can certainly be no "error" or "heresy" in the Mourner's Bench, where properly conducted. It is due to the device that it be properly conducted, or not, at all. There must not be charged to the Mourner's Bench the conduct of unscrupulous and ungodly men.

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\* Nevin, *The Anxious Bench*, p. 118. Comp. above, Ch. VIII, 3, (c); VIII, 3.

† Nevin, p. 114.

\*\* Nevin, p. 114.

solid way, where it is allowed to have any considerable authority. But the great many passages elsewhere all over the land, which employ the language of the Bible, or its corresponding history, are proofs against the above assertion. Here, as in other instances, our author is qualified his statement, that when you arrive at his meaning, there is but little to consider in the effort to reply.

(x) Sin and repentance are sufficiently admitted. The fact of sin is acknowledged, but not in its true extent. The idea of a new spiritual creation is admitted but not its proper and radical and corrective form. This may be true in the case of individuals and un-converted men. But in the hands of intelligent and converted persons and worthy revivalists, it would not be. Such as the latter, however, sin in all its forms, and dwell upon the "exceeding sinfulness" thereof, and insist on the necessity of repentance, -- "we must be born again", and state the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only way of salvation, -- "for there is none other way under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

(y) Involves error and heresy. -- Error and heresy are involved in the system itself, and cannot fall sooner or later, when it is attempted, to evolve themselves in the most advantageous results. There can possibly be no "error" or "heresy" in the doctrine of the Bible, where properly conducted. It is due to the doctrine that it is properly conducted, or not at all. There must not be changed to the doctrine's hands the conduct of men, and thereby not.

See Davis, p. 114.      1 Davis, p. 114.  
 7111, 3.  
 Davis, The Antislavery Cause, p. 114. (2d. ed. 1847, p. 114, 115)

(z) Deserves to be discouraged.--The object of Nevin, "The Anxious Bench", ch. I:--"To show that the measure is adapted to obstruct rather than to promote the progress of true godliness, and that it deserves to be discouraged on this account." \* The author of "The Anxious Bench" does not write his tract with the view of impartially examining all facts connected with the Mourner's Bench, and giving the device impartial justice, but does his work with the determination of unconditionally killing the measure if it is in his power. § The Mourner's Bench cannot therefore expect to receive impartial treatment at his hands. This, however, it demands before an impartial public which will look at its history in the hands of wise and earnest men of God. Let the facts be brought to the front, not in the light of the use of fanatics, or of men of the world, but that of true and thoughtful ministers, who can be credited with the use of that discretion which becomes the house of God.

(&) Harm and loss to souls.--"Harm and loss to the souls of men flow largely from the use of the Anxious Bench." \*\* How different here is the conviction of those good and wise men who use it. Many of the instances coming under their own personal observation, in which they have been profoundly convinced that God was in it, and that he had employed it for the carrying on of his great work of salvation. §§

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\* Nevin, The Anxious Bench, p. 11.

§ Comp. above, Ch. XIII, 1, (1), (d) and note, (\*); XIII, 1, (2).

\*\* Nevin, p. 77; comp. above, Ch. VIII.

§§ Nevin, pp. 24, 81, 112.--Comp. above, Ch. XIII, A, 2, (p).

(2) Passages to be distinguished.--The object of Rev. "The Anxious Bench", of E.--The view that the measure is adapted to obtain rather than to promote the progress of true godliness, and that it deserves to be discouraged on this account. \* The author of "The Anxious Bench" does not write his tract with the view of impartially examining all facts connected with the Anxious Bench, and giving the decisive impartial justice, but does his work with the determination of unconditional support therefore except to receive impartial treatment at his hands. This, however, it demands before an impartial public which will look at the history in the hands of wise and earnest men of God. Let the facts be brought to the front, not in the light of the use of Anxious, or of man of the world, but that of true and thoughtful ministers, who can be credited with the use of that direction which becomes the house of God.

(3) Harm and loss to souls.--"Harm and loss to the souls of men flow largely from the use of the Anxious Bench." \* How different here is the conviction of those good and wise men who use it. Many of the trustees <sup>system</sup> for their own personal observation, in which they have been profoundly convinced that God was in it, and that he had employed it for the carrying on of his great work of salvation. It

\* Rev. "The Anxious Bench", p. 11.  
 † Com. above, Ch. XIII, 1, (1), (4) and note, (+); XIII, 1, (2).  
 \*\* Rev. p. 7; com. above, Ch. VIII.  
 †† Rev. p. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.

(aa) Opens the way to spurious conversions.--"Thousands of souls are deceived into a false hope." "In any form, the system is full of peril, as opening the way to spurious conversions, and encouraging sinners to rest in hopes that are vain and false." "A system that leads to such a multitude of spurious conversions and that makes room so largely for that low, gross, fanatical habit, which has just been described, cannot possibly be associated to any extent with the power of godliness in its deeper and more earnest forms." \* Note, here, 1. That the unfortunate "souls" referred to, are misled by deceivers, not by true and honest men of God who make the Mourner's Bench an occasion of expression of desire for the help of prayer, on the part of honest souls that are seeking to find Christ. 2. That real regenerations cannot be "spurious conversions". That these are the product of the Holy Spirit of God alone. That wise and good ministers of Jesus Christ will look sufficiently into the conditions of those showing interest, and especially those presenting themselves for membership in the churches, to satisfy their own minds as to whether they are really "new creatures" in Christ, and therefore really converted people. 3. That it is not the system that leads people to make premature professions, but the premature leaders, or ministers, who abuse the use of the Mourner's Bench, ~~not the leaders, or ministers,~~ for which it is not responsible. 4. That ministers and churches using the Mourner's Bench, do possess and enjoy the purest and deepest forms of religion. §

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\* Nevin, The Anx. Bench, pp. 24, 81, 112; comp. above, Ch. XIII, A, 2, (p).

§ Comp. above, Ch. VIII.

(bb) Popularity proves nothing.--"Popularity and apparent success prove nothing." "The popularity of the Anxious Bench proves nothing in its favor." \* This depends on the character of the people with whom it is popular. When the reader chronicles the friends of the device as their names are found in the preceding pages, and considers the nature of the evidence presented in preceding extracts from authors and workers, he will be in a better position to answer for himself. Popularity of the right kind, and from the right source, does indicate a great deal in favor of anything. Accordingly, it means a great deal for the Mourner's Bench.

(cc) Success proves nothing.--"Nothing can be argued in favor of the Anxious Bench from its success," etc. "We are told of hundreds awakened and converted in connection with its use. . . . But after all, the representation is entitled to no respect." § Real success, as the reader knows, amounts to a great deal. It is one of the most important facts in favor of anything. The position of our author, as shown in the above statement, puts him at great disadvantage in the estimation of impartial judges. Certainly the "representation" of honest men "is entitled to" some "respect". If anything proves anything in favor of a device, real success does. \*\*

(dd) Salvation lies in the sinner.--"The ground of the sinner's salvation is made to lie at last in his own separate person." §§--I

\* Nevin, The Anxious Bench, p.32.

§ Nevin, pp. 35. 34/

\*\* See above, Ch. VIII.

§§ Nevin, p. 115.

(32) Popularity proves nothing.---Popularity and apparent success prove nothing. The popularity of the Axioms Branch proves nothing in its favor. This depends on the character of the people with whom it is popular. When the reader observes the friends of the device as they names are found in the preceding pages, and considers the nature of the evidence presented in preceding extracts from authors and works, he will be in a position to answer for himself. Popularity of the right kind, and from the right sources, does indicate a great deal in favor of a system. Accordingly, it seems a great deal for the honor of the Branch.

*He believes*

(33) Success proves nothing.---Nothing can be argued in favor of the Axioms Branch from the success, etc. The one told of hundreds of hands and converted in connection with the use. . . . But after all, the representation is entitled to no respect. . . . Real success, as the reader knows, amounts to a great deal. It is one of the most important facts in favor of a system. The position of our author, as shown in the above statement, puts him at great disadvantage in the estimation of impartial judges. Certainly the "representation" of himself as "in-entitled to no respect" . . . It anything proves anything in favor of a device, real success does.

(34) Salvation lies in the sinner.---The ground of the sinner's salvation is made to lie at last in his own separate person. . . .

\* Devlin, The Axioms Branch, p. 25.  
 † Devlin, p. 28.  
 \*\* See above, pp. VII.  
 ‡ Devlin, p. 118.

do not consider this as true. Properly managed, the sinner is reminded, with emphasis, that the thing to do is to trust the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.

(ee) Salvation depends on New Measures.--"The whole question for eternity is to be settled by a single act, an arbitrary act, very recently adopted." \* No intelligent and thoughtful minister believes, or teaches, that there is salvation in the Mourner's Bench. They believe that God may be pleased to bless men who will indicate, by their coming forward, their conscious need of a Saviour and their desire to approach, with others, the throne of grace, in prayer for the divine favor. That the sinner has to make a complete surrender of himself to God, is certain. That this may be effectively done in the act of coming to the Mourner's Bench for prayer, seems equally certain. That a determination not to come seems to put the individual into an unfavorable attitude with reference to accepting Christ, seems to be beyond question. One has to be willing to do anything the Lord may suggest, if he would find Christ. †

(ff) Thing not good because God uses it.--"It does not follow by any means that a thing is right and good, because it may be made subservient occasionally, in the hands of God, to a good end." \*\* The fact that God does take it "in" his "hands", "occasionally", to use it, gives it very much the appearance of an approved instrument, especially, since he, who is the Infinite Creator and Lord, has it in his power to

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\* Sprague, Lect. on Rev., App., p. 390.

† See above, Ch. VIII, 5; VIII, 6; VIII, 7.

\*\* Nevin, The Anxious Bench, p. 37.





provide just such instruments as it may accord with his mind to use. The fact that he is consciously present with his servants from year to year, in their use of the Mourner's Bench, and is saving scores and thousands of sinners, on the occasions of its employment, satisfies those servants that the Lord is using it as an instrument in the work, and that it is "in the hands of" the Lord, a good thing. \*

(gg) System unfavorable to intelligent piety.--"The general system to which the Anxious Bench belongs . . . is unfavorable to deep, thorough and intelligent piety." "The very design of the inquiry now proposed, is to show that the Anxious Bench, and the System to which it belongs, have no claim to be considered either salutary or safe, in the service of religion." § Yet, the most consecrated men among us use it, and feel that God is with them in it. A great many people date their conversion to the very act of coming to the Mourner's Bench, or to the very moment of prayer at the Mourner's Bench. Having been convinced of God's blessing and presence in the same, these ministers so impressed, feel that they cannot afford to dispense with its use. So it goes on, and all recognize that its power is not its own, but that of the Holy Spirit, who is pleased to work with men, as they are pleased to acknowledge their sins, and their need of Christ, and express wishes for the help of their friends in prayer. \*\*

(hh) Ground of objection.--"The objection to it really rested on a theological ground. The Old School, extreme Calvinists, were not

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\* Comp. above, Ch. VIII.

§ Nevin, The Anxious Bench, pp. 22, 22<sup>1/2</sup>. Comp above, Ch. XIII, B, 3, (z).

\*\* Comp. above, Ch. VIII.

provide that such instruments as it may record with this kind to use.  
 The fact that he is essentially present with his servants from year to  
 year, in their use of the Honour's Bench, and in saving scores and thou-  
 sands of others, on the occasions of his employment, entitles these  
 servants that the Lord is using it as an instrument in the year, and  
 that it is "in the hands of" the Lord, a good thing.

(22) System unalterable to intelligent piety.--The General over-  
 law to which the Honour's Bench belongs, is unalterable to design,  
 through and intelligent piety. "The very design of the inquiry now  
 proposed, is to show that the Honour's Bench, and the System to which it  
 belongs, have no claim to be considered either salutary or safe, in

the service of religion." If, therefore, the most connected and most in use  
 it, and feel that God is with them in it. A great many people have  
 their converted to the very act of coming to the Honour's Bench, or  
 to the very moment of prayer at the Honour's Bench. Hearing these con-  
 viction of God's blessing and presence in the case, these ministers do

*into*

impressed, feel that they cannot afford to dispense with its use. So  
 it goes on, and all recognize that the power is not its own, but that of  
 the Holy Spirit, who is pleased to work with man, as they are pleased  
 to acknowledge their sins, and their need of Christ, and express wishes  
 for the help of their friends in prayer.

(23) Ground of objection.--The objection to it really turned on  
 a theological ground. The Old School, extreme Calvinists, were not

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Comp. above, Ch. VIII.  
 I have, The Honour's Bench, pp. 88, 112, Comp. above, Ch. VIII, § 2, (x).  
 Comp. above, Ch. VIII.

willing to allow that the human will had any self-determining power. In their belief conversion followed regeneration, a mysterious process wrought immediately by the Holy Spirit<sup>s</sup> on the heart<sup>s</sup> of the elect. They were accustomed merely to urge their hearers to use the means of grace and wait on the Lord until it was his good pleasure to renew them. Mr. Finney, on the other hand, assumed that the sinner had sufficient power of self-determination to accept the divine promise of salvation at any time, and that nothing but his own wicked perversity stood in the way of his immediate salvation. Consequently, in all his preaching he attempted above all things to sweep away every excuse that men had for their inaction, and strove by every means in his power to bring them to an immediate decision for Christ!\* But the views of the extreme Calvinists and of Finney do not necessarily conflict at the Mourner's Bench. It is true that the Holy Spirit originates in the sinner's heart all real interest in the direction of salvation. Also, that he really brings the sinner<sup>s</sup> to repentance and faith. At the same time, he uses means, and the Mourner's Bench is one of the means he employs in this work. Men are to do all they can in the use of the appointed or adopted means, and none have a just excuse for rejecting, or not accepting, Christ. Yet, the Holy Spirit does all the real saving of the soul, through the all-sufficient atonement of Christ. The proper use of the Mourner's Bench does not necessarily, at all, conflict with God's sovereign grace, on the one hand, or human free agency on the other. God uses the Mourner's Bench, and yet salvation is all of Christ.

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\* Vedder, Hist. Bapt. Mid. States, pp. 152f.

Willing to allow that the man will had any self-determining power, in their belief conversion followed regeneration, a systematic process wrought immediately by the Holy Spirit on the heart of the sinner. They were accustomed rarely to urge their hearers to use the means of grace and wait on the Lord until it was his good pleasure to answer them. Mr. Finney, on the other hand, assumed that the sinner had sufficient power of self-determination to accept the divine promise of salvation at any time, and that nothing but his own wicked propensity stood in the way of his immediate salvation. Consequently, in all his preaching he attempted above all things to sweep away every excuse that men had for their inaction, and strove by every means in his power to bring them to an immediate decision for Christ. But the views of the extreme Calvinists and of Finney do not necessarily conflict at the Sinner's Barricade. It is true that the Holy Spirit originated in the sinner's heart all real interest in the doctrine of salvation. Also, that he really brings the sinner into repentance and faith. At the same time, he uses means, and the Sinner's Barricade is one of the means he employs in this work. Men are to do all they can in the use of the appointed or adopted means, and none have a just excuse for rejecting or not accepting Christ. Yet, the Holy Spirit does all the real saving of the soul, through the all-sufficient atonement of Christ. The proper use of the Sinner's Barricade does not necessarily, at all, conflict with God's sovereign grace, on the one hand, or human free agency on the other. God uses the Sinner's Barricade, and yet salvation is all of Christ.

and after

(ii) The Mourner's Bench opposed.--a. "Mr. Finney's use of this method (inviting inquirers to the 'Anxious Seat') was severely criticised". "It was in connection with these meetings" (at Rochester, etc.) that great opposition was developed to what were called Mr. Finney's 'new measures'".\* b. "The worldly minded man. The extravagancies and disorders of the 'old-fashioned mourner's bench' will offend him. But his lordly lip will curl with equal scorn at Mr. Moody's meetings, where responses are discouraged and shouting saints are warned to keep silence. The solemn 'inquiry meeting' of the staid Presbyterian shares the ban of his disapproval with the noisy altar--work of the impulsive Methodist."<sup>§</sup> c. "If New Measures can be shown to proceed from the Holy Ghost, or to be identified in any view with the cause of revivals, they may well demand our reverence and respect. If they can be shown even to be of adiaphorous character with regard to religion, . . . they may then put in a reasonable plea to be tolerated in silence, if not absolutely approved. But neither the one nor the other of these positions can be successfully maintained." \*\* d. "Anxious Seats (as they were unfortunately called) became common about the same time"<sup>1824</sup>(1837). "It cannot be said that they met with general approval; and the more conservative pastors strongly discountenanced them." §§ e. "I do not deny that they may have been used without injury, perhaps with some advantage, in certain places, and on particular occasions. But as a general measure they seem to me

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\* Vedder, Hist. Bapt. Mid. States, pp. 151ff.

§ Vincent, The Revival, p. 33.

\*\* Nevin, The Anxious Bench, p. 21.

§§ Fish, Handbook of Rev., p. 351.

(11) The Southern's Southern opposition... Mr. Finney's was of this  
 kind (trusting inquiries to the 'Anxious Seat') was however critic-  
 ized. "It was in connection with these meetings" (at Rochester, etc.)  
 that Great opposition was developed to what was called Mr. Finney's  
 'new measures'. . . . "The worldly minded man. The extravagant and  
 disorderly of the 'old-fashioned' manner's people will offend him. But  
 his lordly lip will curl with equal scorn at Mr. Hoop's meetings, where  
 responses are discouraged and shouting saints are warned to keep silence.  
 The solemn 'industry meeting' of the state Presbyterian shares the  
 of his disapproval with the noisy after-work of the Impulsive Methodist."  
 . . . "If Mr. Hoop's can be shown to proceed from the Holy Ghost, or to  
 be identified in any view with the cause of revival, they may well be  
 held out reverence and respect. If they can be shown even to do of  
displeasure character with regard to religion, they may then put in  
 a reasonable plea to be tolerated in silence, if not absolutely approved.  
 But neither the one nor the other of these positions can be successfully  
 maintained." \* \* \* "Anxious Seats" (as they were unfortunately  
 called) became common about the same time (1837). "It cannot be said that  
 they met with general approval; and the more conservative pastors often  
 in silence returned them." § 1. "I do not deny that they may have  
 been used without injury, perhaps with some advantage, in certain places  
 and on particular occasions. But as a general measure they seem to me

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\* Webster, Hist. Dept. 1854, States, pp. 181-182.  
 † Vincent, The Revival, p. 22.  
 \*\* Harris, The Anxious Seat, p. 21.  
 †† First, Handbook of Rev., p. 201.

unnecessary, and seriously objectionable." \*

A. The reader must reject all opposition that grows, 1. Out of prejudice. § 2. Out of fanaticism. \*\* 3. Out of ignorance.--This applies to that opposition which grows out of the lack of acquaintance with the measures,--a fact quite possible in communities where they are "new". Here, they are rejected because they are "New Measures", and not because they have been impartially, patiently, and properly used, and found to be wanting. §§ 4. Out of an indiscriminate fault-finding disposition. Such a disposition will condemn the good with the bad. \*\*\*

B. Let him note the following: 1. "If New Measures can be shown to proceed from the Holy Ghost", they are to stand.--The highest evidence that they do, and that they therefore have his endorsement, is, so far as relates to their actual workings among us, the fact that he blesses their use. §§§ 2. "The more conservative pastors strongly discountenanced them." Conservatism would hold on to what we have, and admit nothing new, and especially nothing in conflict with it. In this we may be sadly wrong. Such is always the case, when we, in our conservatism, refuse to admit that which is necessary, or better than what we have. Many consecrated brethren have found the use of the Mourner's Bench, or its related devices, a necessity to the most successful course of a revival. In such cases, they have found it truly helpful, and an occa-

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\* Sprague, Lect. on Rev., App., p.349.

§ See above, Ch. XIII,1.

\*\* See above, Ch. XIII,1,(2).

§§ See Vædder, above, Ch. XIII,B,3,(ii),a; XIII,B,1,(j).

\*\*\* See above, Ch. XIII,B,3,(ii),b.

§§§ See above, Ch. VIII.



unnecessary, and certainly objectionable.

A. The reader must reject all opposition that grows, 1. Out of

positions; 2. Out of frustration; 3. Out of ignorance.--This

applies to that opposition which grows out of the lack of acquaintance

with the matter,--a fact with which it is possible to communicate where they are

"new". Here, they are rejected because they are "New Measures", and

not because they have been impatiently, patiently, and properly used, and

found to be wanting. 4. Out of an indiscriminate faith-finding dis-

position. Such a disposition will condemn the good with the bad. \*\*\*

B. Let him note the following: 1. "If New Measures can be shown

to proceed from the Holy Ghost, they are to stand.--The highest evidence

that they do, and that they therefore have His endorsement, is, so far

as relates to their actual workings among us, the fact that he classes

their use. 2. "The more conservative pastors strongly dissem-

inated them." Conservatives would hold on to what we have, and admit

nothing new, and especially nothing in conflict with it. In this we may

be sadly wrong. Such is always the case, when we, in our conservatism,

refuse to admit that which is necessary, or better than that we have.

Many conservative brethren have found the use of the Hymnary's Book, or

its related devices, a necessity to the most successful course of a re-

vival. In such cases, they have found it truly helpful, and an over-

\* Epistles, last on Rev., pp. 249.

1 See above, Ch. XIII, 1.

2 See above, Ch. XIII, 1, (3).

3 See Webster, above, Ch. XIII, 2, (11); (a); XIII, 2, 1, (1).

4 See above, Ch. XIII, 2, 1, (2).

5 See above, Ch. XIII.

sion of great good. It is wise to be conservative in the right direction. Never, in one that is wrong. \* 3. If the Mourner's Bench has been used "with advantage, in certain places, and on particular occasions", the matter of its use resolves itself into conditions: (1) That it be used only, but surely, on such occasions as really call for it. This is all that its thoughtful and considerate advocates could ask for it, as to occasion. The honest pastor, or leader in charge, must decide the question for himself. (2) That it be properly used on such occasions. In being thus used, it will be used to the best real advantage. §

(jj) No Scripture for it.--"There is no Scripture authority for this measure",--Some evangelists. \*\*

We need to ascertain here, what is "The real attitude of the sacred Scriptures to this matter in clear expression, or in spirit, and whether it accordingly has the sanction, or rests under the condemnation of, God--not what may be its visible origin, or development, within the precincts of ecclesiastical history." §§ Let us consider, with a view to arrival at this fact, the following texts: 1. Rom. 8:26,27:"The Spirit helpeth our infirmities' (R.V.)--helps us wherein we lack. 'We know not how to pray as we ought' (R.V.). He teaches us what to pray for, etc.; intercedes for, inspires and intensifies our desires; leads us to prevail".--He inspires all real prayer for sinners. \*\*\*

2. I Tim. 2:1-4: "Exhortation that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men',--thereby enjoining us to

\* See above, Ch. XIII, B, 3, (ii), d; B, 1, (h); B, (i), (j).

§ See above, Ch. XIII, B, 3, (ii), (e), and comp. Ch. VIII.

\*\* Hervey, Man. of Rev., p. 85.

§§ Chr. Ind., Oct. 19, 1899, art., "Mourner's Bench".

\*\*\* Chr. Ind., Oct. 19, 1899, art. "Mourner's Bench".

... of great good. It is wise to be conservative in the right direc-  
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Spirit itself can help our infirmities" (R.V.) -- helps us wherein we fail. We  
know not how to pray as we ought" (R.V.). He teaches us what to pray  
for, etc.; intercedes for us, prays and intercedes for our desires; leads  
us to prayer. -- He inspired all real prayer for sinners. \*\*\*

1. 1 Tim. 2:1-6: "Exhortation that supplications, prayers, interces-  
sions, thanksgivings, be made for all men, -- liberty enjoying us in  
\* See above, pp. XIII, N. 3, (1), 2, (1), 3, (1), 4, (1), 5, (1), 6, (1), 7, (1), 8, (1), 9, (1), 10, (1), 11, (1), 12, (1), 13, (1), 14, (1), 15, (1), 16, (1), 17, (1), 18, (1), 19, (1), 20, (1), 21, (1), 22, (1), 23, (1), 24, (1), 25, (1), 26, (1), 27, (1), 28, (1), 29, (1), 30, (1), 31, (1), 32, (1), 33, (1), 34, (1), 35, (1), 36, (1), 37, (1), 38, (1), 39, (1), 40, (1), 41, (1), 42, (1), 43, (1), 44, (1), 45, (1), 46, (1), 47, (1), 48, (1), 49, (1), 50, (1), 51, (1), 52, (1), 53, (1), 54, (1), 55, (1), 56, (1), 57, (1), 58, (1), 59, (1), 60, (1), 61, (1), 62, (1), 63, (1), 64, (1), 65, (1), 66, (1), 67, (1), 68, (1), 69, (1), 70, (1), 71, (1), 72, (1), 73, (1), 74, (1), 75, (1), 76, (1), 77, (1), 78, (1), 79, (1), 80, (1), 81, (1), 82, (1), 83, (1), 84, (1), 85, (1), 86, (1), 87, (1), 88, (1), 89, (1), 90, (1), 91, (1), 92, (1), 93, (1), 94, (1), 95, (1), 96, (1), 97, (1), 98, (1), 99, (1), 100, (1).  
+ See above, pp. VII, N. 3, (1), 2, (1), 3, (1), 4, (1), 5, (1), 6, (1), 7, (1), 8, (1), 9, (1), 10, (1), 11, (1), 12, (1), 13, (1), 14, (1), 15, (1), 16, (1), 17, (1), 18, (1), 19, (1), 20, (1), 21, (1), 22, (1), 23, (1), 24, (1), 25, (1), 26, (1), 27, (1), 28, (1), 29, (1), 30, (1), 31, (1), 32, (1), 33, (1), 34, (1), 35, (1), 36, (1), 37, (1), 38, (1), 39, (1), 40, (1), 41, (1), 42, (1), 43, (1), 44, (1), 45, (1), 46, (1), 47, (1), 48, (1), 49, (1), 50, (1), 51, (1), 52, (1), 53, (1), 54, (1), 55, (1), 56, (1), 57, (1), 58, (1), 59, (1), 60, (1), 61, (1), 62, (1), 63, (1), 64, (1), 65, (1), 66, (1), 67, (1), 68, (1), 69, (1), 70, (1), 71, (1), 72, (1), 73, (1), 74, (1), 75, (1), 76, (1), 77, (1), 78, (1), 79, (1), 80, (1), 81, (1), 82, (1), 83, (1), 84, (1), 85, (1), 86, (1), 87, (1), 88, (1), 89, (1), 90, (1), 91, (1), 92, (1), 93, (1), 94, (1), 95, (1), 96, (1), 97, (1), 98, (1), 99, (1), 100, (1).  
\*\* See above, pp. VII, N. 3, (1), 2, (1), 3, (1), 4, (1), 5, (1), 6, (1), 7, (1), 8, (1), 9, (1), 10, (1), 11, (1), 12, (1), 13, (1), 14, (1), 15, (1), 16, (1), 17, (1), 18, (1), 19, (1), 20, (1), 21, (1), 22, (1), 23, (1), 24, (1), 25, (1), 26, (1), 27, (1), 28, (1), 29, (1), 30, (1), 31, (1), 32, (1), 33, (1), 34, (1), 35, (1), 36, (1), 37, (1), 38, (1), 39, (1), 40, (1), 41, (1), 42, (1), 43, (1), 44, (1), 45, (1), 46, (1), 47, (1), 48, (1), 49, (1), 50, (1), 51, (1), 52, (1), 53, (1), 54, (1), 55, (1), 56, (1), 57, (1), 58, (1), 59, (1), 60, (1), 61, (1), 62, (1), 63, (1), 64, (1), 65, (1), 66, (1), 67, (1), 68, (1), 69, (1), 70, (1), 71, (1), 72, (1), 73, (1), 74, (1), 75, (1), 76, (1), 77, (1), 78, (1), 79, (1), 80, (1), 81, (1), 82, (1), 83, (1), 84, (1), 85, (1), 86, (1), 87, (1), 88, (1), 89, (1), 90, (1), 91, (1), 92, (1), 93, (1), 94, (1), 95, (1), 96, (1), 97, (1), 98, (1), 99, (1), 100, (1).  
\*\*\* See above, pp. VII, N. 3, (1), 2, (1), 3, (1), 4, (1), 5, (1), 6, (1), 7, (1), 8, (1), 9, (1), 10, (1), 11, (1), 12, (1), 13, (1), 14, (1), 15, (1), 16, (1), 17, (1), 18, (1), 19, (1), 20, (1), 21, (1), 22, (1), 23, (1), 24, (1), 25, (1), 26, (1), 27, (1), 28, (1), 29, (1), 30, (1), 31, (1), 32, (1), 33, (1), 34, (1), 35, (1), 36, (1), 37, (1), 38, (1), 39, (1), 40, (1), 41, (1), 42, (1), 43, (1), 44, (1), 45, (1), 46, (1), 47, (1), 48, (1), 49, (1), 50, (1), 51, (1), 52, (1), 53, (1), 54, (1), 55, (1), 56, (1), 57, (1), 58, (1), 59, (1), 60, (1), 61, (1), 62, (1), 63, (1), 64, (1), 65, (1), 66, (1), 67, (1), 68, (1), 69, (1), 70, (1), 71, (1), 72, (1), 73, (1), 74, (1), 75, (1), 76, (1), 77, (1), 78, (1), 79, (1), 80, (1), 81, (1), 82, (1), 83, (1), 84, (1), 85, (1), 86, (1), 87, (1), 88, (1), 89, (1), 90, (1), 91, (1), 92, (1), 93, (1), 94, (1), 95, (1), 96, (1), 97, (1), 98, (1), 99, (1), 100, (1).

pray 'for all men'. This includes sinners." \*

3. Num. 21:7: Sinners (God's erring people) asking God's servant to pray for them.--"Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents for us. And Moses prayed for the people."--The Lord was pleased with his servant's petition, and answered it.

4. Job 42:7-10: God instructs offenders, assuring them of the help of prayer.--"The Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt-offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly." Job "prayed for his friends".--The Lord requires his servant to mediate or intercede for others. Moreover, the Lord inclined his heart to do this thing.

5. Gen. 20:7,17: The Lord instructs Abimelech, and assures him of the help of prayer.--"Restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live. . . So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech", etc. Here, as in Job, above, the Lord justifies the supplication of man for man.

6. I Ki. 13:6: The servant of the Lord prays for the wicked Jereboam.--"The king answered and said unto the man of God, Intreat now the face

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\* Chr. Ind., Oct. 19, 1899, art., "Mourner's Bench".



of the Lord thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me again. And the man of God besought the Lord, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as it was before." The man felt his need of prayer, and appealed to the man whom he recognized as on terms of approach to God. Him he asked for prayer.

7. Ac. 8:24: The sinner instructed to pray. His request, in return, for prayer: "Pray ye to the Lord for me". See comments, Ch. IV, <sup>4</sup>3, above.

8. Mr. 11:24; Jas. 5:16: The prayer of faith is answered.--"All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them".--Mark. We are to pray for one another.--"The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working".--James.

The Holy Spirit indites all real prayer. The Holy Spirit originates in sinners an interest in eternal things. The Holy Spirit inclines the Christian to pray for sinners, and impresses the sinner with desire for the help of prayer. The Christian finds joy in locating those who feel their need of Christ and desire to be saved. He desires to help them--at least in prayer. The interested sinner finds encouragement and help in knowing that he is remembered by praying people at a throne of grace. It is proper for opportunities to be given that these facts may be made known. Hence, the proposition from the earnest Pastor to the interested. Hence, in response, the expression of desire for prayer. Compare the proposition of Sammel, I Sam. 7:5:- "Gather all Israel to Mizpâh, and I will pray for you unto the Lord." Also, vs. 8, the entreaty of Israel, "Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us; that

he will save us out of the hands of the Philistines". Also, vs. 9, "Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel; and the Lord heard him".--Samuel volunteered to pray for the people.

It is thoroughly in accord with the spirit of Scripture for God's people to pray for interested sinners. It is not contrary to Scripture precedent for God's servants to indicate a willingness to pray for those who need his help. It certainly cannot be against the spirit of Scripture to encourage those who realize their need, to honestly indicate it at a proper time and place. What place more appropriate to indicate one's desire for prayer than in the presence of praying people, in the house of prayer?

**THE END.**