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A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bib-sacra\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php)

## JOHN HUMPHREY NOYES AND HIS "BIBLE COMMUNISTS"

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### II. THE BEGINNINGS

It was into this atmosphere that John Humphrey Noyes was plunged by his conversion in August, 1831. He was an opinionated, self-assertive young man of twenty,<sup>44</sup> who had been graduated from Dartmouth College the year before (1830), and meantime had been studying law in his brother-in-law's office at Putney, where the family had been resident since 1823. The great revival of 1831 seems fairly to have rushed him off his feet. He took his conversion hard, yielding with difficulty; but when he yielded he yielded altogether. He himself sums up what happened in a rapid sentence, which is no more rapid, however, than the rush of the events it describes. "The great Finney revival found him," he says of himself, "at twenty years of age, a college graduate, studying law, and sent him to study divinity, first at Andover, afterwards at New Haven."<sup>45</sup> He entered the Seminary at Andover four weeks after his conversion, and in less than three months after it he had placed himself at the disposal of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. But nothing that organized Christianity could offer could satisfy his morbid appetite for excitement, and in a little more than two years more he had turned his back upon it all and was seeking thrills along a new path.

He has himself described for us the stages of his progress.

"After a painful process of conviction, in which the conquest of my aversion to becoming a minister was one of the critical points"—it is thus that he describes his conversion,<sup>46</sup>—"I submitted to God and obtained spiritual peace. With much joy and zeal I immediately devoted

myself to the study of the Scriptures, and to religious testimony in private and public. The year of 1831 was distinguished as 'the year of revivals.' New measures, protracted meetings, and New York evangelists had just entered New England, and the whole spirit of the people was fermenting with religious excitement. The millennium was supposed to be very near. I fully entered into the enthusiasm of the time; and seeing no reason why backsliding should be expected or why the revival spirit might not be maintained in its full vigor permanently, I determined with all my inward strength to be 'a young convert' in zeal and simplicity forever. My heart was fixed on the millennium, and I resolved to live or die for it. Four weeks after my conversion I went to Andover and was admitted to the Theological Seminary."

This was a typical conversion of the "revival-of-excitement" order, issuing not so much in sound religion as in restless activities, and filling the mind only with strong delusions—in this case chiliastic delusions—which prepare it for everything except sane religious development. It is interesting to observe that, as he tells us more than once, most of those who followed him in his further vagaries had begun with him in these. "Most of those," he says, writing in 1847,<sup>67</sup> "who have become Perfectionists"—he means the term in the narrow sense in which it describes only his own followers—"within the last ten years had previously been converts and laborers in such revivals," that is to say, had been victims, as he was, of the "revival of excitement."

Of course no one in his inflamed state of mind could find satisfaction at Andover. The students there were merely Christians, and seemed to him from his exalted point of view a good deal less than what Christians should be. In the censoriousness which naturally accompanies such exaltation of spirit he accuses them of indifference, levity, jealousy, sensuality,—of everything which as Christians they ought not to be. Only in a few who were touched with the enthusiasm of missions—Lyman, Munson, Tracy, Justin Perkins—did he find any congeniality of companionship. He was taken into a secret society which they

maintained for mutual improvement, and learned from it a method of government by criticism which he afterwards employed in his communistic establishment.<sup>68</sup> The classroom instruction, also, was not wholly without effect upon him; in particular Moses Stuart's exegesis of the seventh chapter of Romans, and of the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, supplied him with points of departure from which he afterward advanced to the two hinges on which his whole system turned. He remained at Andover, however, only the single session of 1831-32. The autumn of 1832 found him at the Divinity School at New Haven. His motive for making the change, he tells us, was that at Yale, he "could devote a greater part of his time to his favorite study of the Bible"; by which he appears to mean that the classroom work at Yale was less exigent than at Andover. In any case he preferred to prosecute his study of the Bible without, rather than under, the direction of, his teacher. "I attended lectures daily," he writes, "and studied sufficiently to be prepared for examination; but my mind was chiefly directed with my heart to the simple treasures of the Bible. I went through the Epistles of Paul again and again, as I had gone through the Evangelists at Andover; and in the latter part of the time"—during which he was at Yale—"when I had begun to exercise myself in preaching, I was in the habit of preparing the matter of every sermon by reading the whole New Testament through with reference to the subject I had chosen." He also found time for many external activities. He worked among the negroes of the town and took part in the organization of one of the earliest anti-slavery societies in this country. He even became instrumental in building up a struggling church. There were about a dozen "revivalists" in the city, he says, and their fervor attracted him. "For," says he, "I was burning with the same zeal which I found in them (but nowhere else in the city) for the conversion of souls." As they grew in number they had organized themselves as the "Free Church," and, on Noyes's recommendation, they now in-

vited James Boyle to preach to them. He was thus provided with church associations of the hottest revivalistic character.<sup>69</sup>

These new associations were not calculated to moderate Noyes's fanatical tendencies. The censoriousness which he had exhibited toward his fellow students at Andover he now turned upon Christendom at large. How many real Christians are there in Christendom? he asked himself; and he felt constrained to answer, Not many. From his higher vantage-ground he looked out upon Christianity, as exhibited in the churches, and found it fatally wanting. His missionary zeal naturally cooled: with all Christendom lying in the evil one, what were the heathen to him? He saw his task now in the Christianizing of nominal Christians; the lost condition, not of the heathen but of Christians, was heavy on his heart.<sup>70</sup> And now his sedulous study of the Bible in careful seclusion from his natural advisers, began to bear fruit,—though he did not get so far away from Moses Stuart as to impress us with the originality of his thought. In the summer after his first year at Yale—the summer of 1833—he settled it with himself that our Lord's second advent had already taken place; that it took place, in fact, within a generation of His death. We say "he settled it with himself," for his confidence in his new conclusion was characteristically perfect. "I no longer conjectured or believed in the inferior sense of these words," he says, "but I *knew* that the time appointed for the Second Advent was within one generation from the time of Christ's personal ministry." Oddly enough he appears to have been led to this conclusion chiefly by Jno. xxi. 22: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" "Here," said he, "is an intimation by Christ himself that John will live till His Second Coming; the Bible is not a book of riddles; its hidden treasures are accessible to those who make the Spirit of Truth their guide; and how is it possible to reconcile this intimation with the accepted theory that Christ's Second Coming is yet future?" If we are inclined

to wonder a little at the mental struggles which Noyes seems to have undergone in reaching this conclusion, we should remind ourselves that it involved a very considerable revolution of thought for him; and revolutions of thought were not easy for Noyes. He had hitherto been, we must remember, a hot chiliast, looking for the Second Coming not only in the future, but in the immediate future; and expecting from it everything he was setting his hopes upon in his inflamed fancy. It was a great wrench to transfer this second coming back into the distant past, though, as we shall see, he managed to soften the blow by preserving his chiliastic hopes for the impending future and carrying only the second coming itself back into the past.

In August of this same summer (1833) he was licensed to preach by the New Haven West Association, and spent the six weeks that intervened before the reopening of the Seminary in the autumn, preaching in a little church in North Salem, New York. He was as yet not a perfectionist; only a fanatical chiliastic revivalist — if we can use the word “only” in such a connection. But perfectionism did not lie outside the horizon of his vision. Those “New York evangelists” who broke their way into New England in 1831, — to whom he also had fallen a victim, and James Boyle among the others, who had been a Methodist and whom he had brought to New Haven, where he had formed with him a close intimacy, — came from a region plowed and harrowed by perfectionism, and can scarcely have been ignorant of it; they may even have in their own persons borne more or less of its scars. He found also on his return to the Seminary some zealous young men, newly entered, who spurred him on to higher attainments in holiness. He diligently read such works as the “Memoirs” of James Brainerd Taylor<sup>11</sup> and Wesley’s tract on “Christian Perfection.” He naturally found himself, therefore, through the autumn and early winter months making steady and accelerating progression toward perfect holiness. No lower attainment would satisfy him, and he

became ever more and more eager to reach the goal; this effort, in the end, absorbed all his energies. At last the blessing came, and he received his "second conversion."

He writes to his mother: "The burden of Christian perfection accumulated upon my soul, until I determined to give myself no rest while the possibility of the attainment of it remained doubtful. At last the Lord met me with the same promise that gave peace to my soul when first I came out of Egypt: 'if thou wilt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.' By faith I took the proffered boon of eternal life. God's spirit sealed the act, and the blood of Christ cleansed me from all sin." His "second conversion" consisted then in his pressing the promise of "salvation," the assurance of "cleansing from all sin," into a promise and assurance that the "salvation," the "cleansing," shall be completed as soon as begun, consuming no time and running through no process to the promised and assured end. The parallel between his first and second conversions was complete. Not only were both accomplished through the instrumentality of a single text, — understood partly then, perfectly now, — but in both cases alike he was driven by his temperament at once into publicity. The atmosphere of propaganda was his vital breath: he gave not a moment to meditation, testing, ripening. As, on his "first conversion," he tells us that he "immediately" devoted himself (along with the study of Scripture) "to religious testimony in private and public"; so now, on the evening of the very day of his "second conversion," he preached at the Free Church on the text, "He that committeth sin is of the devil," and proclaimed the doctrine of perfect holiness — how such a man would do it from such a text we can well imagine. "The next morning," we are availing ourselves now of W. A. Hinds's narrative,<sup>73</sup> "a theological student who heard the discourse of the previous evening came to labor with him, and asked him directly, 'Don't you commit sin?' The answer was an unequivocal 'No.' The man stared as

though a thunderbolt had fallen before him, and repeated his question, and got the same answer. Within a few hours word was passed through the college and the city, '*Noyes says he is perfect!*' and immediately afterward it was reported that *Noyes is crazy!*"<sup>73</sup>

There is no mention made, in Noyes's account of his "second conversion," of any influences working on him in that direction from without. We have seen that there cannot have failed to be such. Noyes himself, however, speaks in this connection only of his study of perfectionist literature of the Wesleyan school; to which, no doubt, we must hence give much of the credit of the change in his views. The perfectionism which he adopted, however, when he worked himself through, was not specifically Wesleyan in type, but was rather of that mystical kind which was at the time prevalent in western and central New York. As there was nothing in Noyes's previous intellectual history to prepare us for this particular mode of thinking, we naturally conjecture that he must have derived it from the New York men, channels of communication with whom, as we have seen, existed in abundance. A writer of the time, who shows himself in general very familiar with what was going on, tells us explicitly that he owed his indoctrination into perfectionism to one of the young men who had gone astray in E. N. Kirk's school at Albany. "Chauncey E. Dutton," we read,<sup>74</sup> "had breathed the afflatus. In 1833 he left Albany and entered the theological department at New Haven, Connecticut. Here he infused the new enthusiasm into John H. Noyes, a young man of Putney, Vermont, with whom he had become familiar. Thus began the logos of New Haven Perfectionism." The date is right, and the general circumstances; it was on his return to New Haven in the autumn of 1833, Noyes himself tells us, that he found a number of zealous young men just entering the Seminary, to whose "constant fellowship and conversation" he attributes, along with the Wesleyan literature which he read, his "progress towards holiness." The difficulty lies in the absence of the name of Dutton from the

general catalogue of the New Haven Divinity School, and indeed from that of the University also. It may be of course that a mistake has been made, only, in connecting Dutton with the institution as a pupil. There is no doubt that he was in New Haven not far from this time propagating his perfectionist faith. We find him there, for instance, only a couple of years or so later on this errand, and Noyes was in close intercourse with him a year earlier in Brimfield.<sup>75</sup> The tone of Noyes's reference both to him and to his companion in these ministries, Simon Lovett, however, leaves an impression that this intercourse with them belongs rather to 1835, and later than to 1833-34. And we can scarcely avoid the feeling that he means us to gather that he was self-converted to his perfectionism.

Lyman H. Atwater, who was a fellow student of the next lower class with Noyes at Yale, seems to think of him merely as one of the Pelagianizing perfectionists who sprang up in his student days at New Haven under the teaching of Nathaniel W. Taylor. He is giving a general account of the rise of this class of perfectionists, and permits himself this bit of personal reminiscence:—<sup>76</sup>

"When we were students of theology, a little coterie, becoming wiser than their teachers or fellow students, strained the doctrine of ability beyond the scope contended for and admitted by its most eminent champions, to the length of maintaining, not only that all men can, but that some do, reach sinless perfection in this life, of which, so far as students were concerned, a trio or so were the principal confessors. The net result of the whole was that the leader, instead of going forward into the ministry, ran into various socialistic and free love heresies, on the basis of which he founded the Putney and Oneida communities, over the latter of which he now presides. Other sporadic outbursts of the distemper appeared here and there in the Presbyterian and Congregational communions, or among separatists and come-outers from them, these often uniting with the radicals or advanced reformers of other communions."

This statement informs us that Noyes was not the only student at New Haven at the time who lapsed into perfec-

tionism, but had a few companions, or, we may possibly suppose, converts. That his perfectionism arose simply from an overstraining of the Taylorite doctrine of ability seems, however, from his own account of it, not altogether likely; and we may perhaps not improperly suspect that Atwater has merely included him in the general movement which he was describing, without stopping to inquire as to any special peculiarity he may have exhibited. He himself, in giving an account of his mental and spiritual growth leading up to his conversion to perfectionism, has nothing to say of N. W. Taylor; but speaks rather of John Wesley as a guide and instructor. There was no doubt a Taylorite element in his thought,<sup>77</sup> which came out especially in his teaching as to the "first conversion" and as to the act of faith in general, concerning which he seems to have no other idea than that it is an act of our own in our own native powers.<sup>78</sup> But he certainly did not find the account of the perfection to which he supposed himself to have attained on that fateful twentieth of February, 1834, in the sheer ability of his will to do what it chose, and therefore (if it chose) to be perfect. He referred it, on the contrary, directly to the effect of communion with Christ. The affinities of his doctrine, in other words, were less Pelagian than mystical. By "the apprehension" of the facts concerning Christ and His saving work, — "His victory over sin and death, the judgment of the prince of this world, and the spiritual reconciliation of God with man," — he explains,<sup>79</sup> "believers are brought into fellowship with Christ's death and resurrection, and made partakers of His divine nature and His victory over the evil one." "The gospel which I had received and preached," he had written a few months earlier,<sup>80</sup> speaking directly of what had happened on February 20, 1834, "was based upon the idea that faith identifies the soul with Christ, so that by His death and resurrection the believer dies and rises again, not literally, nor yet figuratively, but *spiritually*; and thus, so far as sin is concerned, is placed beyond the grave, in heavenly places with Christ." He goes on to

say that three months later he felt compelled to extend this doctrine so as to make it include the redemption of the body as well as the soul — to abolish death as well as sin — by participation in Christ's resurrection so that though we will "pass through the form of death" (sad concession to the appearance of things!) we who are believers indeed will not really die. This doctrine, not only in form but in substance, is extremely mystical.

The effect of Noyes's proclamation of his perfectionism was, naturally, the loss of the countenance of the several religious organizations with which he was connected. He was dismissed from the Divinity School and requested to withdraw altogether from the premises. The New Haven West Association, by which he had been licensed to preach the previous August, now recalled its license, "on account of his views on the subject of Christian perfection."<sup>81</sup> His church membership was still in the Congregationalist Church at Putney, and that church subsequently excluded him from fellowship "for heresy, and breach of covenant" — supporting the charge apparently, however, by specifications which are drawn from his subsequent teaching.<sup>82</sup> His real church home was, nevertheless, the Free Church at New Haven, and a vote was passed at once by that church requesting him to discontinue all communication with its members. He represents himself as feeling very isolated. "I had now lost," he writes, "my standing in the Free Church, in the ministry, and in the college. My good name in the great world was gone. My friends were fast falling away. I was beginning to be indeed an outcast: yet I rejoiced and leaped for joy. Sincerely I declared that 'I was glad when I got rid of my reputation.' Some persons asked me whether I should continue to preach, now that the clergy had taken away my license. I replied, 'I have taken away their license to sin, and they keep on sinning; so, though they have taken away my license to preach, I shall keep on preaching.'" The isolation complained of, however, had of course only relation to, and meant no more than an enforced change in, his associates. There were

plenty of perfectionists within reach, and they of the most aggressive character. Noyes was soon, if he were not already, in close intercourse with them. But there can be no doubt that the effect of the announcement of his new views was something of a surprise to him, and brought on a crisis in his career. He tells us that in conversation with his father one day, during the short interval between his conversion and his entering the Seminary at Andover, he had propounded an interpretation of some Scripture, concerning which the older man uttered a warning. "Take care," said he, "that is heresy." "Heresy or not," rejoined the son, "it is true." "But," warned the father, "if you are to be a minister, you must think and preach as the rest of the ministers do; if you get out of the traces they will whip you in." "Never!" rejoined the son hotly: "never will I be whipped by ministers or anybody else into views that do not commend themselves to my understanding as guided by the Bible and enlightened by the Spirit." Now that the crisis had come, the "fighting spirit" he had announced in this program did not fail him. He had so little thought of yielding to the admonitions of his mentors, that he rather threw himself unreservedly into the conflict and seized the reins of leadership of the perfectionist party. "I resolved," he says, "to labor alone if necessary, to repair the breaches of our cause."

The immediate fruits of his propaganda at New Haven were not altogether inconsiderable. He was able to count James Boyle himself among his converts; and the two together carried on for a time a vigorous literary campaign, including the publication from the summer of 1834 (the first number bears the date of August 20) of a monthly journal called *The Perfectionist*. A number of the members of the Free Church also left the church, and joined Noyes's party. Some converts were made also here and there outside of New Haven, especially in New York. Every effort was made by Noyes to compact his followers into a definite sect with its own doctrinal platform and organization. It was in this that his peculiarity consisted.

We have already had occasion to point out the extreme individualism of the perfectionists of his day. Noyes was determined that he at least should not stand off by himself, but should be the head of a body which reflected his thought and obeyed his will. Everywhere he asserted his leadership; and although he was able to make it good with the completeness which he desired over only a small coterie, a certain deference appears to have been shown him in a surprisingly widely extended circle. Looking back upon these early days from a point of sight thirty years later, he tells us how they then appeared to him.

"The term Perfectionist," he tells us,<sup>88</sup> "was applied to two classes who came out from the Orthodox churches at about the same period. They resembled each other in many respects (both classes apprehending alike the great truth, that the new covenant means salvation from sin, the security of believers, the substitution of grace for law and ordinances, etc.), but there was yet this fundamental and important distinction:—one class appropriated these doctrines in the interest of individualism, the other in the interest of unity; one class scorned the idea of subordination and discipline, the other joyfully received the idea of organization, and was willing to submit to such discipline as organic harmony should require; one class were all leaders, a regiment of officers, many of them were for a time eloquent champions of the new truths, but the majority of them rushed into excesses which dishonored the name Perfectionist; the other class, led by J. H. Noyes, have persevered in a course of self-improvement, overcoming many obstacles, and finally have developed a system of principles and a form of practical life which at least challenges the admiration of the world."

This formal difference—organized or unorganized—was not, however, the only thing which divided Noyes's followers from outlying perfectionists. He was not only prepared to impose upon them his personal leadership, but his personal doctrinal views also. And, young man in his twenty-fourth year as he was, he had his doctrinal views even now in their formative ideas already in hand. They were evolved from the two fundamental assertions to which

he had now attained — that Christ's second coming took place in A.D. 70, and that no one living in sin is in the proper sense a Christian. Working out the details of his system rapidly from these two underlying principles, he as rapidly developed a very acute sense of the uniqueness of his "New Haven Perfectionism." Consciousness of the points of agreement between his and other perfectionism grew faint: the settled persuasion that he, and he alone, possessed truth took possession of him. "New Haven Perfectionism," he writes in his journal,<sup>84</sup> "is a new religion . . . has affinity with no sect this side the primitive church. . . . As a system it is distinct from all the popular theologies." And again:<sup>85</sup> "New Haven Perfectionism is a doctrinal system, standing by itself, distinct from Wesleyan, New York, and Oberlin Perfectionism, as it is from non-resistance, 'come-outism,' etc. . . . "Perfectionism in other places" than in Putney, "so far as I know (individual instances excepted) has been mixed up with New York fanaticism, Boyleism, Gatesism, Non-resistance, etc." His immediate purpose in these last words is not directly to assert doctrinal peculiarity (although that is asserted), but rather to repudiate any entanglement in the immoralities which persistent rumor was laying to the charge of perfectionists, at Southampton, Brimfield, and other places where the indecency of "spiritual wives" was in practice.

It is worth while to turn aside to point out that one of the peculiarities by which Noyes separated himself from the perfectionists of the time was that he did, in point of fact, keep himself free from complicity with this evil. He makes it quite clear that it was in his mind a characteristic of what he calls "New York Perfectionists," and he declares with the utmost emphasis that he himself never gave it the least countenance. It was brought into New England from New York, he tells us, by Simon Lovett and Chauncey E. Dutton, who circulated at Southampton, Brimfield, and afterward at New Haven itself, as a sort of missionaries; and though beginning in mere "bundling,"

passed on into actual licentiousness.<sup>86</sup> As for himself, he asseverates that he had no connection with such things — whether at Brimfield, Rondout, or New York <sup>87</sup> — except to reprove them.<sup>88</sup> It must not be imagined, however, that it was what we should call the immorality of the practice which kept Noyes thus free from this iniquity. He speaks of it as "licentiousness," it is true; but he fully shared the "antinomianism" of which it was the expression. His chief concern was that the premature practice of this antinomianism should not prejudice the spread of the doctrine. And then again, the idea of spiritual wives did not go far enough to satisfy the demands of his antinomianism. It still was held in the bonds of law. He stood for promiscuity in principle. And spiritual wives are just as incongruous to the principle of promiscuity as are "legal wives"; they are "spiritual dualism." "The only true foundation is that which Jesus Christ laid," he writes, "when he said, that in the good time coming there will be no marriage at all" — meaning not that celibacy will rule, but "promiscuity."<sup>89</sup>

Noyes himself tells us that he had already adopted this theory of promiscuity in general in May, 1834,<sup>90</sup> that is to say, on the very heels of his "second conversion" — or conversion to Perfectionism — and at the very beginning of his propaganda for the formation of a Perfectionist sect. One gets the impression that it held from the first in his mind the place of an essential principle — we might even say of *the* essential principle — of his system, while the whole doctrinal elaboration led up to it and prepared the way for it.<sup>91</sup> Meanwhile, however, he kept it in the background, putting it forward only tentatively and as men, having absorbed the doctrinal preparation, were able to bear it. As he himself expresses it:<sup>92</sup> "I moulded it, protected it, and matured it from year to year; holding it always, nevertheless, as a theory to be realized in the *future*, and warning all men against premature action upon it." How he was accustomed to propagate it is, no doubt, fairly illustrated by his circumspect and veiled, and yet perfectly

clear, presentation of it in a letter written in January, 1837, to his friend David Harrison of Meriden, Connecticut, — a letter which has acquired the name of “the Battle Axe Letter” from the circumstance that Harrison, acting on a suggestion of Noyes’s (who was eager to make quiet propaganda), showed it to Simon Lovett (who liked it), and Lovett showed it to Elizabeth Hawley,<sup>93</sup> who sent it to Theophilus R. Gates,<sup>94</sup> who published the salient parts of it in his paper *The Battle Axe* (August, 1837) — and thus forced Noyes’s hand, and drew him for the first time to make public acknowledgment of this central element of his teaching. In this letter he writes:—<sup>95</sup>

“I will write all that is in my heart on one delicate subject, and you may judge for yourself whether it is expedient to show this letter to others. When the will of God is done on earth as it is in heaven, there will be no marriage. The marriage supper of the Lamb is a feast at which every dish is free to every guest. Exclusiveness, jealousy, quarrelling, have no place there, for the same reason as that which forbids the guests at a thanksgiving dinner to claim each his separate dish, and quarrel with the rest for his rights. In a holy community there is no more reason why sexual intercourse should be restrained by law, than why eating and drinking should be; and there is as little occasion for shame in the one case as in the other. God has placed a wall of partition between the male and the female during the apostasy, for good reasons which will be broken down in the resurrection for equally good reasons; but woe to him who abolishes the law of apostasy before he stands in the holiness of the resurrection. The guests of the marriage supper may have each his favorite dish, each a dish of his own procuring, and that without the jealousy of exclusiveness. I call a certain woman my wife — she is yours; she is Christ’s, and in Him she is the bride of all saints. She is dear in the hand of a stranger and according to my promise to her I rejoice. My claim upon her cuts directly across the marriage covenant of this world, and God knows the end.”

What is proclaimed here is complete promiscuity among the perfect; those that are perfect are already living the “resurrection life.” Noyes could not repudiate his letter,

and, with characteristic courage, declared his purpose thenceforth to publish the doctrine taught in it from the housetop. But with his equally characteristic caution he kept it still in the background, and put in the front those doctrines which he appeared to value more and more, chiefly because they led up to this; but which meanwhile produced less scandal to talk about. A typical example of his dealing with the matter may be seen in the attempt which he makes in June, 1839,<sup>96</sup> to explain to a correspondent how his brand of perfectionism differed from that of the Methodists, Friends, and Asa Mahan. They all agree, he says, that "perfect holiness is attainable in this life." But the "Perfectionists" — that is, his own sect — are discriminated from the others by certain primary and also by certain secondary tenets. The primary ones he enumerates thus: "1. Their belief that perfect holiness, when attained is forever secure. . . . 2. Their belief that perfect holiness is not a mere privilege, but an attainment absolutely necessary to salvation. Holding this belief they of course deny the name of Christian to any other sects. . . . 3. Their belief that the second coming of Christ took place at the period of the destruction of Jerusalem." On this third point of doctrine he remarks: "Perfectionists insist upon this doctrine as the foundation of the two preceding" — that is to say it stood with them as the fundamental doctrine out of which all else is deduced. Out of it ultimately come then the "secondary consequences," adherence to which also characterized "Perfectionists." These he enumerates as "their 'Antinomianism,' their belief in a present resurrection, their peculiar views of the fashion of this world in respect of marriage, etc." The promiscuity for which "Perfectionists" stand is not left here, it is true, unsuggested; but it is not obtruded. It is made a mere secondary result of their most fundamental doctrines.

We perceive that Noyes, beginning in 1834 as a perfectionist among perfectionists, had rapidly drifted into an attitude of open antagonism to all perfectionists except that

small number who were willing to receive from him a totally new doctrinal and ethical system, and to subject themselves to his unquestioned authority. He no longer disagrees with them only in standing for organization over against their atomizing individualism; nor indeed only in reprobating the tendency to cloak licentiousness under a show of close spiritual relationship, which was showing itself among some of them. He declares them not really Christians, and he takes infinite satisfaction in pointing out his differences from them. He exhibits, indeed, a real predilection not only for explaining the differences between the several varieties of perfectionist teaching and his own, but in general for pointing out the defects in the teaching of all whom he supposes might be imagined to have been in any way before him advocates of holiness. As to the "ordinary class of pietists in the carnal churches," no doubt, he considers it unnecessary to say anything.<sup>97</sup> They are "confessors and professors of sin," and therefore certainly not Christians. He adduces David Brainerd as a "fair specimen" of the "more distinguished spiritualists of the churches," but thinks that enough has been said when it is said that "his general experience is in essence a transcript of the seventh chapter of Romans" —in which chapter is depicted, according to Noyes, a carnal not a spiritual condition. "It is evident," he says, "that he was through life, *under conviction*, panting after freedom from sin, but not reaching it." With Brainerd, he classes Edwards, Payson, and "nearly all of those who have obtained the highest distinction for piety in the churches." James Brainerd Taylor's experience, as we have seen, he is willing to allow to have been "of a higher grade." "He came to the very borders of the gospel," he says, "and *saw* clearly the privilege and glory of salvation from sin." "He even confessed, at times, in a timid way that he was free from sin," and in doing so really "condemned the routine of sinning and repenting which was the only experience allowed or known in the churches before him." His biographers, he asserts, "suppress the clear-

est part of his testimony in relation to his own salvation." Nevertheless he was only "the John the Baptist of the doctrine of holiness" and, not knowing the gospel of the primitive church, was not born of God in the Bible sense." There is nothing better to say of the Mystics,— Madame Guyon, William Law. They lose themselves in "a spiritual philosophy": Law is the best and his "Address to the Clergy" his best book. It is he who is the real father of the semi-perfectionism which the Methodists profess. The Methodists—like the Moravians and Shakers,—and Asa Mahan and his companions with them, fail because they make holiness not the main point of religion but an appendix to something else, and have denied or suppressed the most essential element of the new covenant, viz. "security." Oberlin may stand as the illustration of a semi-perfectionism like this: it represents the stage a man comes to when, seeking holiness, he has a gleam of it—and stops.<sup>98</sup> "We," he says in another place,<sup>99</sup> differentiating his "Perfectionists" from Wesleyans and Oberliners—"we believe in the 'New Covenant' which enlists soldiers *for life*; or, in other words, for *perpetual holiness*."

We must not exaggerate the success of the propaganda for his perfectionism which Noyes inaugurated at New Haven in the spring of 1834. Its success, although, as we have said, not inconsiderable, was not great; and what was gained at the outset was soon largely lost. It was not long before James Boyle cast off allegiance, and the converts from the Free Church also soon returned to it.<sup>100</sup> Noyes himself remained in New Haven, after his adoption of perfectionism, only a year. When he left it, in February, 1835, never to return except on occasional visits, his departure bore a somewhat dramatic appearance. Simon Lovett, he tells us,<sup>101</sup> had come "as a sort of missionary from the New York Perfectionists" to convert him to their ideas; but he on the contrary converted Lovett to some of his, "especially to the New Haven doctrine of the Second Coming." Lovett took him, however, to Southampton and Brimfield to make him acquainted with the groups of per-

fectionists which had sprung up in those places under the New York propaganda. He won his triumphs among them also, he tells us. "Their leader, Tertius Strong, succumbed to my reasonings," he says, "and soon the doctrine of the Second Coming, and what was called the 'Eternal Promise' were received on all sides with great enthusiasm." But he did not like what he saw. "There was a seducing tendency to freedom of manners between the sexes," and there was "a progressive excitement" manifesting itself. So he ran away — leaving without notice, on foot, "through snow and cold below zero" — to Putney, sixty miles distant. Thus he escaped complicity, perhaps participation, in one of the wildest follies of the perfectionist orgies; and at the same time found a new scene for his work and a revised program for his labors. He did not at once, indeed, find the new way. A period of uncertainty intervened in which he spent himself endeavoring to repair the losses that had been suffered and to build up the broken fortunes of his party. He went from place to place on this errand. He was visited at Putney by old friends and fellow workers. Simon Lovett came on from Brimfield and joined him in his labors. Hard on his heels Charles H. Weld<sup>102</sup> came, fresh from Theophilus R. Gates (who, he said, was "pure gold"), with letters in his hands from a New York priestess, a Mrs. Carrington, full of censures of Noyes's "carnality and worldly wisdom." Noyes describes this woman as "a lady living somewhere in the State of New York, who had recently been converted to perfectionism by Weld's labors, and was soaring in the highest regions of ecstasy and boasting." He no longer had any sympathy with mere perfectionists — with Weld he finally broke, apparently violently, and certainly permanently. He was meditating other things to which perfectionism was only a stepping stone. To these other things, however, perfectionism was a stepping stone — an indispensable stepping stone — and he now gave himself, having the new vision before his eyes, with all diligence to building it up in a form suitable for what was to come.

"At this time," he says, "I commenced in earnest the enterprise of repairing the disasters of Perfectionism, and establishing it on a permanent basis, not by preaching and stirring up excitement over a large field, as had been done at the beginning, nor by laboring to reorganize and discipline broken and corrupted regiments as I had done at different places, but by devoting myself to the particular instruction of a few simple-minded, unpretending believers, chiefly belonging to my father's family. I had now come to regard the quality of the proselytes of holiness as more important than their quantity; and the quality which I preferred was not that meteoric brightness which I had so often seen miserably extinguished, but sober and even timid honesty. This I found in the little circle of believers at Putney; and the Bible School which I commenced among them in the winter of 1836-7 proved to be to me and to the cause of holiness the beginning of better days."

Although the work in which Noyes now engaged himself took the form of a "Bible School," neither his purpose nor his interest could any longer be described as theological or even as religious. That purpose and interest belonged to a transcended phase of his development. His teaching in the "Bible School," we are told, sought chiefly to confirm the pupils in "the new doctrines of Salvation from Sin and the Second Coming of Christ," and to draw corollaries from them "resulting in the discovery of many other doctrines at variance with the dogmas of the divinity doctors and commentators."<sup>103</sup> This is an euphemistic way of describing what was really being done. What was really being done was, by the constant inculcation, enforcement, elaboration, illustration, of Noyes's fundamental doctrines of the emancipation of believers from all restrictions of law, and their imminent entrance into the "resurrection state" in which the selfishness of "exclusive marriage" should be done away, to supply his pupils with a religious basis for the practice of sexual promiscuity and to induce them to enter upon the practice of it without shock, when the time seemed to him to have come to introduce it. Meanwhile he tells us emphatically and with some iteration that, personally he "walked in the ordinances of the law blameless" — "until

1846"; and that also "his face was set as a flint against laxity among the Saints"—again "until 1846."<sup>104</sup> His whole preoccupation was, however, all this time with sex. "I got the germ of my present theory of Socialism," he writes in 1867<sup>105</sup>—meaning nothing other than his doctrine of promiscuity, which he speaks of as if it carried with it his entire socialistic theory—"very soon after I confessed Holiness, that is, in May 1836. As that germ grew in my mind I talked about it. It took definite form in a private letter in 1836. It got into print without my knowledge or consent in 1837. I moulded it, protected it, and matured it from year to year; holding it always, nevertheless, as a theory to be realized in the future, and warning all men against premature action upon it. I made ready for the realization of it by clearing the field in which I worked of all libertinism, and by educating our Putney family in male continence<sup>106</sup> and criticism.<sup>107</sup> When all was ready, in 1846, I launched the theory into practice."<sup>108</sup>

Of course Noyes,—for that was his custom—rationalized his preoccupation with sex. That was, he said, his necessary preoccupation after doctrine had been disposed of. "The first thing to be done," he writes more than once,<sup>109</sup> "in an attempt to redeem man and reorganize society is to bring about reconciliation with God; and the second thing is to bring about a true union of the sexes. In other words, religion is the first subject of interest, and sexual morality the second, in the great task of establishing the Kingdom of God on earth. Bible communists are operating in this order. Their main work from 1834 to 1846 was to develop the religion of the New Covenant and establish union with God. Their second work, in which they are now especially engaged, is the laying the foundation of a new state of society by developing the true theory of sexual morality." When this passage was written, however—say in 1848—Noyes and his followers were not engaged in "developing the true theory of sexual morality," if by that is meant working it out theoretically. That had been the work of the preceding period. They were now

putting that developed theory of sexual morality into practice—and only in this practical sense “developing” it. Nor must the general terms in which the statement is thrown be permitted to throw the reader off of the real line of thought which is being followed. It is of course perfectly true that the two great objects of human regard are religion and morality, and the two matters of first consideration in the establishment of a sound social order are our relations to God and to one another. Since man has been made male and female, it may very properly be said also that, after religion, the family is the foundation stone of society. Precisely what Noyes was engaged in doing, however, was destroying the family. The problem he had set himself was nothing less than the reconstitution of human society without the family. It was precisely because of this that, in “the laying of the foundation of a new state of society,” he required first of all to “develop” a new “theory of sexual morality,” a theory of sexual morality, that is to say, which dispensed with the family. The theory which he developed was nothing other than that of sexual promiscuity—prudently regulated, no doubt, in its practice in the interest of the community, but not only distinctly but even dogmatically insisted upon. The development of this theory and its inculcation to his followers were actually his “main-work” for ten years before 1846. Its practical application was equally actually his main work for the remainder of his active life. His mind was preoccupied thus for a whole half of a century with the details of the sexual life. The religious preoccupation was past: *The Berean*, which was published in 1847, but is made up of articles reprinted from the periodicals published from 1834 on, is its monument. The economic experiment on which he ultimately embarked was dependent on the narrower matter of sex-relations in which he saw its foundation stone: for all communism is wrecked on the family, and he perceived with the utmost clearness that he must be rid of the family if he was to have communism. Accordingly he constantly speaks of his “social theory” when he

means nothing more than his "sexual theory," and his book called "Bible Communism," published in 1848, was nothing more than an elaborate plea for the practice of sexual promiscuity under the name of "entire community," that is to say community not only in goods but also in women.<sup>110</sup>

## NOTES

"He was born at West Brattleboro, Vt., Sept. 3, 1811, the eldest son and favorite child of John and Polly (Hayes) Noyes. John Noyes was graduated from Dartmouth College in 1795, served his college as a tutor 1747-49 (having Daniel Webster as a pupil), began to study for the ministry, but finally entered mercantile pursuits, served in 1816 as Representative in Congress from the Southern District of Vermont. Polly Noyes (an aunt of President Rutherford B. Hayes) is described as a woman of notably strong character and deep religious spirit.

\* American Socialisms, p. 614.

"In his Confessions of Religious Experience, from which the extracts in the following pages, not otherwise credited, are also taken. The present one is also to be found in the Handbook of the Oneida Community (1887), pp. 6 f.

"The Berean, p. 242. See also, American Socialisms (1870), p. 614.

"An account is given of this society and its practice of "mutual criticism" in the Congregational Quarterly for April, 1875; and the whole subject is dealt with at large in a pamphlet called Mutual Criticism, published by Noyes in 1876. Cf. also The Galaxy, vol. xxii. (1876) pp. 815 ff.

"The "Free Church" was organized August 31, 1831, but was long in getting upon its feet. According to the account in the Contributions to the Ecclesiastical History of Connecticut, etc. (1861), it worshiped for the first two years of its existence in the Orange Street Chapel, and then for three years in "a large hall in the Exchange building"; and "from September, 1836, in a house of worship erected for it in Church Street" (for this house of worship, see Leonard Bacon, Thirteen Historical Discourses, etc. (1839), p. 399). Noyes's connection with the church, falling between the autumn of 1832 and the spring of 1834, was in its days of extreme weakness, when it was worshiping first in the Orange Street Chapel and then in the Exchange building. The church remained weak until 1848, when it moved once more,—from Church Street to College Street. It was not able to settle a pastor (the Rev. Mr. Ludlow) until 1837. "For the first six years

of its existence," the Contributions above quoted record, "it had no pastor, but had the ministrations, for periods of from three to six months, of Revs. Waters Warren, Samuel Griswold, James Boyle, Dexter Clary, Austin Putnam, John Ingersoll, and the late N. W. Taylor, D.D." Here are seven men to divide six years between. Boyle's period of ministration to the church was necessarily short; and appears to have centered in the spring of 1834. He seems to have received no countenance from the Congregationalist authorities. In the Minutes of the General Association of Congregationalist Churches of Connecticut, this church appears as vacant for 1835 and 1836; the earlier Minutes are not accessible to us.

"This is the way he puts it himself: "As I lost confidence in the religion around me, and saw more and more the need there was of a re-conversion of most of those who professed Christianity, my outward-bound missionary zeal declined, and my heart turned toward thoughts, desires and projects of an internal reformation of Christendom. Quality of religion, instead of quantity, became my center of attraction."

"What is meant is the Memoir of James Brainerd Taylor, by John Holt Rice, D.D., and Benjamin Holt Rice, D.D., which was published in 1833, and therefore was a new book, just issued from the press when Noyes came back to New Haven in the autumn of 1833. He may have been the more attracted to it from the circumstance that the book was intended especially for theological students. This Memoir was supplemented by *A New Tribute to the Memory of James Brainerd Taylor (1833)*. Brief accounts of Taylor may be found in *Appleton's Cyclopædia of American Biography*, vol. vi. p. 45, and *McClintock and Strong's Cyclopædia of Religious Knowledge*, vol. x. p. 231. Taylor was a young man of marked devoutness of spirit, who, having given himself to the (Congregationalist) ministry, was cut off before he could enter upon its work (1829). Noyes calls him "the John the Baptist of the doctrine of holiness," who came "to the very borders of the Gospel," "saw clearly the privilege and glory of salvation from sin," and "even confessed at times, in a timid way, that he was free from sin,"—but "did not know the Gospel of the primitive church, and was not born of God in the Bible sense." That is to say, he had not received "the second conversion" into "holiness" (*The Berean*, §7 pp. 271 ff.). Cf. Rice's judicious account of Taylor's attitude towards Christian attainments and the relation of this attitude to perfectionism in the Memoir, pp. 94-97. There is a contemporary appreciation of the Memoir in the *Biblical Repertory* of 1834, written by Henry Axtell; in it the message of Taylor and of the Memoir alike is held to be "eminent

holiness is attainable on earth." In C. G. Finney's *Lectures to Professing Christians*, which were published in 1837 (ed. 1880, p. 359), there is a passage curiously parallel to Noyes's account, in which, telling of his own conversion to perfectionism, Finney says he read Wesley's *Plain Account of Christian Perfection* and Taylor's *Memoir*, and speaks of Taylor's biographers' concealing his tendency to Perfectionism just as Noyes does.

"*American Communities* (Revised edition, 1902), p. 152. Hinds's account of Noyes's early experiences given in this edition of his book (that in the first edition is negligible) is derived from Noyes's *Confessions of Religious Experience*, and is the best of the accessible accounts. We have been glad to check up our own by it and to follow its guidance with some closeness.

"Noyes is careful to explain that his assertion of freedom from sin did not involve the claim that he was incapable of positive growth. "I certainly did not," he says, "at this time regard myself as perfect in any such sense as excludes the expectation of discipline and improvement. On the contrary, from the very beginning my heart's most earnest desire and prayer to God was that I might be made perfect by full fellowship with the sufferings of Christ; and from that time till now, all my tribulations have been occasions of thanksgiving, because I have regarded them as answers to that first prayer, and as pledges of God's faithfulness in completing the work then begun. The distinction between being free from sin on the one hand, and being past all improvement on the other, however obscure it may be to some, was plain to me as soon as I knew by experience what freedom from sin really is. To those who endeavored to confound this distinction, and to crowd me into a profession of unimprovable perfection, I said: 'I do not pretend to perfection in externals; I only claim purity of heart and the answer of a good conscience toward God. A book may be true and perfect in sentiment, and yet be deficient in grace of style and typographical accuracy.'"

"Quoted in H. Eastman, *Noyesism Unveiled* (1849), p. 31, note.

"Noyes's own testimony to this intercourse will be found in Dixon's *Spiritual Wives*, vol. II. pp. 36 and 46 (cf. also pp. 25, 30, 35, 40, 48).

"*The Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review*, July, 1877, pp. 410, 411.

"G. W. Noyes in his tract, *The Oneida Community: its Relation to Orthodoxy* (no date; but certainly after 1912), represents Noyes and Noyesism as definitely Taylorite. An annotator ("F. W. F."), however, seeks to draw back a little.

"He does not betray any tendency, however, to minimize the divine control of the will, so only it be allowed to be merely sua-

sive in its mode. His formula here is "if a man's own will goes with his acts, he is a free agent, however mighty may be the influences which persuade him" (*The Berean*, p. 173). He illustrates thus: "God dwelt in Christ, and determined all his actions. And yet was He not free?" "There is not a professor in all the churches, whether sincere or not, who does not expect to be kept from sin in heaven by the power of God. . . . This is acknowledged to be consistent with free agency." One may ask whether something more than suasion is not suggested in this language. The doctrine, however, is the general Taylorite doctrine, and was made very familiar to the churches by its vigorous assertion by C. G. Finney.

"*The Perfectionist*, Feb. 22, 1845: "Theses of the Second Reformation," Theses 29 and 30.

"*The Perfectionist*, Sept. 7, 1844.

"Contributions to the Ecclesiastical History of Connecticut prepared under the direction of the General Association in 1861, pp. 328, 329.

"H. Eastman, as cited, p. 29.

"*Handbook of the Oneida Community* (1867), p. 8.

"*The Perfectionist*, vol. iv. No. 4, quoted by Eastman as cited, p. 79. We understand this to mean April, 1846.

"Eastman, p. 80: this apparently belongs to 1842.

"We are giving only the bare facts from the very interesting narrative printed in Dixon's *Spiritual Wives*, vol. ii. pp. 34-47.

"New York City seems to be meant, in contrast with Roundout; and no doubt it is the particular case of Abram C. Smith and Mary Cragin, told at great length by Mary Cragin's husband and reprinted from his narrative by Dixon, *Spiritual Wives*, vol. ii. pp. 89 ff., which is in mind in both references.

"Dixon and His Copyists, p. 20.

"Dixon and His Copyists, p. 31. Cf. his letter to a Mr. Hollister, of July 2, 1839 (Eastman, as cited, p. 86): "About three months from the time when I received Christ as a whole Savior, my mind was led into long and deep meditation on . . . the relation of the sexes. I then came to the conclusions in which I have since stood. . . . So I have testified for the past five years; and every day sinks me deeper and deeper in the certainty that these are the principles of God and his heavenly hosts."

"*Spiritual Wives*, p. 153.

"Cf. what he writes in the *Spiritual Moralist* of June 13, 1842 (Eastman, as cited, p. 89):—"In the winter of 1834, I abandoned the popular religious system in which I had been educated, and became a perfectionist. The change in my views at the time was not confined to the subject of holiness, but extended to every de-

partment of theology and morals. . . . The subject of *sexual morality* was early forced upon my attention, by its close connection with those peculiar views of the law, of the leadings of the Spirit, and of the resurrection, which are among the principal elements of my testimony in *The Perfectionist* and in *The Witness*. Personal circumstances of an interesting character, the startling and in some instances the corrupt suggestions of men with whom I was then connected, and a variety of scandalous reports concerning the licentious doctrines and practices of certain Perfectionists, conspired to urge me to a thorough examination of the matter. . . . Under these circumstances I meditated on the subject much of the time for two years. My mind was particularly exercised in relation to it during several long seasons of spiritual trial. In the winter of 1836-7 my views assumed a definite and satisfactory form."

"*Spiritual Wives*, vol. ii. p. 184.

"On Elizabeth Hawley, see *Spiritual Wives*, vol. ii. p. 46, as well as *Eastman*, as cited, p. 95.

"*Eastman*, as cited, p. 98, says of Gates that "he was not, as Noyes asserts, a Perfectionist; but he certainly held doctrines in perfect keeping with the sentiments of the *Battle Axe Letter*, for he approved of, and published it." Of Gates's writings we have had the opportunity of consulting only two early books: *The Trials, Experience, Exercises of Mind and First Travels of Theophilus R. Gates*, written by Himself (1810); and *Measuring Rod to Separate Between the Precious and the Vile* (1815, second edition, 1819). The former of these is a picaresque narrative of a boy's religious experiences, as he travels on foot from New England to North Carolina and back. The latter is made up nearly entirely of quotations from standard divines on the works of an impenitent and the works of a penitent heart. It is not possible to obtain from either of them Gates's matured opinions.

"The 'whole letter is printed in *Spiritual Wives*, vol. ii. pp. 52 ff.: the portion which we quote is printed also at the opening of the excellent chapter on "The *Battle Axe Letter* and its History," in *H. Eastman's Noyesism Unveiled*, pp. 91 ff.

"*Eastman*, as cited, pp. 364 f.

"*The Berean*, Lecture 39, pp. 271 ff.

"In *Dixon and His Copyists*, p. 39, Noyes warns us against the account given by *Dixon* (*New America*, vol. ii. pp. 242 f.) of the relation between the views of Noyes and Oberlin. It is, he says, "a ludicrous historical jumble" in which the actual position of the two parties is reversed.

"*Bible Communism* (1853), p. 7. Cf. what is said in the *Handbook of the Oneida Community* (1867), p. 30:—"Wesley and his

associates almost succeeded in reopening the way of holiness, but they failed. . . . Perfect holiness was only a secondary appendage to Methodism even in its best days. . . . Besides, Wesley, in denying the security of the higher class, left a dismal barrier at the upper end of the way of holiness, which broke the communication of his church with heaven. These remarks may be applied without much alteration to Oberlin Perfectionism, which, in respect to the secondary place of perfect holiness, and every other essential feature, is only an attempted repetition of the system of Wesley."

<sup>100</sup> Eastman, as cited, pp. 31, 32.

<sup>101</sup> *Spiritual Wives*, vol. ii. pp. 34 ff.

<sup>102</sup> Charles Huntington Weld, born 1799, graduated from Yale 1822, at Andover 1824-26, agent of the American Bible Society in Mississippi 1830, preached at Manlius, New York, for a short period, and then resided at Belleville, died Hyde Park, Mass., 1871. He appears to have been a fanatic of the purest water and so unstable nervously that he fell into convulsions on any great excitement. Noyes describes his relations to him at great length: and his description is reprinted by Allan Estlake (*The Oneida Community* [1900], pp. 22 ff.). He was a licentiate of the Presbytery of Oneida from 1828 to 1836: but during the trial of James Boyle by that Presbytery in the spring of 1835 he became implicated in the same charges, and on March 10, 1836, wrote to the Presbytery returning his license as "being no longer in harmony with the doctrines of the Presbyterian Church." His younger brother Theodore D. Weld (who married Angelica Emily Grimke) is well known as an antislavery agitator. He was a convert of Finney's, who gives a full account of the circumstances of his conversion in his *Memoirs* (1876), pp. 184 ff. He too was a licentiate of the Presbytery of Oneida and entered on his preparation for the ministry at Lane Seminary. But "tearing away from his moorings under the anti-slavery excitement, he returned his license to the Presbytery, abandoned the church, discarded the supreme authority of the Bible, silenced his golden-mouthed speech, folded his eagle wings and lived in the solitude and muteness of the grave" (P. H. Fowler, *Historical Sketch of Presbyterianism within the Bounds of the Synod of Central New York* [1877], p. 163).

<sup>103</sup> Hinds, as cited (Edition 2), p. 156.

<sup>104</sup> *Spiritual Wives*, vol. ii. pp. 182-183; Dixon and His Copyists, p. 7; *Bible Communism*, pp. 21, 23.

<sup>105</sup> *Spiritual Wives*, vol. ii. pp. 183, 184.

<sup>106</sup> By "Male Continence" is meant an obnoxious method of birth control, on the invention of which Noyes greatly prided him-

self, and of all the most intimate details of which he speaks with the utmost nonchalance. It was required to be practiced in the Association, that promiscuity might be indulged while the burden of children — which no communism can live under — was avoided. Noyes shows a nice choice of words when he defends his community against the charge of "licentiousness," but never, so far as we have observed, against that of "lasciviousness," which is perhaps in any case the best word to use of its practices.

<sup>107</sup> See Note 68 above.

<sup>108</sup> In *Bible Communism* (1853), pp. 21–23, Noyes goes over much of the same ground. The radical principles of his theory of the relation of the sexes, he says here, were "early deduced from the religious system evolved in New Haven in 1834, were avowed in print by J. H. Noyes in 1837," and were subsequently discussed from time to time. "These principles, though avowed in 1837, were not carried into action in any way by any of the members of the Putney Association till 1846." They have, indeed, it is added, "never been carried into full practical embodiment either at Putney or Oneida, but have been held by the Association as the principles of an *ultimate state*, toward which society among them is advancing slowly and carefully with all due deference to sentiments and relations established by the old order of things." All that is meant by the last sentence is that the promiscuity has been confined within the bounds of the association as yet, and has not yet become world-wide. We read. (p. 22): "The Association in respect to practical innovations limits itself to its own family circle, not invading society around it, and no just or even legal complaint of such invasions can be found at Putney or Oneida."

<sup>109</sup> We are quoting from *Male Continnence* (1872), ed. 2, 1877, p. 19, which itself quotes from *Bible Arguments* (1848), p. 27. The same position is argued more fully, but in much the same language in *Bible Communism* (1853), proposition 16, pp. 40 ff.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. the statement in *American Socialisms*, p. 616: "As the early experiences of the Community were of two kinds, religious and social, so each of these experiences produced a book. The religious book, called *The Berean*, was printed at Putney in 1847, and consisted mainly of articles published in the periodicals of the Putney School during the previous twelve years. The socialistic book, called *Bible Communism*, was published in 1848, a few months after the settlement of Oneida, and was the frankest possible disclosure of the theory of entire Communism, for which the Community was then under persecution."